

BUILDING THE MODEL MAN:
MONEY, MEDIA, AND GENDER IN SOUTH KOREA, 1961-1972

by

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Abstract

In the 1960s and the early 1970s, mass media, in the form of radio, US-produced newsreels, weekly magazines, and films, became available to a wider South Korean public during the period of Park Chung Hee's dictatorship and his state-driven capitalist development. The popular mass media content portrayed the pursuit of wealth as a masculine quality. In the popular narratives, the ideal man was a successful and hard-working businessman who was loyal to the Park Chung Hee government, attracted female affection, and enjoyed the benefits of South Korea's emerging consumer society. By contrast, women were confined to the domestic sphere as dutiful wives in portrayals that abnormalized and degraded the growing population of female wage workers in light industries and the service sector. These forms of popular media presented South Koreans with the dream of a modern, American-style middle-class life in Seoul characterized by apartment living and conspicuous consumption. Unlike more conventional portrayals of South Korean capitalism as a top-down, state-led development, focus on popular mass media in this dissertation shows how many "ordinary" South Koreans participated in the new culture of profit-seeking and capital accumulation.

Lay Summary

This dissertation examines how popular mass media, such as radio, weekly magazines, and films, portrayed earning money as a masculine activity in South Korea during the period of Park Chung Hee's dictatorship and his state-driven capitalist development in the 1960s and the early 1970s. In the popular stories and images, the ideal man was a successful and hard-working businessman who was loyal to the state, attracted female attention, and enjoyed the benefits of South Korea's emerging consumer society. By contrast, ideal women were dutiful wives in the home. These forms of popular media presented South Koreans with the dream of a modern, American-style middle-class life in Seoul. Unlike the usual portrayals of South Korean economic development as something that the Park Chung Hee government achieved, focus on popular mass media in this dissertation shows how many "ordinary" South Koreans participated in the new culture of profit-seeking and wealth accumulation.

Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Jihyun Shin.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Lay Summary.....	iv
Preface.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
The Park Chung Hee era.....	3
The Rise of Mass Media.....	6
Literature Review.....	11
The Intersections of Media, Gender, and Capitalism.....	19
Chapter 1: Commercializing the Poor, 1963-1965.....	24
The Radio Era.....	24
“Charity Drama: This Poor Person!”.....	26
Sexualization of Impoverished Women.....	32
Normalization of Men as the Sole Breadwinner of a Household.....	42
Conclusion.....	48
Chapter 2: Masculinizing Money-Making, 1964-1966.....	51
The Era of Weekly Magazines.....	51
Making Money with Bare Fists.....	58
Money-making as a Nationalist Task.....	64
“Continuous, Rational, Capitalistic Enterprise”.....	71
Dissociation of Women from Money-making.....	80
Conclusion.....	86
Chapter 3: Visualizing Male-led “Modernization” 1964-1967.....	88
Newsreels in Postwar Korea.....	91
Women in <i>Liberty News</i>	98
Men in <i>Liberty News</i>	109
Conclusion.....	123
Chapter 4: Fantasized Image of Seoul, 1965-1970.....	126
Consuming Seoul through Apartments.....	128

Locating Seoul Globally through Hotels, Sunglasses, and Cars.....	145
Conclusion	152
Chapter 5: Money and Courtship, 1968-1971.....	154
“Soon-to-be <i>chaebŏl</i> ” in <i>Sunday Seoul</i> (1968-71).....	160
“My Proud Daughter” (1970-81).....	178
“Husband Material” (1969 -)	187
Conclusion	190
Conclusion	193
Bibliography	201

List of Figures

3.1 “Opinion of Liberty and Daehan Newsreels” (1967).....	94
3.2 <i>Liberty News</i> , “Women’s Centre” (1966)	99
3.3 <i>Liberty News</i> , “Flower Arrangement Exhibition” (1965)	101
3.4 <i>Liberty News</i> , “Wigs Being Exported” (1965).....	105
3.5 <i>Liberty News</i> , “Steppingstones of Modernization” (1967)	115
3.6 <i>Liberty News</i> , “Steppingstones of Modernization” (1967)	116
3.7 <i>Liberty News</i> , “The First Businesspeople Day” (1964)	118
3.8 <i>Liberty News</i> , “The First Businesspeople Day” (1964)	119
3.9 <i>Liberty News</i> , “Civil Activities”	122
4.1 <i>Woman Who Wanted an Apartment</i> (1970)	136
4.2 <i>Woman Who Wanted an Apartment</i> (1970)	137
5.1 <i>Sunday Seoul</i> , “Advertisement” (1970).....	170
5.2 <i>Sunday Seoul</i> , “Which Companies Will Give More Bonus” (1969).....	174
5.3 <i>Kyunghyang shinmun</i> (1967)	180
5.4 <i>Sunday Seoul</i> , “My Proud Daughter” (1970)	186

Introduction

In August 1970, *Tonga ilbo* (*Dong-a Daily*) published a series of six articles entitled, “A Quarter Century Since Liberation: Young People Today” (*Haebang sa ban segi: Onül ūi chŏlmünidŭl*). The series investigated how young South Koreans, born around the time of liberation from Japanese rule in 1945 and not old enough to remember the Korean War (1950-1953), viewed a wide range of topics, from politics to marriage. The second article of the series specifically focused on young peoples’ perspectives on *ipshin ch’ulse*, “success in life.” The piece emphasized that this generation of South Koreans primarily viewed success in material terms: lucrative careers in the private sector and the consumer lifestyle they afforded. Under the subheading, “Interest Shifts from Political to Economic Success,” the reporter wrote with a tone of concern that most young people dreamed of becoming successful businessmen, rather than political leaders.¹ According to the article, this shift in values was worrying because it signaled that young people no longer viewed success in terms of personal moral conduct or intellectual achievement – they merely dreamed of getting rich. Virtues that might have been cherished in the past, such as integrity and honesty, lost their importance as the individual pursuit of wealth became privileged above all else.

The observations in the pages of *Tonga ilbo* speak to a broader generational shift in not only societal values, but also in notions of femininity and masculinity, in the context of major social and economic change driven by state-led capitalist industrialization under Park Chung Hee’s

¹ “A Quarter Century Since Liberation: Young People Today Series No. 2 – Perspectives on Success in Life,” [Haebangsa pan segi: onül-ūi chŏlmünidŭl 2 ipshin ch’ulse rŭl ponŭn nun] *Tonga ilbo*, August 11, 1970, 5. I use the McCune-Reischauer system of romanization for transliteration of Korean terms, except for names and words that are commonly used in English, such as Seoul, Gangnam, and Park Chung Hee. I keep the last names of Korean authors first, as is customary in Korea unless they have their own romanized names. All translations are mine unless noted otherwise. In footnotes, titles of Korean sources are translated into English first, followed by transliterated versions in brackets.

dictatorship in South Korea in the 1960s. This dissertation explores the role of popular mass media, from weekly magazines to radio and film, in shaping these new and distinctly gendered conceptions of success, work, and money-making.

I argue that popular mass media in 1960s Korea repeatedly created and circulated content that celebrated the individual pursuit of wealth as an inherently masculine quality, while confining women to their traditional roles in the domestic sphere. The popular narratives and images normalized the ideal of the successful male businessmen as well as the male worker in heavy industries. By contrast, the ideal woman was portrayed as a dutiful wife and mother, while female wage-work was cast as abnormal and of short-lived importance to the economy. I suggest that this new mass media culture helped transform Koreans into wealth-seeking individuals and reinforced gender norms of men as sole family breadwinners.

These gendered narratives represented a process of obfuscation and mythmaking: the life of a successful Seoul businessmen was unattainable for most Koreans, male workers in heavy industry were severely degraded and exploited, and Korea's rapid-industrialization was highly dependent on an ever-increasing population of women workers in light-industries and the service sector. However, these narratives served the process of state-led capitalist industrialization by turning Korea's capitalist entrepreneurs into heroes, extending the patriarchal domination of women from the household into the workplace, securing the loyalty, or at least the compliance, of male industrial workers, dividing male and female workers, and more broadly, by selling the capitalist dream of happiness through hard work and the accompanying consumer lifestyle. The promotion of these gendered notions of work and success, therefore, represented a confluence of interests – the economic development and nation-building goals of the Park state, the labour needs of the private sector, and the profit motives of a burgeoning culture industry.

The Park Chung Hee era

Immediately after liberation in 1945 from 35 years of Japanese colonial rule, the Korean peninsula was divided into two along the 38th parallel with the northern part of the peninsula under Soviet control and the south under American occupation. Despite many Koreans' hope for a unified election, a separate election was held in each side in 1948, permanently dividing the peninsula into the two governments of North and South Korea. The ideological differences became intensified in the vortex of the global Cold War and the Korean conflict significantly escalated in 1950. After the 1953 armistice, the postwar recovery was slow, mostly because of the corrupt government of Syngman Rhee, the first elected president of South Korea. In the immediate postwar years, which Charles Kim calls a "time of poverty," intellectuals wrote essays about the effects of endemic poverty and their hardships in magazines like *Sasanggye* and *Sint'aeyang*, expressing their wish to "be liberated from poverty."² The wish to overcome poverty was a collective one and the intellectuals voiced shared "sadness" in the dire time and called for joint actions for a better life.³

Syngman Rhee stepped down in April 1960 as a result of massive protests, especially by students, but inflation and unemployment worsened significantly.⁴ The price of rice jumped by 60 percent, for example, and the rate of unemployment was well above 20 percent.⁵ It was easy to see newspaper articles about people who attempted or committed suicide.⁶ Many Koreans wanted to

² Charles R. Kim, *Youth for Nation: Culture and Protest in Cold War South Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), 34.

³ Ibid., 34-41.

⁴ The interim government was set up and Yun Posŏn (1897–1990) was elected president in July 1960. But the practical political power was mostly in the hands of Prime Minister Chang Myŏn.

⁵ Hyung-A Kim, *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee* (London: Routledge, 2003), 45.

⁶ In January 1961, a wife of a police officer who was well respected by his colleagues but earning low wages, committed suicide, leaving three children behind. "Impoverished Woman Commits Suicide, Leaving Three Children Behind," [Kanan e chich'in yŏin i chasal: Samnammae rŭl namgyŏdun ch'ae] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, January 10, 1961: 3. In February 1961, a father took his life after leaving a note that said, "Please forgive me, a poor father. What is the

purge government officials who had been connected to, and benefited from, the corrupt Rhee administration, but did not see their wishes fulfilled.

At this time of aggravated poverty and political instability, Major-General Park Chung Hee led a military coup with a “bandit-size revolutionary force of just 3,600 troops” in the early morning of May 16, 1961. Under the phrase, “Revolutionary Promises” (*hyŏngmyŏng kongyak*), he articulated a plan to eradicate corruption.⁷ Following the coup, Park purged many senior officers in the existing government under the slogan “Sweep Away Old Evils” (*kuak ilso*) and arrested illicit profiteers, mostly businessmen who profited from corrupt relations with the Rhee government.⁸

In the 1960s, Park sought to achieve both “legitimacy and control.”⁹ He attempted to legitimize his military rule by emphasizing his role in defending the nation from the Communist north and by improving the economy.¹⁰ Chung-in Moon and Byung-joon Jun describe Park’s policy as “guided democracy and state corporatism.” According to the authors, Park aimed to minimize societal obstacles for rapid economic development, so “both civil society and political society were reorganized, controlled, and orchestrated by the state for the sake of efficiency, stability, and regime security.”¹¹

point of living when I cannot even buy you [child] a piece of clothing or feed myself?” See “A Few Commit Suicide,” [Chasalhan saram to] *Chosŏn ilbo*, February 14, 1961, 3.

⁷ Hyung-A Kim, 64; “No Changes in the Revolutionary Promises,” [Hyŏngmyŏng kongyak pyŏndong ŏpta] *Tonga ilbo*, July 5, 1961, 1.

⁸ Hyung-A Kim, 72-73; 77.

⁹ Ibid., 69.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Chung-in Moon and Byung-joon Jun, “Modernization Strategy: Ideas and Influences,” in *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, ed. Pyŏng-guk Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011), 115-116.

The “reorganization” of civil society for the sake of efficiency and regime security included greater state control over mass media. For example, as soon as Park seized power, he launched a series of projects to establish radio as the primary medium of state propaganda.¹² Park primarily envisioned that radio would transmit his speeches to every corner of the country and educate Koreans on the need to work hard for economic development. Park ordered the Ministry of Culture and Information (*munhwa kongbobu*; previously called the Office of Public Information) to conduct research on radio infrastructure structure throughout the country.¹³ A detailed report was published in October that year, only five months after Park’s coup.¹⁴ In 1963, the Park government also carried out large-scale research on the Korean public’s radio listening patterns, which later set the guidelines for how the regime used the medium to inform the Korean public of government initiatives.¹⁵ The swift measures Park took in terms of radio infrastructure suggests the growing influence of mass media in the 1960s.

¹² This elitist, top-down view of the radio was not uncommon in other nation-states that embraced radio as the medium for government propaganda, knowledge, and education. See Stephen Lovell, *Russia in the Microphone Age: A History of Soviet Radio 1919–1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), Matthew B. Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920–1946* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), and Douglas B. Craig, *Fireside Politics: Radio and Political Culture in the United States, 1920–1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

¹³ The Park regime conducted “Survey of the Nation-wide Public Relations Media” [*chŏn'guk hongbo maegaech'e shilt'ae chosa*] biannually since 1961 (at least up until 69). *Munhwa kongbobu, Survey of the Nation-wide Public Relations Media Report No.1: Dissemination Status of Broadcasting Receivers throughout the Country* [*Chŏn'guk hongbo maegaech'e shilt'ae chosa che 1chip: Chŏn'guk pangsong sushin'gi pogŭp shilt'ae*] (Seoul: Munhwa kongbobu, 1969), 3. The Park administration had done fifty such nation-wide surveys; *Munhwa kongbobu, Thirty Year History of the Ministry of Culture and Information* [*Munhwagongbo 30 nyŏn*] (Seoul: Munhwa kongbobu, 1979) cited in Kim Yŏnghŭi, “The Use of Radio during Korea’s Radio Era,” [*Han'guk ūi radio shigi ūi radio suyong hyŏnsang*] *Han'guk ŏllon hakpo* 47 no. 1 (2003): 145.

¹⁴ *Kongbobu chosaguk, Status Report of Nationwide Public Radio Amplifiers, Private Radio Amplifiers, Elementary Schools’ Radio Amplifiers, and Transistors as of September 12, 1961* [*Chŏn'guk kongsŏl radio aemp'u ch'on, chŏn'guk sasŏl radio aemp'u ch'on, chŏn'guk kungmin hakkyo radio aemp'u, chŏn'guk kungmin hakkyo radio aemp'u shilt'ae chosa pogosŏ*] (Seoul: Kongbobu chosaguk, 1961).

¹⁵ The research results came out as *Results of the Nation-wide Surveys Done on Radio Listeners* [Pangsong e taehan chŏn'guk ch'ŏngch'wich'a yŏron chosa kyŏlgwa] the same year. Survey questions included ones asking whether the public had access to the radio or an amplifier, listened to the radio at work or at home, or preferred particular programs. *Kongbobu chosaguk, Results of the Nation-wide Surveys Done on Radio Listeners* [Pangsong e taehan chŏn'guk ch'ŏngch'wich'a yŏron chosa kyŏlgwa] (Seoul: Kongbobu chosaguk, 1963), 168–179. These questions were geared

The Rise of Mass Media

The preceding section outlines the political context in which Korea witnessed a drastic expansion of its mediascape in the 1960s. Song Ŭnyŏng argues that in the 1960s and the 1970s Korea became a “mass (or popular) culture” (*taejung munhwa*) society.¹⁶ According to Song, in earlier periods, there were limited forms of media for the wider Korean public to participate in cultural discourse.¹⁷ Only after the 1960s did media content from magazines to radio become widely available to Koreans.¹⁸ Similarly, Won Kim suggests that Korean “popular” culture traces back to the 1960s and the 1970s when the notion of “Koreanness” was consolidated as a “a concerted attempt by the Park Chung Hee regime to ride out political crises and achieve normalcy by requiring emotional bonding and political attachment to the nation and the state.”¹⁹

Before the 1960s, there was no medium that reached the Korean public across class, region, age, education level, or gender.²⁰ The Korean mediascape experienced a rapid and sweeping change in the 1960s. Radio, for example, quickly became the most accessible and available source of information, knowledge, and entertainment in the 1960s, which Jina Kim calls the “golden age of radio broadcasting.”²¹ In the late 1950s, there were only three main broadcasting stations in

towards knowing the most ideal types of programs, time of broadcasting, and the most effective use of the Korean language so that the government could make the most use out of this medium.

¹⁶ Song Ŭnyŏng notes the challenges of distinguishing mass culture and popular culture and suggests that the Korean word, *taejung*, can be translated as both “mass” and “popular.”

¹⁷ Song Ŭnyŏng, “Korean Mass Culture Society of the 1960s-1970s and the Political Meaning of Korean Mass Culture,” [Han'guk ũi taejung sahoehwa wa taejung munhwa ũi chŏngch'ijŏk ũimi] *Sanghŏ hakpo* 32 (2011): 189.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Won Kim, “The Race to Appropriate “Koreanness” in *Cultures of Yusin: South Korea in the 1970s*, ed. Youngju Ryu (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 21;47. Chung-in Moon and Byung-joon Jun also argue that Park thought traditional Korean virtues, including “national unity and cohesion, patriotism, and resistance against foreign interference and domination,” needed to be nurtured and embraced. See Moon and Jun, 130.

²⁰ Song Ŭnyŏng suggests that the “sprout” of the popular mass culture can be found in the 1930s, but it was only during the 1960s and the 1970s when Korea developed into a “full-fledged” mass culture society. Song Ŭnyŏng, 189.

²¹ Jina Kim, “Between Documentation and Dramatization: Modes of Critique in South Korean Yushin-Era Radio Culture,” *positions: asia critique* 27, no. 2 (2019): 399.

Korean: one public and state-run (Korean Broadcasting System), one religious (Christian Broadcasting System), and one private and commercial (Busan Munhwa Broadcasting Cooperation).²² By 1969, there were 21 private radio broadcasting companies with stations throughout the country.²³ In 1958, only 15 percent of the randomly chosen household respondents in a rural area had said radio was their main source of information; it was 72% in 1969.²⁴ The drastic change resulted from collaboration between the Park government and the private sector. After 1962 the Park government attempted to distribute radios throughout the country, aided by large companies, such as Gold Star (now LG), the first company to produce a “Korean radio.”²⁵ The number of radios in Korea increased from 707,033 in 1961 to 4,958,041 in 1973, and the rate of radio possession per thousand people accordingly jumped from 27.44 to 145.38 during those years.²⁶ Radio became increasingly available to Koreans throughout the 1970s to the point where one household possessed three radios on average in the late 1970s, allowing individual family members to listen to different programs at the same time.²⁷

Many Koreans perceived listening to radio to be a fun pastime and a “source of happiness.”²⁸ For many people, especially in rural areas, radio served as the only door to cultural activities

²² Along with these “Korean” broadcasting companies, there were one American broadcasting station and one Japanese.

²³ Munhwa kongbobu, *Current Condition of Korean Broadcasting* [Han'guk pangsong hyŏnhwang] (Seoul: Munhwa kongbobu, 1969), 3. There were seventeen state-run radio broadcasting companies with twenty-three stations.

²⁴ Yi Mankap, *Structure and Transformation of the Korean Rural Society* [Han'guk nongch'on sahoe ūi kujo wa pyŏnhwa] (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1973), 320. “Main source of information” is the best translation of the Korean term, *chŏngbowŏn*, and the sources of information included newspapers, people from the cities, village leaders, etc. The main source of information in 1958 was the village leader.

²⁵ “This Time Gold Star Sends Fifty Radios as Part of the Sending Radio to the Countryside Movement,” [Ibŏn enŭn kŭmsŏngsa esŏ 50 tae nongch'on radio ponaegi undong e] *Tonga ilbo*, July 25, 1962, 1. “Song Ha Electronics Donates a Hundred Radios,” [Radio 100 tae-rŭl kijŭng] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, April 26, 1963, 7.

²⁶ Kim Yŏnghŭi, 145.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Kim Yŏnghŭi, 142. Kim writes, “Radio was recognized as a source of happiness in typical middle-class households in the city starting in the late 1950s when the society just began to be stabilized after it was destroyed by the war.” Furthermore, Shin Kwŏnsik, a farmer who kept a diary for his entire life described the act of listening to the radio as

because there were hardly any movie theatres or concert halls in the countryside. Communications and media studies scholar Kim Yŏnghŭi aptly summarizes the meaning of listening to the radio in a typical Korean household during what she calls the “radio era”:

Radio was recognized as a source of happiness in typical middle-class households in the city starting in the late 1950s when the society just began to be stabilized after it was destroyed by the war, and the fact that the most transformative change was the dissemination of radio in the rural area in the 1960s truly speaks to such phenomena.²⁹

Radio also created a sense of community as listeners learned about other people’s lives and shared their stories through programs that relied on everyday peoples’ testimonies.³⁰

In the 1960s, weekly magazines (*chuganji*) emerged as a new print medium, surpassing the popularity and accessibility of daily newspapers and monthly magazines that had existed in the past. Starting with *Chugan han'guk* (hereafter “*Weekly Hankook*”), which the publisher of the *Hankook ilbo* (*Hankook Daily*) launched in September 1964, major newspaper companies jumped into the weekly magazine boom throughout the mid-to-late 1960s.³¹ Until the publication of the *Weekly Hankook* in 1964, there had been no magazines that were as far-reaching and popular.³²

a fun family activity in his diary. In 1961, he wrote, “In the evening I brought my radio with me to my grandmother’s place for a fun time.” Shin Kwŏnsik, A Journal dated May 7th, 1961. Shin Kwŏnsik, *Taegok Diary Vol. I* [P’yŏngt’aek ilgi-ro pon nongch’on saenghwalsa 1: P’yŏngt’aek taegok ilgi (1959-1973)] (Gyeonggido: Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation, 2007), 571.

²⁹ Kim Yŏnghŭi, 142.

³⁰ After listening to the radio news about farmers suffering from a drought, Shin Kwŏnsik wrote in his diary, “As a farmer myself, I feel sympathetic to them. The choked-up voices heard through the radio made me tear up.” A journal dated September 16, 1967. Shin, 114.

³¹ In just a few months between August 1968 and January 1969, five new weekly magazines were published. Chŏn Sangki, “The Status of Weekly Magazines as a Medium in the 1960s,” [1960 nyŏndae chuganji ŭi maech’ejŏk wisang] *Han'guk'ak nonjip* 36 (2008): 230.

³² Magazines before the 1960s were mostly consumed by the intellectuals, thus a small portion of the population. There were weekly magazines in the 1950s such as *Sasanggye*.

Sunday Seoul, which Seoul Shinmun Company began publishing in September 1968, especially gained an enormous amount of popularity as “Koreans’ favourite mass-circulating journal.”³³

Films in cinemas also became a regular part of urban Koreans’ cultural consumption in the 1960s. The filmmaking industry grew after the early 1960s, albeit under Park’s censorship, and more Koreans experienced watching motion pictures for the first time. The number of movie theaters throughout the country grew from 139 in 1957 to 344 in 1962 to 662 in 1970.³⁴ By 1966, two-thirds of urban adults were going to the movie theatre at least once a month and more than one third saw a movie at least once a week.³⁵ In 1969, residents of Seoul went to see a movie 25 times a year.³⁶

The growth in moviegoers meant an equal increase in the newsreel audience. Every movie in the theatre had to start with either *Taehan News*, which the Park government-produced, or *Liberty News* which the USIS (United States Information Service) created. The USIS had produced American propaganda films in Korea for Korean audiences since 1952 in the midst of the Korean War. With the increase in the number of movie theatres throughout the country in the 1960s, the audience of *Liberty News* also expanded. Koreans favoured *Liberty News* to *Taehan News* because

³³ Pak Sŏnga, “The Representation of Women Through *Sunday Seoul*,” [Sŏndei sŏul e nat’anan yŏsŏng ŭi yuhyŏng kwa p’yosang] *Han’guk’ak yŏn’gu* 22 (2010): 161.

³⁴ “While the Number of Movie Theatres Goes Up,” [kŭkchang-ŭn nŭrŏgagŏnman] *Tonga ilbo*, September 19, 1962: 5. “Policing Theatre Snack Vendors’ Profiteering,” [kŭkchang maejŏm p’ongni tansok] *Maeil kyŏngje*, May 6, 1970: 3. “National Tax Service Investigate Profiteering of Movie Theatre and Palaces Snack Vendors,” [kŭkchang kogung tŭng kunae maejŏm p’ongni t’ŭkpyŏl chosa kuksech’ŏng] *Chosŏn ilbo*, May 7, 1970, 4.

³⁵ “Korean Newsreel Survey – *Liberty News*,” March 22, 1967, RG 306, Research Projects, East Asia, 1964-73, Box 8, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, 4. Accessed through the National Archives of Korean History online database.
http://archive.history.go.kr/image/viewer.do?catalog_id=AUS001_16_00C0008_024&gid=AUS001_16_00C0008

³⁶ “Citizens Visit Theatre 15 Times a Year,” [Shimin kŭkchang ch’urim han hae 15 pŏn] *Tonga ilbo*, March 19, 1970. The Seoul Division of the Ministry of Information conducted the census. The number 25 is excluding the children under school age and the elderly.

they found *Liberty News* content more entertaining and educational than overtly propagandistic *Taehan News*.³⁷

These disparate forms of popular media all served to promote gendered narratives of money-making and wealth. As this dissertation examines, radio shows often turned to sexualized portrayals of impoverished women as a way to attract an audience, creating feminized and non-normative notions of the female working poor for the audience. By contrast, weekly magazines carried multi-year series on how certain male entrepreneurs raised themselves from poverty to achieve enormous success in their businesses. Almost all of the men who appeared in the pages were portrayed as masculine nationalistic citizens, and ideal husbands. The repeated coverage of these men created a sense of normalcy and confidence in accumulating wealth through one's own business regardless of the reality that was not so favourable to making good money via individual enterprises in the 1960s.³⁸

On the other hand, Korea's growing film industry attracted an audience with a cinematic experience of urbanization through the images of "modern" commodities, including cars and apartments, which were still new in Korean society, creating false images of economic progress and what Myungji Yang calls an "imagined" middle-class in Korea, especially urban centres.³⁹ Together with serialized novels in popular weekly magazines, films created fantasized ideas about urban spaces where men were primary providers and consumers of modern commodities. At a time when apartments or cars were not available to the majority of the Korean population, the cinematic portrayals of Seoul as a space where many men enjoyed providing their partners and family

³⁷ "News Film Should Play Its Proper Role," [Nysü yŏnghwa che kushil haeya hal tan'gye] *Tonga ilbo*, May 25, 1960: 4.

³⁸ "Only Lawyers Make Their Ends Meet," [Suji mannün kŏn pyŏnhosa ppun] *Maeil kyŏngje*, December 4, 1968: 1.

³⁹ Myungji Yang, *From Miracle to Mirage: The Making and Unmaking of the Korean Middle Class, 1960-2015* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 32-61.

members with modern goods instilled a sense of hope of living a successful life in Seoul. Finally, newsreels on Korean industrialization and urbanization played a crucial role in gendering the notions of “praise-worthy” economic activities, particularly by celebrating male businessmen and male industrial workers, while abnormalizing and downgrading the value of women wage workers in light industries.

Literature Review

Despite the rapid and expansive change in the Korean mediascape in the 1960s and the popular mass media’s role in shaping ideas underpinning capitalism, existing scholarship on this period has rarely focused on the history of the media. Korea’s high growth rates during the Park era led to much scholarly attention on Park’s capacity as a leader to industrialize the nation. Korea’s GNP leaped 452 percent from \$12.7 billion to \$57.4 billion (in 1980 prices) within two decades from 1962 to 1980.⁴⁰ The average GNP growth during the Park era was 8.5 percent per year, which made Korea the fastest growing economy in the world at that time.⁴¹

Many scholars have relied on the term “guided capitalism,” created by Park, and focused on state-centred, top-down initiatives to explain the state’s rapid economic growth since 1961.⁴² These scholars have emphasized the role of the Park regime in exercising power to work closely with large conglomerates (*chaebŏl*), incorporate the Korean economy into the US-led capitalist system, and mobilize the population for targeted industries.⁴³ However, these top-down

⁴⁰ Hyung-A Kim, 210. The export earnings increased from \$100 million in 1964 to \$10 billion in 1978.

⁴¹ Chalmers Johnson, “Political Institutions and Political Performance: The Government-business Relationship in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan,” in Frederic C. Deyo, ed., *The Political Economy of the New Asian Industrialization* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 136 and Alice H. Amsden, *Asia’s Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), 56 both cited in Hyung-A Kim, 210.

⁴² Hyung-A Kim, 72.

⁴³ Most notably, Chalmers Johnson, drawing from his analysis of Japan’s post-war economic development, argues that the economic growth of Korea is also because of the role of the state in forming elite state bureaucracy, allocating

perspectives that highlight Park's authoritarian policies as the main attribute of what Korea witnessed at the end of his rule have tended to overlook, or at best, subsume media under the much-studied topic of Park's use of dictatorial power.⁴⁴

The lack of academic attention to popular mass media and the assumption of mass media as part of the state apparatus are also a product of the disproportionately large attention paid to the so-called "Yushin era," roughly the second half of the Park regime's rule, from 1972 to 1979.⁴⁵ Under the Yushin constitution, even the mere act of criticizing the regime was a crime, and all forms of cultural production experienced severe political repression.⁴⁶ The paradox of severe political repression and economic success of the 1970s has attracted a wide range of scholarship focus on this period.⁴⁷

foreign capital, and investing on target industries. See Chalmers Johnson, "The Developmental State: Odyssey of a Concept" in ed. M. Woo-Cumings, *The Developmental State* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1999). Similarly, Peter Evans emphasizes the role of the effective state alliance with the local bourgeoisie, landlords, and foreign capital – what he calls "state and triple alliance" – in generating economic development. See Peter Evans, "Dependency and the State in Recent Korean Development: Some Comparisons with Latin American NICs" in ed. Kyong-Dong Kim, *Dependency Issues in Korean Development: Comparative Perspectives* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1987). Hyung-A Kim in *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee: Rapid Industrialization, 1961-79* points to presidential guidance as one of the key features explaining South Korea's rapid economic development during the Park era. Also, scholars of "developmental state theory" assert that it was mainly the state control of the capital, the market, and industry that led to rapid economic development in Korea. Well-known historian of Korea James Palais also argues that the state guidance was the primary cause of the successful economic development in South Korea by stating, "Consideration of factors that motivated individual entrepreneurs, such as the influence of Confucian principles in teaching, family upbringing, or childhood socialization that stimulated what Max Weber called the spirit of capitalism would have to take second place since individual initiative was secondary to state guidance." James Palais, "Confucianism and Economic Development in South Korea" in *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*, ed. Benjamin A. Elman, John B. Duncan and Herman Ooms (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 491.

⁴⁴ These studies include Kim Hūsuk, "The Politics of Radio: The Park Chung Hee Government's "Send Radio to the Rural Area Movement" in the 1960s," [Radio ūi chōngch'i: 1960 nyōndae pakchōnghŭi chōngbu ūi nongōch'on radio ponaegi undong] *Han'guk kwahaksa hak'oeji* 38, no.3 (2016): 425-451.

⁴⁵ In October 1972, Park declared emergency martial law, dissolved the National Assembly, banned all political activities, and proclaimed the Yushin constitution, all to grant him unprecedented dictatorial powers. Youngju Ryu, introduction to Youngju Ryu, ed., *Cultures of Yusin: South Korea in the 1970s* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 4.

⁴⁶ Ryu, 5.

⁴⁷ See, among others, Hyung-A. Kim, *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee* (London: Routledge, 2003); Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Hwasook Nam, *Building Ships, Building a Nation: Korea's Democratic Unionism under Park Chung Hee*

However, the assessment of the 1970s as the period when the most distinctive features of Park's "developmental dictatorship" took place overshadows the cultural and social dimensions of the 1960s. Won Kim suggests that Park's censorship and control in the 1970s demanded "popular desires and feelings be replaced with what is Korean and national even in the domains of youth culture, hostess movies, and TV dramas."⁴⁸ But even before the era of "hostess movies and TV dramas," radio programs, weekly magazines, and newsreels were newly creating and circulating gendered ideas about money, industrialization, and urbanization, which set a backdrop to the popularization of profit-seeking, capital accumulation, and competition as everyday practices throughout the 1970s and onwards. Korea in the 1970s cannot be understood without the gendered analysis of the popular mass media in the 1960s.

The scholarship on the Park era in the 1970s which uses gender as a category of historical analysis helps us understand Koreans' everyday lives and their gendered experiences, but still does not engage popular mass media in its analysis. Several works on Korean men and women's labour struggles provide a window to their firsthand experiences as "industrial soldiers" under Park's industrialization policies.⁴⁹ These studies commonly touch upon the gendered norms that shaped the workers' identities, but do not ask how those ideas were produced or reinforced. For example, Seung-kyung Kim examines young female factory workers who saw their ambivalent position coming from being part of both the industrial workforce and the conventional family structure but does not ask why traditional gender norms still dominated and confined these women's

(Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); Youngju Ryu, ed., *Cultures of Yusin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018).

⁴⁸ Won Kim, 47.

⁴⁹ See, among others, Seung-Kyung Kim, *Class Struggle or Family Struggle? The Lives of Women Factory Workers in South Korea* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Hwasook Nam, *Building Ships, Building a Nation*; Hwasook Nam, *Women in the Sky: Gender and Labor in the Making of Modern Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021).

experiences even when their sphere of activity expanded beyond the domestic sphere. Why were traditional gender norms kept intact when the society went through so much transformation? Did the popular mass media that factory workers started to consume as a source of entertainment reinforce traditional gendered norms? Similarly, Hwasook Nam's work on shipbuilding industry workers' union activism suggests that the male workers utilized the rhetoric of a male breadwinner in their fight against the management and the state. Why was providing a "decent living for their families" a central part of their masculine identity and patriarchal ideal?⁵⁰

In trying to answer these questions, Seungsook Moon's work suggests that the Park government created "gendered citizens" of male breadwinners and female biological producers through its top-down gendered mobilization of the population. According to Moon, men were mobilized as soldiers and heavy and chemical industry workers, or what Park called "industrial soldiers," through the state-led systems of conscription and vocational training that only targeted men.⁵¹ Women, on the other hand, were educated on household management and reproduction, which marginalized them in the political economic system and relegated them to be biological reproducers.⁵² While Moon's analysis of the *process* whereby Koreans became gendered citizens sheds light on how gendered norms were produced during the Park era, her study primarily looks at the Park regime as the producer, leaving other possible channels, such as popular media, unexplored.

⁵⁰ Nam, *Building Ships, Building a Nation*, 104. Nam argues that the shipyard workers' demand for "living wages" and equality between workers and management during the Park Chung Hee era was ultimately "a claim about their manhood as dignified heads of households."

⁵¹ Seungsook Moon, "Mobilized to be Martial and Productive," in *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 44-67.

⁵² Ibid., "Chapter Three: Marginalized in Production and Mobilized to be Domestic," 68-94.

Following the emphasis in gender studies on the dynamic production of gender norms by various interest groups,⁵³ this dissertation shows that gendered ideas were not static, but always changing as the popular mass media producers, with their profit-oriented goals, were actively producing various gender norms according to the always changing audience's demand and responses. For example, in the early 1960s when the Korean public opposed normalizing their relationship with Japan, the image of a masculine and capable man in popular print media was the one who motivated himself to succeed in business with his strong anti-Japanese sentiment. But in the late 1960s when Korea was receiving Japanese compensation after the normalization treaty was signed in 1965, the anti-Japanese rhetoric was not as popular as before, so it was not used to depict the popular image of a successful businessman. Rather, the normative man was the one who rationalized his "irrational" sentiment and utilized the current political economy to his benefit.

The need to look at popular media becomes more evident as Moon's top-down approach focuses on specific men and women, leaving out the general male and female population. Moon makes a generalized statement claiming that the "gendered paths of mobilization shaped the ways in which women and men obtained new political subjectivity as citizens."⁵⁴ However, the "citizens" do not include those who were not part of the military or skilled classes, for example, farmers, day labourers, or those who ran small businesses.

⁵³ These studies include William E. French, "Prostitutes and Guardian Angels: Women, Work, and the Family in Porfirian Mexico" in *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 72, no.4 (1992); Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi, eds. *Dangerous Women: Gender & Korean Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Mary Kay Vaughan, "Modernizing Patriarchy: State Policies, Rural Households, and Women in Mexico, 1930–1940" in *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Bryan C. Rindfleisch, "What it Means to Be a Man": Contested Masculinity in the Early Republic and Antebellum America." *History Compass* 10, no. 11 (2012); Nadina L. Anderson, "To Provide and Protect: Gendering Money in Ukrainian Households" in *Gender and Society* 31, no.3 (2017).

⁵⁴ Seungsook Moon, 7.

A wide range of Koreans, not just soldiers and industrial workers, but also housewives, students, small business owners, and farmers were consuming popular mass media content as a source of information and entertainment in the 1960s. A turn to media can move us closer to the everyday lives of the so-called “ordinary” Koreans. This study focused on sources that reveal the popular attitudes of ordinary Koreans towards mass media content. For example, editors of *Sunday Seoul*, the *Weekly Hankook*, and *Weekly Woman* assumed their average readers to be salarymen, university students, and housewives, confirming the wide reach of the weeklies to the general Korean public.⁵⁵ The letters to the editor also evince that the readership stretched to remote areas throughout the country.⁵⁶ Similarly, a farmer’s diary entry that recorded his listening habits supports the understanding that Koreans in rural areas listened to radio as a pastime activity.⁵⁷ These “ordinary” Koreans, although they were not direct beneficiaries of Park’s vocational training, consumed gendered messages about money-making in the media. The study of the popular mass media is therefore crucial in understanding how a broader Korean population perceived ideas that underpinned capitalism.

Likewise, this study’s turn to media also shows the existence of multiple masculinities in modern Korea, supporting the recent emphasis in gender studies on considering a “whole range of practices of manhood” to study masculinity.⁵⁸ While Moon seems to see the militarized masculinity as *the* masculinity in modern Korea, this study sees it as one of many masculinities

⁵⁵ Yi Wŏnjae and others, “Pleadings of the Weekly Magazine Editors,” [Chuganji p’yŏnjipcha ŭi pyŏn] *Shinmun kwa pangsong* 29 (1969): 92-93.

⁵⁶ For example, *Sunday Seoul* carried “Letters to the Editor” section every week which included information of the senders’ place of living. The areas where readers sent the letters included remote areas in the countryside, for example, a village in Gangwon Province.

⁵⁷ See footnote 28.

⁵⁸ Bryan C. Rindfleisch, “What it Means to Be a Man”: Contested Masculinity in the Early Republic and Antebellum America,” *History Compass* 10, no. 11 (2012): 853. He argues that men produced distinctive masculinities according to their different socioeconomic standing, race, and place of living.

formed during the Park period. As this study will show, in addition to the “militarized masculinity,” a “businessman masculinity” was being formed and popularized across various media platforms during the 1960s, and even within the businessman masculinity, attributes differed according to what the producers deemed most attractive to the consumers. The constantly changing masculinities that media producers and audience together created and circulated shatters the assumption of a single, fixed, and hegemonic masculinity. Similarly, the use of media supports recent development in intersectionality studies that stresses fluid gendered notions and calls for the need to look at individuals’ experiences at the intersections of diverse factors, including class.⁵⁹ As the following chapters will show, the notions of femininity varied according to the dynamics of women’s class, marital status, and age. Such findings confirm the constantly changing nature of gendered norms in 1960s Korea.

Lauren Berlant’s concept of the “intimate public sphere” is applicable to the exponential growth of popular mass media in South Korea in the 1960s.⁶⁰ Media not only let people know that they belonged to the same “imagined communities” as Benedict Anderson described, but also made the audience feel the affective and intimate ties with their fellow consumers.⁶¹ Berlant explored the emergence of an affective and intimate space in the contemporary US, which was made possible through women’s books, television shows, and films where women who had similar values and concerns symbolically gathered together to share their grievances and complaints. In

⁵⁹ These studies include Anna Krylova, “Gender Binary and the Limits of Poststructuralist Method,” *Gender & History* 28, no.2 (2016); Rita Kaur Dhamoon, “Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality,” *Political Research Quarterly* 64, no.1 (2011); Sumi Cho, Kimerle Williams Crenshaw and Leslie McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis,” *Signs* 38, no.4 (2013); Veronica Sanz, “No Way out of the Binary: A Critical History of the Scientific Production of Sex,” *Signs* 43, no.1 (2017).

⁶⁰ Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Lauren Berlant, *Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2012).

⁶¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 1991).

this sphere, issues discussed were intimate and sentimental matters that were previously considered inappropriate of public discussion and thought to have best remained in the private sphere.⁶² The vision of an intimate, private, family life as the core context of national culture and politics, or “privatization of citizenship” in Berlant’s words, adds an element of popular mass media in South Korea which is missing in Moon’s analysis of how the Park government created gendered citizenship.⁶³

The discussion of “popular mass culture” and the “intimate public sphere” becomes meaningful especially after the 1960s because there were limited channels of public discourse for “ordinary” citizens prior to that decade. Newspapers, which were the most dominant mass medium until the late 1950s, had not frequently covered topics that were thought to be intimate, nor invited ordinary readers to write about their personal lives. However, an “intimate public sphere” developed alongside the growing number of weekly magazines and radio programs that sought to profit by turning readers and listeners into protagonists and made their lives into consumable content. The audience was rapidly invited to participate in this sphere that for the first time created a sense of private and intimate experience in what was thought to be a national and public political sphere.

This perspective of seeing the mass media of the 1960s as creating the “intimate public sphere” that marked the beginning of Korea’s first popular and mass culture allows us to move

⁶² Berlant, “Introduction: The Intimate Public Sphere,” in *Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2012), 5. Berlant argues that in contrast to how Habermas portrays the intimate sphere as a domestic sphere where a person creates a “sense of their own private uniqueness, a sense of self which became a sense of citizenship only when it was abstracted and alienated in the nondomestic public sphere of liberal capitalist culture,” the contemporary intimate public sphere in the US renders citizenship as a “condition of social membership produced by personal acts and values, especially acts originating in or directed toward the family sphere.” In contrast to face-to-face communication in a confined physical space, which Habermas focused, Berlant looks at various types of media such as books, television shows, and films. She also refers to audience sources such as letters to the editor.

⁶³ Berlant, *The Female Complaint* 3.

away from the common assumption of Park's one-way use of the mass media as a propagandistic channel. Private radio broadcasting companies and publishers worked with a profit-seeking logic within the space negotiated by the Park regime's censorship. Surely, the popular mass media promoted the value of capitalism and hard work, but not necessarily in the way the Park government did or for the purpose of assisting Park's policies. For example, mass media producers created content that encouraged Korean men to be incorporated in the capitalist system by emphasizing romantic images attached to wealth while the Park government highlighted the nationalist character in its rationalization of money-making.

The Intersections of Media, Gender, and Capitalism

This dissertation contributes not only to our understanding of the Park Chung Hee era in Korea, but to broader questions of the relationship among capitalism, gender, and media. Challenging the assumption that all societies were at different stages on a linear progression towards a "pure" and "western" capitalism, scholars of capitalism, including Harry Harootunian, have shown that capitalism in different geographies and historical periods develops uniquely by absorbing and incorporating specific material and cultural forms of the past.⁶⁴ Similar efforts to move away from Western-centric understandings of capitalism towards everyday experiences have influenced the way scholars understood what Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer called the "culture industry" of mass media, entertainment, and advertising.⁶⁵ Challenging the rather top-down reading of the Frankfurt School's emphasis on the role of ideology and culture in capitalism, recent developments

⁶⁴ Harry Harootunian, *Marx after Marx: History and Time in the Expansion of Capitalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

⁶⁵ Building upon a foundation laid by Antonio Gramsci and his concept of hegemony, the Frankfurt School famously pioneered the study of the role of ideology and culture in capitalism. The Frankfurt School scholars argued that capitalist hegemony was achieved not only through coercive force, but through the co-option, seduction, and pacification of workers by the "culture industry."

in cultural and anthropological studies have emphasized capitalism as a “social practice” and a “form of life.”⁶⁶ This approach presumes that “all facets of life are inherently interwoven, bypassing distinctions between discourse, bodies, language, and materiality” and enables scholars to incorporate diverse aspects of life to “investigate the effects of capitalism holistically and at a range of scales.”⁶⁷ The use of gender as a category of historical analysis has also shown how specific cultural and everyday practices of individuals are woven into what we understand as “global capitalism.”⁶⁸ But even these studies have not fully explored various facets of the popular mass media, at the levels of both content and audience, as elements that are central to how individuals shape and experience capitalism on a daily basis. This project examines everyday mediascape as an integral part of life and a window to cultural and social experiences of capitalist transformation.

This dissertation’s analysis of the multi-media environment also speaks broadly about the need in media history to examine a wide range of popular mass media as consumers would have experienced it. Media scholars have so far theorized what constituted mass communications and traced how technological innovations in the “West” produced new knowledge about the “Other.”⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Alyson Cole and Estelle Ferrarese, “How capitalism forms our lives,” *Journal for Cultural Research* 22, no.2 (2018): 105-112.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 105.

⁶⁸ See, among others, Nadina L. Anderson, “To Provide and to Protect: Gendering Money in Ukrainian Households” in *Gender and Society* 31, no. 3 (2017): 359–382; Paula A. de la Cruz-Fernández, *Gendered Capitalism Sewing Machines and Multinational Business in Spain and Mexico, 1850-1940* (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2021).

⁶⁹ Oftentimes the “Other” was the colonized other. For example, various German colonial institutions created the image of the colonial “other” in print commercials and in public exhibitions. See David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011) and John Philip Short, *Magic Lantern Empire: Colonialism and Society in Germany* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2016). Both Ciarlo and Short focus on the visual image of the “other” created by commercial interests and disseminated widely through print media in the German Empire at the beginning of the 20th century. Ciarlo argues that the image of the uncivilized “other” itself “became a commodity— imaged, packaged, circulated, marketed, and sold to a consuming public on a massive scale” (170). Short argues that the fascination with the exotic, enthusiasm for colonies, and a sense of authority and modernity in the German Empire coincided with advances in print capitalism and commercial mass culture.

These studies generally focus on one medium, such as newspaper or radio, without examining the dynamics of the multi-media environment that surrounded the everyday experiences of capitalist transformations.⁷⁰ This project investigates the multi-media environment in which Koreans lived, understanding how these different media of radio, print, and film interacted to create a gendered rationalization by Korean men and women of money-making.

In addition, this study brings the audience reception to the fore by engaging with “popular” mass media. There has been a general lack of historical studies on “popular” mass media, let alone a clear distinction between mass media and *popular* mass media. A medium can be mass-circulating, but not necessarily popular.⁷¹ Still, the discussion of media has tended to assume the popularity of mass media content and portrayed the audience as passive recipients of the message transmitted by the political and economic interests of media elites.⁷² As James Carey suggests, our tendency to see “each new advance in communications technology as an opportunity for politics and economics” has made us devote our understanding of media as matters of “government and trade.”⁷³ Similar to the cultural turn in the history of capitalism, Carey suggests a cultural analysis of the content of mass communication. The shift of focus from the political economy to media

⁷⁰ These works include Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), Douglas B. Craig, *Fireside Politics: Radio and Political Culture in the United States, 1920-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), Bernhard Fulda, *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), and Stephen Lovell, *Russia in the Microphone Age: A History of Soviet Radio 1919-1970* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁷¹ For example, both US-produced and the Korean government-produced newsreels were mass-circulating to the Korean public in the 1960s, but only US-produced newsreels were popular.

⁷² Many scholars have argued that political interests made media a “state property” for propaganda and political campaigns. These scholars include Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies*, Douglas B. Craig, *Fireside Politics*, Barak Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), Bernhard Fulda, *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic*, Fabian Schäfer, *Public Opinion, Propaganda, Ideology: Theories on the Press and Its Social Function in Interwar Japan, 1918-1937* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), Stephen Lovell, *Russia in the Microphone Age: A History of Soviet Radio, 1919-1970* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁷³ James Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 27. This focus on the political economy is also because of the “paternalistic idea that political and economic elites had to act as caretakers of the masses’ cultural and educational needs.” See Heidi J. S. Tworek, “The Savior of the Nation? Regulating Radio in the Interwar Period,” *Journal of Policy History* 27, no. 3 (2015).

content and the audience allows us to analyze popular mass media sources. The effort to identify content and forms of media that the Korean population actually widely consumed contributes to the cultural understanding of media and allows us to explore diverse experiences of audiences.

The *popular* mass media sources this dissertation examines include radio program transcripts, weekly magazines, newsreels and films. I examine not just the content of the popular media, but also its producers and the audience. To understand the producers' side of popular media, I use memoirs and interview transcripts of radio and film producers and editors of weekly magazines. To examine how the audience actually interacted with popular media content, I explore letters to the editor that the readers sent to magazines and audience surveys that the US and the Korean government conducted.

The following chapters examine gendered messages of wealth in popular mass media when the medium was at its peak popularity. Radio first became the most popular and accessible medium in the early to mid-1960s, circulating feminized notions of poverty (Chapter One). With the publication of the *Weekly Hankook* in 1964, the print media delved into stories of self-made businessmen, masculinizing the notions of money-making by running one's own business (Chapter Two). Concurrently, the film industry grew in the mid-to-late 1960s, exposing the Korean audience to newsreels in cinema. The newsreels visualized male-centred industrialization by celebrating male-dominant heavy and chemical industries, while portraying women-dominant light industries as less important (Chapter Three). The "weekly magazine boom" continued well into the late 1960s, with multiple weeklies launched, including *Sunday Seoul*, which gained immense popularity. Serialized novels in weekly magazines and commercial films instilled a false image of luxurious lives in Seoul residing in apartments and driving cars in the late 1960s and in the early 1970s. Such images portrayed men as normative consumers and providers of the modern commodities (Chapter

Four). In contrast to the early 1960s when popular mass media made profit off stories about impoverished Koreans, in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, media content about courtship gained popularity. Another multi-year series on self-made businessmen and other series on “ideal” housewives in weekly magazines depicted the ideal husband to be the wealthy businessman, while confining the ideal housewife to the domestic sphere (Chapter Five). By bringing together money, masculinity, and media, this dissertation paints a complex and nuanced picture of how individual wealth became a societal value in Korea in the 1960s and the early 1970s.

Chapter 1: Commercializing the Poor, 1963-1965

The Radio Era

The first few years following Park Chung Hee's seizure of power by a military coup in 1961 marked the beginning of commercial radio broadcasting in South Korea. State initiatives to establish a tightly connected broadcasting network throughout the country hit a responsive chord with media entrepreneurs, mostly newspaper company owners, who aspired to make profit from the booming popularity of radio. This chapter examines how popular radio programs of the 1960s gendered poverty by focusing on young unmarried women and portraying them in a sexualized way. The portrayal of impoverished women as objects of both sympathy and sexual curiosity did more than attract the audience and bring revenues to the company – such portrayals obfuscated the real causes of their poverty and simultaneously valorized the concept of the male breadwinner. Rapid capitalist industrialization and urbanization under Park Chung Hee's authoritarian rule exacerbated the problems of precarity, exploitation, and sexual violence for young women, and at the same time commodified their sufferings.

With the simultaneous growth of radio production and commercial broadcasting, radio became the most accessible and popular form of media and the dominant source of information and entertainment in South Korea in the 1960s.¹ Nevertheless, the few existing studies on radio are limited to topics, such as the development of radio in relation to state initiatives, the audience's

¹ Sociologist Yi Mankap's study of rural South Korean society in the 1960s also showed that in contrast to 1958 when 68% of the randomly chosen household respondents had said they received information from the village leader, in 1969, 72% of the respondents said radio was their main source of information. Yi Mankap. *Structure and Transformation of the Korean Rural Society* [Han'guk nongch'on sahoe ūi kujo wa pyŏnhwa] (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1973), 320. In 1958, 15% of the respondents had said radio was their main source of information. In 1969, only 6.3% of the respondents said their main source of information was newspaper. As a result of a collective effort from the government and the private sector to domestically produce radios and disseminate them to a wider public, the rate of radio possession per thousand South Koreans increased drastically from 16.82 in 1960 to 97.03 in 1970. Kim Yŏnghŭi, 145.

listening habits, and the “home drama genre.”² Most of these studies do not employ gender as a category of analysis and regard sexualized portrayals of women as merely a tactic for attracting an audience. As this chapter will show, sexualized portrayals of young, impoverished women were created and reproduced in a specific historical context when even a media company that heralded democratic journalism against the authoritarian government created content that reinforced the ideas of female reproductive bodies and male breadwinners, which the Park Chung Hee government envisioned.³

Furthermore, radio programs that invited impoverished South Koreans as guests provide a unique source of information on their lives in their own voices. Studies on women in sex and sexualized industries have focused on the larger political and economic context which created the industry where women’s sexuality was commodified. Jin-kyung Lee’s work, for example, examines how the Park Chung Hee government promoted the growth of the sexualized service and sex work industries in the 1960s, leading to what she calls, “proletarianization of sexuality.”⁴ However, as she acknowledges, these studies lack the portrayal of the lived experiences because

² Chu Ch'angyun, “The Radio Culture Formation in the 1960s,” [1960 nyŏn chŏnhu radio munhwa ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng] in Han'guk pangsong hakhoe ed., *A Socio-cultural History of Korean Broadcasting from the Colonial Period to the 1980s* [Han'guk pangsong-ŭi sahoe munhwasa: Ilche kangjŏmgi put'ŏ 1980 nyŏndae kkaji] (P'aju: Hanul ak'ademi, 2011); Mun Sŏnyŏng, “The Formation and Characteristics of 1960s Radio Home Drama,” [1960 nyŏndae radio hom tŭrama ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chakp'um t'ŭksŏng] *Han'guk kŭk yesul yŏn'gu* 33, no.1 (2011): 225-254; Kim Hŭisuk, “The Politics of Radio: The Park Chung Hee Government’s “Send Radio to Rural Areas Campaign” in the 1960s” [Radio ŭi chŏngch'i: 1960 nyŏndae pakchŏnghŭi chŏngbu ŭi nong ŏch'on radio ponaegi undong], *Han'guk kwahak sahak hoeji* 38, no. 3 (2016): 425-450.

³ Dong-a Broadcasting System (DBS), which this study examines in depth, received strict censorship from the Park Chung Hee government as the company grew more popular than the state-run broadcasting services, KBS, and created content that was not entirely compliant with government propaganda. For example, on June 4, 1964, some DBS producers and associated figures of the program called the “Mockingbird” were arrested for supposedly promoting anti-government sentiment by describing the Park administration’s decision to normalize the relations with Japan in a negative way. As a measure to intervene, the Park administration frequently gave warnings to DBS, and during the period of 1963 -1968 DBS received most penalty warnings among all the commercial broadcasting companies for violating the “Code of Ethics.” Kongpopu [Ministry of Information], “Yunli kyuchŏng chŏch'ok kŏnsu nugye, 1963-1968.”

⁴ Jin-kyung Lee, *Service Economies: Militarism, Sex work, and Migrant Labor in South Korea*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 89.

of the scarcity of documented voices of those women. In this light, it is even more crucial to examine radio programs that transmitted the voices of women in the sex and sexualized industries. In addition, audience sources, such as letters to the editor, help us better understand what kind of popular media messages resonated with the listeners. By utilizing previously untapped sources of radio transcripts, memoirs of producers and scriptwriters, and audience sources, this chapter reveals how private media companies produced and circulated gendered ideas about capitalism in the early 1960s in South Korea under Park Chung Hee's dictatorship.

“Charity Drama: This Poor Person!”

In the 1960s, many South Koreans remained impoverished despite a widely held perception of this period as successfully going through an economic “take-off”, with expanding opportunities for people to earn money.⁵ Newspapers and intellectual magazines were replete with anecdotes about the everyday struggles of indigent South Koreans. Many from rural areas, especially young women, migrated to Seoul in search of opportunities to make a living. These women faced a lack of job availability and often suffered from discriminatory hiring processes, including sexually predatory situations. Some of them resorted to the sexualized service industry, working as hostesses, sex workers, and *yanggongju* (sex workers in U.S. military bases).⁶

The newly founded radio companies sometimes turned to these marginalized women as a source material for their programs. Dong-a Broadcasting System (DBS), established in 1963,

⁵ American economist Walt Rostow introduced the term, “take-off,” to the Korean policy makers in the late 1950s. Rostow envisioned the “take-off” stage of modernization to be centered on investment in infrastructure, manufacturing, export, and urbanization. See Steven Hugh Lee, “Development without Democracy.” Jung-en Woo argues that South Korea went through the “takeoff” stage in the 1960s successfully in large part because of Japanese investment. See Jung-en Woo, *Race to the Swift: State and Finance in Korean Industrialization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

⁶ Jin-kyung Lee, 79-123.

adopted such a strategy in one of its initial programs, “Charity Drama: This Poor Person!” (*Chasŏn tŭrama: i saram ŭl!* hereafter, “This Poor Person!”) which ran for three and a half years and became one of the most popular prime time shows across multiple radio channels in the 1960s.⁷ As the title suggests, the program was a mixture of a charity show and drama. The producers advertised the program as serving the humanitarian purpose of helping impoverished South Koreans during a time of collective hardship, and each show ended with the host’s plea to the listeners to help the guests.⁸

On the evening of Sunday, May 5, 1963, a week after Dong-a Broadcasting System (DBS) was established, the first episode of “This Poor Person!” was aired on radio.⁹ The host of the show, announcer Kim Chuhwan, called for the audience’s participation in achieving the program’s goal of helping the poor:

“There are so many tragedies around us. Right near us are our neighbors, brothers, and sisters who are struggling to survive. Their lives vanish without us knowing because we pretend that we do not hear or see them. This program’s purpose is to find those people suffering from the underprivileged condition, share their sadness together, and promise the hope of a better future. Only you listeners’ fraternal love and active support can make this program’s objective come true.”¹⁰

During the show the host talked with the guests about their current situation and past journeys, followed by melodramatic narration of their stories. At the end of the show, the host asked the

⁷ According to the book, *I saram-ŭl*, which compiled the first forty-nine broadcasted shows, thirty-one were about women, in contrast to the fifteen stories about male guests. The rest was about groups of individuals, including a group of elementary students who lost their lives in an accident during the field trip. The book was published in December 1964.

⁸ The mother company of DBS, *Tonga ilbo*, frequently included advertisements for the show, highlighting its altruistic purpose. For example, on October 10, 1963, *Tonga ilbo* wrote about the popularity of “This Poor Person!”, describing the show as “building a humanitarian bridge” (*injŏng ŭi kagyo*).

⁹ The first six shows had been aired at 9:30 P.M. on Sundays for thirty minutes, but since June 13, 1963, the time changed to 8:30 P.M. and then to 8:25 P.M. on Thursdays.

¹⁰ “Mother’s Love Looking for Light” [Pit ŭl ch’annŭn mojŏng], *Charity Drama: This Poor Person!* [Chasŏn drama isaramŭl!] Dong-a Broadcasting System (DBS), produced by An P’yŏngsŏn, written by Kip’al Kim, aired May 5, 1963, in broadcast syndication: Radio. Accessed through the DBS online archive. <http://dbs.donga.com>.

audience to help the guest by directly calling or writing the staff of the show. The producer's initial doubts about the success of the program were pleasantly put aside by hundreds of phone calls from the listeners inquiring about possible ways to support the guests. Over the next three and a half years, many South Korean listeners helped the guests in various ways, donating money and household goods, offering jobs, and even adopting the young guests without family members or relatives. Every month hundreds of listeners also called the company to be chosen as the next "poor persons," hoping that they would also receive a kind support they heard on radio and read on print media.¹¹ The weekly introduction of "our unprivileged neighbours" gained so much popularity that the first forty-nine broadcasted stories were published into a monograph under the name, "This Poor Person!" (*I saram ūl!*) in December 1964. The overwhelming amount of attention from the audience suggested that the listeners were attracted to the media content that introduced fellow citizens' hardships and provided ways to help those impoverished guests.

The producer and scriptwriter remembered the beginning of the program to have been fortuitous. Producer An P'yöngsön (b. 1936) was just a junior producer with no previous experience and only twenty-eight years old when he became the sole producer of the show. When he was put in charge as the main producer, he thought of hiring Kim Kip'al (1937-1991), a promising scriptwriter who had just gained fame for winning the Korean Broadcasting System radio serial script competition in 1960.¹² Kim reminisced that he was thrown into the job by An's

¹¹ "Humanistic Bridge: DBS This Poor Person! Gains More Popularity," [Injōng ūi kagyo: DBS chasōn'gük 'i saram ūl' kalsurok in'gi] *Tonga ilbo*, October 10, 1963.

¹² An P'yöngsön, "Theater Arts Production Association in the Earlier Period and Joining DBS" [Ch'ogi chejakkük'oe wa tonga pangsong ipsa], interview transcript, interviewed by Yi Yōngmi, July 24, 2018, transcribed by Paek Tusan, in *Modern Korean Arts History Oral History Collection* [Han'guk kŭnhyōndae yesulsa kusul ch'aerok yōn'gu shirijŭ] (Seoul: Korean Arts Council, 2018), 166. Accessed through the Arts Council Korea (ARCO) online database. <https://archive.arko.or.kr/search/0016/000000808202>.

last-minute request.¹³ He was also in his twenties when hired without much prior experience as a scriptwriter. When An and Kim met, An explained that the program had been just dropped onto him, and he wanted to do something that would help poor people.¹⁴

Although both An and Kim did not remember how they came up with the ideas of the program in their memoirs and interviews, their decision to create what they called a “semi-documentary”, an autobiographical documentary that incorporated melodramatic aspects reflected the budding trend in radio programs of the 1960s. According to Chu Ch'angyun, many popular programs in the early years of Korean broadcasting were autobiographical dramas in which listeners sent their own stories and the scriptwriters turned them into dramas.¹⁵ According to Chu, “Life Story Carrier (*Insaeng yŏngmach'a*)” which had aired on KBS from November 1954 to 1962 was the first autobiographical drama that led to many more in the upcoming years.¹⁶ Chu suggests that the discursive mechanisms of incorporating ordinary listeners’ lives into the radio programs allowed them to feel intimacy as if they were having personal encounters with the drama characters.¹⁷ Mun Sŏnyŏng and Yun Kŭmsŏn’s studies on radio programs of the 1960s-1970s also suggest the popularity of the documentary genre which employed melodrama.¹⁸ Therefore, even though both An and Kim were thrown into the job at the last-minute, it is likely that they knew

¹³ Kim Kip'al, “Eighteen Years with DBS” [DBS wa hamkke han 18nyŏn], in *the History of Dong-a Broadcasting Company* [*Tonga pangsongsa*] eds. *Tonga bangsongsa p'yŏnch'a nwiwŏnhoe* (Seoul: *Tonga pangsongsa*, 1990), 422.

¹⁴ An, 166.

¹⁵ Chu, 272.

¹⁶ Chu, 274. While Chu does not address the actual period of the program, according to newspaper articles, the first episode was aired in November 1954 and the last episode under the same title was broadcasted in August 1962. On August 21, 1962, the program changed its title to “The Theater of Life” but continued its genre as autobiographical drama. “Life Documentary Emerges,” [*Insaeng kŭkchang tŭngjang*] *Tonga ilbo*, August 21, 1962.

¹⁷ Chu, 272.

¹⁸ Yun Kŭmsŏn, “A Study on Radio Listening Tendency and Radio Drama’s Current Situation: Mainly from the 1950s to the Early 1970s,” [Pangsong ch'ŏngch'wi kyŏnghyanggwa radio tŭrama hyŏnhwang: 1950 -1970 nyŏndae ch'ogirŭl chungshimŭro] *Kugŏ kyoyuk yŏn'gu* 50, no.1 (2012): 549-88; Mun, “The Formation and Characteristics of 1960s Radio Home Drama.”

that the program would be a mixture of documentary, autobiography, and melodrama, which were all popular genres of radio programs in the early 1960s.

The decision to exclusively focus on impoverished South Koreans, however, made the program the first of its kind.¹⁹ When the broadcasted stories were published as a book in December 1964, DBS director Kim Sangki wrote the preface, praising the program's success and its distinctive position in commercial broadcasting that was largely preoccupied with what he called "vulgar and entertainment-only" content.²⁰ He stated that "This Poor Person!" created an atmosphere of kindness, and contributed to the efforts to eradicate poverty in a country where indigence seemed to be the deciding national trait.²¹

Kim Sangki's point about the prevalence of poverty throughout the country was not an exaggeration. South Korean society in the early 1960s witnessed the suffering of people whom Kim Kip'al remembered as the "absolute poverty class."²² Millions of South Koreans who migrated to urban places like Seoul had to face the challenges of unemployment, food shortages, and lack of housing. Newspapers regularly covered the stories of suicides by poor urbanites, and intellectuals frequently wrote about this collective hardship that crumpled the "beauty of humanity."²³ Many in Seoul lived under the poverty line, and it was easy to see orphans and vagrants begging for money on the street.²⁴ A 1963 December *Kyŏngnyang shinmun* (*Kyŏngnyang*

¹⁹ Chu Ch'angyun and Yun Kŭmsŏn's works also acknowledge that the focus on the poor was what separated "This Poor Person!" from other radio dramas during this period.

²⁰ Kim Sangki, preface to An P'yŏngsŏn and Kim Kip'al *This Poor Person!* [I saram ūl!] (Seoul: Sarangsa, 1964), 4.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Kim Kip'al, 422.

²³ Charles R. Kim, *Youth for Nation: Culture and Protest in Cold War South Korea* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), 34.

²⁴ "Orphans in Seoul Reach 400," [Sŏul shinae kŭnŭl ūi koa ch'ŏn 400 myŏng] *Tonga ilbo*, January 25, 1962. The city estimated that there were around 11,000 orphans in 121 orphanages, plus 1,400 orphans who were not registered in any established orphanage in Seoul.

Daily) special report, “How Poor Are We?” assessed Park’s first three-year economic policies to get rid of famine and poverty as a failure.²⁵ Newspapers regularly reported on the people who committed suicide as the last resort to escape the distress.²⁶ These impoverished South Koreans, some of whom were on the verge of taking their own lives, emerged as accessible source material for “This Poor Person!” The producer and scriptwriter became confident with the decision to focus on the poor as the first show gained an unexpectedly huge amount of attention.

As the popularity of the program grew, the coverage of impoverished South Koreans not only ensured a high audience rating, but also generated a philanthropic image for DBS. At the beginning of the program, the high audience rating was what guaranteed scriptwriter Kim Kip'al's “quite good” script fee.²⁷ As other media platforms portrayed “This Poor Person!” in a positive light by detailing the support the guests received from the audience, the reputation of “This Poor Person!” as a benevolent program gradually followed.²⁸ Those who donated money or helped the guests in other ways were portrayed as philanthropists by the media, adding a sense of fulfillment and moral superiority to those who reached out to South Koreans in need. DBS and *Tonga ilbo* continued the “commodifying of philanthropy” by disseminating more stories about heroic individuals who assisted the impoverished guests.²⁹ DBS also pooled the charity money that individual listeners and organizations sent and managed a fund named after the company. DBS

²⁵ “How Poor Are We,” [Uri nŭn ōlmana kanan han'ga] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, December 10, 1963. The article highlighted the world GDP per capita graph that showed a visually striking contrast between the U.S. that led the chart with the highest per capita income of 2,250 dollars and South Korea at the very end with only 78 dollars.

²⁶ “Depressing News,” [Uul han semo] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, December 23, 1963. In just two days in December 1963, there were ten cases of attempted suicides in Seoul which mainly occurred because of economic hardships and half of those incidents led to death.

²⁷ Kim Kip'al, 422.

²⁸ *Tonga ilbo*, the mother company of DBS, did most coverage of the program.

²⁹ David Jefferess, “For Sale – Peace of Mind: (Neo-) Colonial Discourse and the Commodification of Third World Poverty in World Vision’s ‘Telethons’,” *Critical Arts* 16, no. 1 (2002): 1-21.

then used the fund for charitable acts, making the company itself a philanthropist and promoting an altruistic image to the public.³⁰

As the show began to attract public attention for its “philanthropic” efforts, many companies sought to sponsor the program to make their own image as benevolent as “This Poor Person!” For example, Mugunghwa Soap Company used the program to resuscitate its image tainted from a corruption scandal. Established in 1947, the company had encountered its biggest challenge in March 1964 when the government announced that the company had been receiving an unfair amount of the foreign direct investment and suspended the investment for a month. The company, in an urgent attempt to save its reputation, appealed to the public through a “letter of explanation” in major newspapers as well as radio advertising. Around this time the company became the sole sponsor of “This Poor Person!” At the beginning of the show, the host announced Mugunghwa Soap Company’s sponsorship of the program.³¹ This way, companies benefited from having their names publicized in association with “This Poor Person!” in their attempt to promote a positive image. Therefore, from the point of DBS, commercializing the poor not only attracted an audience, but also brought revenues from advertising.

Sexualization of Impoverished Women

The popularity of the show that ensured a high DBS audience rating, a good script fee, and advertising revenues was mostly tied to the sexualized portrayals of impoverished female guests. Invited guests ranged widely from orphans to the disabled, but there were disproportionately more

³⁰ For example, in December 1964, DBS publicized its plan for 1965 to distribute a tuition scholarship of 5,000 won to ten students in need. “Golden Program: DBS This Poor Person,” [koltün p’üro DBS i saram ül] *Chugan han’guk*, December 13, 1964.

³¹ Their name was also weekly printed as the sponsor to the program in the “Today’s DBS Programs” section in *Tonga ilbo*.

women than men guests. Out of the first 49 episodes that were broadcast before the publication of *This Poor Person* in 1964, 31 of them were about women and only 15 of them were about male guests' stories. The remaining three episodes had groups of women and men as guests. Many of the female guests were young women with the experience of engaging in socially chastised relationships or sex work. When the host interviewed these guests, the questions revolved around the content that provoked listeners' sexual curiosity, for example, how the female guests gave birth to children of different fathers.³² The melodramatized portion of the show also depicted in detail the women's encounters with their male lovers and experiences in the sex industry.

When An P'yöngsön and Kim Kip'al decided to work together and create a charity show, they went to places like orphanages and shelters in an attempt to find their first guests but had a difficult time. As a last resort, they went to the City Hall, where they found a woman sitting helplessly with her children in the social affairs division.³³ When An asked her what she did, she uttered, "I was actually following the circus tour...and became the boss's lady..."³⁴ In his reminiscences, this was the moment when An thought the perfect guest "had fallen right into his lap."³⁵ The more he learned about the woman's life, the more confident he became with the possibility of making her story into a show, so he hurriedly took her to the radio station.³⁶

An's swift realization that the lady's story would make a good first show must have come from his knowledge of the popular radio programs from the 1950s which had revolved around the

³² On the first show in which the guest, Ko Kwangcha, was a single mother of four children whom she had with three different men, the host asked in detail about Ko's past relationships and how she ended up alone with four children of different fathers.

³³ While in his 2018 interview with the Korean Arts Council An said he remembered the place to have been the social affairs division in the City Hall, Kim thought it was the women's welfare division according to Kim's memoir included in *Tonga pangsongsa*.

³⁴ An P'yöngsön, 167.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

themes of women's sexual immorality, household ethics, and unmarried women's fidelity issues.³⁷ The first autobiographical radio drama, KBS's "Life Story Carrier" (*Insaeng yŏngmach'a*), which had started in 1954, mostly dealt with extramarital affairs, adultery, and marriage-related conflicts.³⁸ Both An P'yŏngsŏn and Kim Kip'al knew that frequent coverage of women, especially those with "sexually immoral" stories, would guarantee an audience rating even when their exclusive focus on the poor was new.

As producer, An P'yŏngsŏn recognized right away that the lady at the City Hall, Ko Kwangcha, was an ideal first guest who could provoke listeners' interest. She was a thirty-three-year-old single mother of four children of different fathers. She had worked as a *kisaeng* (entertainer) and was a circus performer when she was invited to the show. She was an ethnic Korean born in Japan during the colonial period, lost her father at the age of nine, suffered from her family's physical violence, worked as a maid and in a coffee shop in her teens, and came to Korea at the age of seventeen in 1946, a year after Korea's liberation. She worked at many jobs to earn money, including singing in a touring band. Her tragedy started when she was taken as a *kisaeng* by a senior *kisaeng* who wanted to "take advantage of her good looks."³⁹ While working as a *kisaeng*, she gave birth to two children of different fathers who wanted nothing to do with the children. After she quit working as an entertainer, she worked as a missionary at a church and married a man who wanted her to send the two children to an orphanage. Conflicts grew between Ko and her husband, and she was again abandoned, this time with four children. All the money she had earned was used to pay her first child's middle school tuition, so she and her children were living in a small studio that did not even have a kitchen. Her dream was to have a place that had

³⁷ Chu, 275; Yun, 577.

³⁸ Chu, 274.

³⁹ "Mother's Love Looking for Light" [Pit ūl ch'annŭn mojŏng].

one or two rooms for the children to study and to possess some capital to start a small business so that she could live with the children. The host responded that this small dream of hers would be simple for the rich, but too difficult for her.⁴⁰

Throughout the show, the host paid more attention to Ko's past romantic relationships, in an attempt to pique and sustain the listeners' interest. Kim Chuhwan's questions included, "It's a difficult question to ask, but how are the children related?" and "Then let me ask again. After you were separated from the first master (*chuin*), it seems that you welcomed a second one. How did you meet the second man?"⁴¹ To these questions, Ko explained her past relationships with three different men in a quiet voice. Ko talked about Mr. Kim, the second man she was involved with, and the father of Ko's second child. Mr. Kim was a prosecutor who frequented the restaurant where Ko worked, and Ko was "sent" by the restaurant owner to a place where Mr. Kim was waiting. After Ko's explanation, the show moved on to radio actors' melodramatized acting of the encounter between Ko and Mr. Kim. Ko told him about her daughter whom he fathered, and Mr. Kim did not want anything to do with the child because he had already married someone else:

Kim: You are doing this purposefully to ruin my future. How can I accept your behavior?

Ko: But this kid is certainly yours...

Kim: I don't need to hear that crap.

Ko: But I sincerely loved you, Mr. Kim.

Kim: Love? How many do people like you "love" each day? Is ruining someone else's social status and family what you guys call love?⁴²

In this melodramatized portion, Mr. Kim referred to Ko as one of "people like you," implying that she was a woman who would intentionally approach wealthy men to take advantage of them. The

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

show did not focus on reasons why Ko became impoverished. Rather, it portrayed her as a deviant woman and a subject of unsympathetic gossip. In the following dramatized radio segment, Mr. Kim tore up the photo of the child and warned Ko not to “cunningly” bug him, threatening her of repercussions if she appeared in front of him again. Even after Ko quit working as a *kisaeng* and started working as a door-to-door seller to make a living, the radio show actors used provocative words, such as “coquette” and “prostitute” in multiple melodramatic scenes where they criticized her morally corrupt past.

The portrayal of Ko as having a “disgraceful” history not only captured the listeners’ ears, but also shifted the scope of the reason for their poverty from the structure to the individual. The emphasis on Ko’s past experience as a *kisaeng* was coupled with a guilt narrative. At the end of the show the host shouted, “Would you please help out this lady who sheds tears of repent?”⁴³ The “tears of repent” put the blame on Ko as if she deserved her harsh reality because of her work experience as a *kisaeng* and past relationship with multiple different men. The book version also attributed more guilt to Ko by calling her a “woman of many sins.”⁴⁴ Ko said during the show, “Even the motherland did not feed me,” hinting that the causes of her abject situation lay in the larger political and economic structure.⁴⁵ Yet, the focus of the radio program was on her “sexually immoral” past.⁴⁶

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ An and Kim, 431.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Lisa M. Cucklanz, “Mass Media Representation of Gendered Violence,” 34-35. Cucklanz suggests the media make stereotypes of prostitutes as “social deviants or helpless victims” to imply that the victim, not the nation or the international world, is to blame.

The shifting of blame to the individual and the focus on the guest's work as a *kisaeng* can be seen as a manifestation of what Chungmoo Choi characterizes as "homonational misogyny."⁴⁷ Choi argues that Korean men have "obsessively disciplined and regulated women's bodies as metaphors for their uncontaminated, uninterrupted homonational (or homosocial) identity and imposed on women the ideology of chastity and self-censorship."⁴⁸ The homonational identity was formed in the context of Japanese colonial rule as a new kind of nationalism which also demanded young women suppress their sexuality.⁴⁹ According to Choi, this ideology of chastity has silenced Korean women with sexually "corrupt" past, including those who were mobilized as sex slaves during the colonial period. In this light, Ko's past of having been born and raised in Japan and worked as a *kisaeng* in Korea rendered her to be a typical case of Korean women "victimized by their own history of foreign dominations and homonational misogyny."⁵⁰

In similar episodes, poverty was portrayed as a function of individual "choices" to work in sex industry rather than the lack of an adequate welfare system. The nineteen-year-old guest⁵¹ of "They Call Me an Armless Prostitute" had lost her arm as a result of shooting by the government forces during the April 19th Student Protest in 1960. Her father had lost the will to make money after his business went bankrupt and her mother had died of cancer. She had younger siblings to take care of, but her attempts to get a job were not successful because of her disability and a lack of school diploma. The book, *This Poor Person!* described in detail how she made a desperate

⁴⁷ Chungmoo Choi, "Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea," in *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism*, ed. Elaine H Kim and Chungmoo Choi (Hoboken, N.J.: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 13.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 27.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁵¹ The transcript or audio recording for this particular show does not exist, and the book version does not mention the guest's name.

decision to work at a brothel where she had had an “animal-like” life.⁵² A male customer groped her body and expressed his disgust upon discovering her loss of an arm. The guest highlighted that her situation was beyond her control, and she had no other options but to become a sex worker. But she was portrayed as lacking a proper “ethical judgement” because she willingly went to work at a brothel.⁵³ She also hinted that her country could be blamed by saying that she did not “resent the country” for what happened to her.⁵⁴ Yet, the recurring focus on her being “just unlucky” throughout the story reduced the structural marginalization of an uneducated and disabled woman to an individual’s misfortune.⁵⁵

Similarly, the guest of “At the Doorstep of Moral Corruption” became the object of moral judgement because she considered working as a *yanggonju* (sex worker in U.S. military bases) to make a living.⁵⁶ She had quit high school because her older sister, who had been providing money, passed away. During this period, small-to-medium sized business would often ask for a deposit from employees and she did not have enough to pay a deposit. A melodramatized scene detailed how male employers would try to take advantage of her by offering a job in return for a sexual interaction when she applied for jobs. Another scene described a time when her male cousin tried to rape her after he lured her with an opportunity to earn money. She eventually went to a U.S. military camp town, looking for a senior *yanggonju* who would provide an opportunity to make a living. Despite the structural problem of a job market that marginalized poorly educated and impoverished young women, the emphasis on her encounters with men made it seem like it was

⁵² An and Kim, 232.

⁵³ Ibid., 234.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 226.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 226.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 332-341.

her fault that she ended up in those sexually predatory situations and reduced her to a girl at the doorstep of moral corruption, as the title suggested.

The political economy in the 1960s could not possibly put the blame on these girls who resorted to sex work. In the beginning of 1963, around the time “This Poor Person!” started, the unemployment rate was as high as 25% among those who were eligible to work.⁵⁷ Newspaper articles reported that recent college graduates faced an “employment hell” (*ch'wijiik chiok*) because there were so few openings for too many applicants. Those who did not receive college education faced even harsher job market conditions. As many guests of the program shared, part-time jobs such as a paper route or a door-to-door salesperson required a lump sum of money which many could not afford. Job openings for those without college or high school education were rare, and when there was one, thousands of people applied. For example, in January 1963, for thirteen receptionist positions at a hospital at a monthly salary of a mere 2,500-3,000 won, 2,566 applicants applied, marking a 200:1 acceptance ratio.⁵⁸

Women with no formal education had even fewer opportunities and were subject to an unfair hiring process that discriminated against them on the basis of age and appearances. A job advertisement in August 1963 for hotel receptionist positions announced that only “unmarried women between nineteen to twenty-one years old whose appearances are decent” were eligible to apply.⁵⁹ These women who must have been in similar situations as the guests in “This Poor Person!” were merely summed up as “women who were in good shape and quite pretty” by the reporter.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ “Hope: Rescue from Unemployment,” [Somang (wan): Shiröp kuje] *Chosŏn ilbo*, January 11, 1963. The Bank of Korea conducted the research and South Koreans “who were eligible to work” were those who were in the in the age of 14 to 60.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ “Employment Hell: 40 to 1,” [Ch'wijiik chiok: 40 tae 1] *Chosŏn ilbo*, August 22, 1963. Four hundred and eighty women applied for eleven openings, marking a 40:1 ratio.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

As “This Poor Person!” showed, some of these women who had to quit high school or did not have money to look “decent” mostly ended up working as housemaids (*shingmo*) or sex workers. Some became juvenile vagrants begging for money on the streets and eventually became “the target of social cleansing” by the state, which criminalized them and put them into correction facilities.⁶¹ A few were housed in shelters and orphanages if they were lucky enough. The anecdotal reporting of young women’s attempts to get jobs throughout the 1960s reveals that there were numerous South Koreans who were continuously marginalized. The system that did not give opportunities to impoverished, homeless, uneducated young women and girls let their stories be invited to the mediascape where their stories were commodified.

In the eyes of the producers and scriptwriters who sought profitable content, impoverished women on the verge of “moral corruption” were an attractive source material. DBS maximized the audience’s interest through provocative titles and advertisements of these women’s stories. The titles and brief descriptions of the shows included words and phrases like “prostitute,” “young widow,” “*yanggongju*,” “*kisaeng*,” “unmarried virgin,” “sexually immoral,” “marriage without love,” “high school girl working at a bar,” “woman with the wrong beginning,” and “pretty college girl.” These descriptions functioned to arouse potential listeners’ attention and to make them curious about the expected sensual stories, rather than poverty cases.

Similarly, the attempt to bring out more attention from the audience was clear in newspaper advertisements. For example, the *Tonga ilbo* announcement for the “This Poor Person!” show to be aired on January 16, 1964, wrote, “Just as loud as the raindrops sounded that night, my mind was also rowdily muddled. The man who was my brother-in-law until yesterday will become my

⁶¹ Kim Aram, “Social Policies under the Military Regime: Characteristics of Children Welfare and Measurements towards Vagrants,” [5 16 kun chōnggi sahoe chōngch’aek: adong pokchi wa puranga taech’aek ūi sōnggyōk] *Yōksa wa hyōnshil* 82, no. 1 (2011): 360.

husband today... [I wonder] whether it would become a bliss or a misfortune...”⁶² This description made the show sound more like a melodrama than a charity documentary, but it incited listeners’ sexual curiosity. All these efforts from the producers’ end suggest that even in the early 1960s when Korea was politically and economically more stable than the 1950s, the “obliteration of the female subject and voice,” which Kelly Y. Jeong observes in Korean literature of the mid-to-late 1950s, continued to occur through the woman’s “objectification as a diseased body, her infantilization, or through an abject oversexualization of woman as the sexual Other” by men as a response to the “sense of crisis and challenge to the masculine self.”⁶³

One reason why the producer and the scriptwriter frequently invited female guests whose stories could be sexualized was because they did not invite heavy government censorship. The Broadcasting Ethics Act of 1963 included a ban on “too much sexual content”, but in the 1960s, or even in the 70s or the 80s, the notions of sexual violence against women via sexual objectification in media did not exist, and sexualized portrayals of women were tolerated.⁶⁴ In case of the camptown prostitution on US bases in particular, Katherine H. S. Moon suggests that the Park government in the 1960s was yet to see the issue as harming the national image or threatening relations with the U.S. but regarded it as a matter between the GI and the prostitute.⁶⁵ Jin-kyung Lee also argues that the Park government in the 1960s actually promoted the growth of the sexualized service and prostitution industries, leading to what she calls, “proletarianization of

⁶² “Today’s DBS,” [Onŭl ŭi tonga pangsong] *Tonga ilbo*, January 16, 1964.

⁶³ Kelly Y. Jeong, *Crisis of Gender and the Nation in Korean Literature and Cinema: Modernity Arrives Again* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2011), 55.

⁶⁴ Jin-kyung Lee suggests that the sexual abuse of young female domestics lacks documentation as the “notion of sexual harassment or sexual violence did not exist for even middle-class women, let alone for working-class women” in 1970s South Korea. J. Lee, 86-87.

⁶⁵ Katherine H.S. Moon, “Prostitute Bodies and Gendered States,” in Choi eds. *Dangerous Women*, 150.

sexuality.”⁶⁶ Until this stance changed dramatically in the 1970s when the government began the “camptown cleanup campaign”, the public response and the government attitude was to pity and sympathize with those women’s poverty while morally condemning them at the same time.⁶⁷

This collective sentiment of curiosity, pity, sympathy, and condemnation towards those women from the public guaranteed a high audience rating. The popular mass media, therefore, relied on sexualized portrayals of women to attract an audience and readership in the negotiated space created by the Park Chung Hee government. Therefore, even when the female guests in “This Poor Person!” experienced instances of sexual violence and trafficking by present-day definitions, the public sentiment of the 1960s condoned such conditions as a rather expected part of their struggle to overcome poverty.⁶⁸

Normalization of Men as the Sole Breadwinner of a Household

At the same time, the “This Poor Person!” radio show “normalized” men as the sole breadwinners of households by portraying the absence of a father or a husband as the reason why the young women guests became impoverished. For example, the episode, “A Smile Buried at the Crossroads,” which was aired on May 20, 1965, about a sixteen-year-old girl, An Yŏngae, focused on the death of her father as the reason for An’s abject situation. An had been living a comfortable life with her father, who worked as a civil servant. An did not have to work because her father was making good money. An’s mother also had never worked. When An’s father suddenly died of a stroke, An’s mother decided to invest the family money in her acquaintance’s business. The

⁶⁶ Jin-kyung Lee, 89.

⁶⁷ Katherine H.S. Moon, 150.

⁶⁸ Jin-kyung Lee’s analysis of literary and popular representations of female prostitution in the 1970s confirms the continued condoning of prostitution. She suggests that prostitution was seen as a “uniquely feminine contribution” to national modernization and as serving the “general good of the (male) population.” Jin-kyung Lee, 93; 96.

business went bankrupt, and An's family was left with nothing. After listening to An's story, the host stated, "If her father was alive, this girl right here would not have been the protagonist of this sad story," even though An's family was struggling because of reasons beyond her father's death.⁶⁹ An's mother fell sick from the shock and could not get out of bed. In this narrative, An's mother was a helpless victim in despair who could not raise herself up and manage to feed her children. The host did not explore why the mother decided to invest all her money or whether she attempted to claim it back. Instead, the host repeatedly emphasized how unfortunate and hopeless the situation was:

The siblings cried and suffered from sadness day and night. This is a cruel world for them. Did the brother actually go to school when he left home saying he was going to school? What about the girl? Did she go to school? Can their mother who is now sick in bed get better? Everything is so hopeless. Yǒngae went looking for a job at factories for four months out of her entire year in her second year in middle school.⁷⁰

This melodramatic portrayal of "sadness" and "hopelessness" reduced Yǒngae's situation to an individual's misfortune than a reflection of a larger structural problem. The representation of Yǒngae's mother as a helpless widow undermined her agency as a breadwinner of a household.

Even when the fathers of girl guests willingly abandoned the family, the program presented the stories as if the girls only saw the return of their fathers as the solution to end their poverty. In the episode, "Father, Are You Abandoning Me," the world was harsh because the guest's father left her. The guest, Chasun, was a 20-year-old woman who traveled from the countryside to Seoul in search of her father who had left her and her mother when Chasun was little. When Chasun was ten, her mother died, so she moved in with her relatives. When Chasun could no longer stay with

⁶⁹ "A Smile Buried at the Crossroads," [Shipcharo e mudŭn miso] *Chasŏn drama isaramŭl!* produced by P'yŏngsŏn An, written by Kip'al Kim, aired on May 20, 1965, in broadcast syndication, Dong-a Broadcasting System (DBS), Radio. Accessed through <http://dbs.donga.com>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

her relatives, she decided to find her father so that she could live with him. Chasun had no money or a place to stay when she arrived in Seoul, so she started working as a housemaid (*shingmo*) at a wealthy family. In the book version of the program, her time as a housemaid was melodramatized with details of the mistreatment from the master family, including feeding her cold leftover food and not heating up her room in winter. When Chasun finally found her father, he already had a different family with three children and refused to take Chasun to be part of his family. Chasun was left alone again.

Chasun was a “poor person” who deserved sympathy from the listeners because her father abandoned her, and she could not afford to have a decent living without her father. Similar to An Yöngae’s case, the episode was replete with emotionally provocative scenes that focused on the absence of her father as the reason for her despair:

It would have been better if Chasun never found her father. Chasun started to learn how to type, with her teeth clenched, to forget about her father and to become successful on her own. She wanted to show that she could proudly live on her own without a father. Alas, this world was too cruel for her, though. There was no job for Chasun who managed to learn how to type...Even animals have an instinct to find and nurture their offspring, but how can a human being not allow his daughter to call him father...⁷¹

This portion of the story portrayed Chasun as a helpless victim who could not get a job because she was an unfortunate soul who was constantly saddened by her father’s rejection of her. The host did not mention the lack of available jobs or discriminatory hiring process against young women. The fixation on the absence of her father as the reason for Chasun’s sadness left the audience little room for other explanations for her poverty.

Similarly, Sin Yöngsuk’s story, “Father, Please Come Back,” had a recurring message that the father’s return would rescue Yöngsuk’s family from misery despite the fact that it was the

⁷¹ An and Kim, 40-41.

father's fault that the family was in debt. The episode, "Father, Please Come Back" was about how a girl, Yöngsuk, and her family's life became miserable when her father left the family after he lost a lot of money from stock investment. Because Yöngsuk's father even lost the money he borrowed from friends and relatives, Yöngsuk's family of five siblings were saddled with huge debts. They did not have enough money to buy food, so they would often starve and lived on what the neighbors offered. The episode ended with the host's outcry, "Yöngsuk's father! We don't know where you are right now, but please listen to this story of your daughter, Yöngsuk, who is desperately looking for you!"⁷² The outcry made it sound like the father's return would immediately solve the problem despite the fact that Yöngsuk's father's reckless decision to invest all the money on stock was the reason why Yöngsuk's family fell into despair. His poor financial management made "the family of seven starved more often than fed" and was already forgiven in the narrative which did not blame him for his action.⁷³ Rather, he was still expected to come home to fulfill the role of a breadwinner in the family.

Like other episodes, the melodramatic aspects of the story shifted the focus of the problem from the bigger structure to individuals. The last portion of the story, which made a direct appeal to the audience, was mostly about Yöngsuk and her family crying everyday:

There is no single day when there is no sound of crying from Yöngsuk's house... Yöngsuk's younger siblings kept crying out of hunger and Yöngsuk and the eldest younger sibling, who were more mature than the youngest ones, were crying out of hopelessness. It was as if they lived to cry.⁷⁴

This sentimental appeal made it difficult for the audience to focus on the real problems of poverty which were brought up in the episode. Yöngsuk's family's destitution was not entirely from the

⁷² Ibid., 145.

⁷³ Ibid., 144.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

absence of her father. Her mother wanted to make money by selling things door-to-door but did not have any seed money to buy products to sell. Her two sisters, who were in middle school, could have made money by doing a newspaper route if they could afford to pay the deposit to start the job. They had to remain in a situation where they “barely managed to survive each day by feeding themselves porridge made with rice that the neighbors gave.”⁷⁵ There was no guarantee that her father’s return would help Yöngsuk’s family get out of poverty, but the narrative highlighted the absence of her father as the reason why she and her family had to starve every day.

The recurring image of an absent father was in stark contrast with the able and productive men who were rich enough to help the impoverished female guests. The representative case was the eighteen-year-old girl, Sin Myönghui, who was later adopted by a male listener of the program.⁷⁶ Sin lost her parents when she was three and was left with her grandmother and a younger brother. The show emotionally portrayed Sin’s wish to be adopted to a “normal” family. During the show Sin said she was most jealous of those who had someone to call “mother, father, sister, and brother.”⁷⁷ Her wish was to live at some family’s house, helping with their household chores and learning how to write so that she could at least write her own name. She uttered in a sobbing voice, “This is all I want. Nothing more.”⁷⁸ Then the host passionately shouted, “Ladies and gentlemen! Is there anyone who could share love and affection with this poor person!”⁷⁹ After the show was broadcast, 351 listeners called and 81 more either came or sent letters to the company

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ The episode was titled “The Sad Story of a Girl who Lost Her Grandmother and Younger Brother” and aired on November 19, 1964. “The Sad Story of a Girl who Lost Her Grandmother and Younger Brother,” [Halmöni-wa örin tongsaeng-ül irün kiguhan sayön], *Chasön drama isaramül!* produced by P’yöngsön An, written by Kip’al Kim, aired November 19, 1964, in broadcast syndication, Dong-a Broadcasting System (DBS), Radio. Accessed through <http://dbs.donga.com>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

with their intentions to adopt the guest.⁸⁰ Out of all those people, a man named Yi Hyŏngchin, CEO of Myŏngshin Building Materials adopted Sin Myŏnghŭi.

The print media reporting of Mr. Yi's adoption of Sin Myŏnghŭi portrayed Mr. Yi as the philanthropic savior who came to rescue an orphaned and impoverished girl. The coverage by *Tonga ilbo* wrote, "Mr. Yi has a small family. He and his wife have only a six-year-old son. Mr. Yi, who is quite wealthy, is pleased to welcome Sin as a daughter and is excited to send her to night school and pour out parental love towards her."⁸¹ The emphasis on his wealth created a message that only a well-off man can save the girl whose only wish was to have someone to call father, mother, and brother and that he was worthy of being recognized for his benevolence.⁸² His and his company's names also became publicly known as heroic and benevolent in multiple print media, including one of the most popular tabloids in the 1960s, the *Weekly Hankook*.⁸³

There were other individuals and organizations whose charitable act was reported in association with their support to "This Poor Person!" including members of a high school baseball team, like-minded high school girls, and employees of a department company.⁸⁴ However, more attention was given to successful and wealthy males, especially business owners. Similar to the attention Yi Hyŏngchin received, Kim Yŏngch'ŏl, CEO of Pyŏl Trading Company, was publicized in a popular weekly magazine in December 1964 for being the person who donated most money to the DBS.⁸⁵ Newspapers and tabloids recognized rich men like Mr. Yi and Mr. Kim as benevolent,

⁸⁰ "Oasis," [Oashisŭ] *Tonga ilbo*, December 1, 1964.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ The company's name was again highlighted in a positive light in *Chugan han'guk* on December 13, 1964.

⁸⁴ "Oasis," [Oashisŭ] *Tonga ilbo*, May 28, 1963; "Sketch," [Sŭk'ech'i] *Tonga ilbo*, February 17, 1964.

⁸⁵ "Golden Program – DBS This Poor Person!" [Koltŭn p'ŭro DBS i saram ŭl], *Chugan han'guk*, December 13, 1964; a similar example was when, Yi Chunyŏng, a member of the Lions Club, an international service organization, was featured multiple times in 1963 for his support of the guests in "This Poor Person!" His membership in the Lions Club was highlighted to suggest his high position in the society. The Korean Club branch of the Lions Club, established in

admirable, and even heroic. Such juxtaposition between helpless young women and wealthy men undermined women's agency but strengthened the message that men were the normative breadwinners of households.

Conclusion

The proven popularity and profitability of "This Poor Person!" encouraged other media companies to delve into the similar genre of autobiographical drama and the topic of the poor. In 1964, another private radio broadcasting company, MBC, started its own autobiographical documentary on a similar topic called, "There is no Despair", and the show lasted more than ten years. CBS launched "There is a Way Here" in 1966. It was not just radio that profited from commodifying the stories of the poor. One of the most popular and most revenue-earning movies in the 1960s was *Sorrow in the Sky* (*Chō hanŭl edo sŭlp'ŭmi*), which was about an impoverished orphan. However, the continued attention on poverty in mass media came to an end with full-blown authoritarianism in the 1970s. Across all media, any negative portrayal of the country was subject to severe censorship when the Park government was trying hard to introduce a good image of the nation to the world. When a Japanese film director and TV producer learned about the story "They Call Me an Armless Prostitute" and wanted to acquire the original source for the Japanese TV channel, Nippon TV's "Nonfiction Theater", DBS turned it down because it was inappropriate to have such grim picture of the country be exposed to Japan.⁸⁶

1959, was known as a quite exclusive organization comprised of "reputable figures, such as university professors, lawyers, doctors, and entrepreneurs who were unanimously approved by the membership committee." See "Oasis," [Oashisŭ] *Tonga ilbo*, May 28, 1963; "Woman in Despair: DBS Charity Drama," [Chitpaphin yōinsang: DBS chasŏn'gŭk] *Tonga ilbo*, June 1, 1963; "Lions Club Membership Requirements," [Raionjŭ k'ŭllŏp kaip haryōmyŏn] *Tonga ilbo*, September 5, 1963.

⁸⁶ *Tonga bangsongsa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe*, 107.

In the 1960s when profitable content was scarce, but poverty was rampant, media industries turned to the poor and commercialized their stories. Using their stories was profitable because finding the guests took little time and entailed low production costs, but the popularity of their stories was high and long-lasting. As the first radio program that combined the genres of autobiographical drama and a charity show, “This Poor Person!” gained its reputation as a program that helped impoverished South Koreans. The program gave listeners a sense of relief over their accumulated wealth and better circumstances, as well as a feeling of moral superiority coming from helping the guests. More people listened to the program, consuming the philanthropic sentiment that came from the clear division between them as better-off consumers and the impoverished guests on radio.

State censorship strictly banned content that would damage the national reputation, but sexualization of women thrived across media as a way to attract a larger audience well into the 1970s and the 1980s. The decision of the producer and scriptwriter of “This Poor Person!” to cover the stories of young women and sexualize their stories created “apparent, legible, and ideally emotionally provocative” content that attracted the audience and advertisers, while avoiding government censorship.⁸⁷ In a radio program that dealt with the issue of poverty, the emphasis on the female guests’ “sexually immoral” pasts shifted the responsibility from the state to the individual. The female guests were portrayed as socially deviant and simultaneously helpless victims. They neither knew how to support themselves or their children, nor had husbands or fathers supporting the family. The absence of a male breadwinner in the household was particularly

⁸⁷ Sheila C. Moeschen, *Acts of Conspicuous Compassion: Performance Culture and American Charity Practices* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 9.

portrayed as the reason why the young women guests fell into despair and needed help from the listeners.

At the same time, this narrative revolving around the absence of a male breadwinner in the household was juxtaposed with the media coverage of wealthy men who came to save the guests by donating money or adopting them. The portrayal of the rich male entrepreneurs as the savior undermined women's agency and "normalized" men as the sole breadwinners of households. Even a broadcasting company that heralded "democratic journalism" against the authoritarian government contributed to creating the male-centered capitalist society that the Park Chung Hee regime envisioned. Private media companies' profit-oriented decisions to commercialize the poor and sexualize impoverished women "abnormalized" poverty and excluded impoverished women and men as normative participants of the nation-building process.

Chapter 2: Masculinizing Money-Making, 1964-1966

The Era of Weekly Magazines

As much as the 1960s was the “radio era,” many scholars argue that the 1960s was also the “era of weekly magazines.”¹ Weekly magazines such as the *Weekly Hankook*, *Sunday Seoul*, and *Weekly Woman* that all came out in the mid-to-late 1960s not only changed the landscape of the print media but also the everyday life of Koreans in significant ways. This chapter explores how popular weekly magazines, especially the *Weekly Hankook*, sold the ideas of individual pursuit of wealth by popularizing self-made businessmen as masculine, nationalistic, and rational.

The popularity of weekly magazines in the 1960s was unprecedented in the history of print media in Korea. Until the publication of the *Weekly Hankook* in 1964, there had been no magazines that were as far-reaching and popular.² Hankook Ilbo Media Group that had been publishing a daily, *Hankook ilbo*, since 1954 marked the beginning of the era of weekly magazines by launching the *Weekly Hankook* in September 1964. The *Weekly Hankook* gained immense popularity so rapidly that it shocked its own editors and publishers. The sale of the first issue immediately exceeded the sale of *Hankook ilbo* by an order of two.³ The *Weekly Hankook*’s peak circulation was 415,000 in the late 1960s, which set the record at the time in the circulation of periodicals in

¹ Chŏn Sanggi, “The Status of Weekly Magazines as a Medium in the 1960s,” [1960 nyŏndae chuganji ūi maech’ejŏk wisang] *Keimyung Korean Studies Journal* 36 (2008): 227; Kim Kyŏngyŏn, “Conventional Politics: A Re-Reading of Kim Seung-Oak’s Novels of the Late 1960s,” [T’ongsok-ŭi chŏngch’ihak: 1960 yŏndae huban kimsŭngong chuganji sosŏl chaedok] *Ōmullonjip* 62 (2015): 382; Pak Sŏnga, “The Representation of Women in *Sunday Seoul*,” [Sŏndei sŏul-e nat’anan yŏsŏng-ŭi yuhyŏng-kwa p’yosang], *Han’guk’ak yŏn’gu* 22 (2010): 161; Kwŏn Podŭrae and others, *Park Chung Hee and Modernism in the 1970s: From Yushin to Sunday Seoul* [1970 pak chŏng-hŭi modŏnijŭm: yusin esŏ sŏndei sŏul kkaji] (Seoul: Ch’ŏnnyŏn ūi Sangsang, 2015), 246-247. The translation of Kim Kyŏngyŏn’s article is done by the journal editors. This dissertation translates the Korean word, *chuganji*, as weekly magazines.

² Magazines before the 1960s were mostly consumed by intellectuals, thus a small portion of the population. There were weekly magazines in the 1950s such as *Sasanggye*.

³ Kim Sŏngu, “My Days during the Early Years of the *Weekly Hankook*,” [Na ūi chugan han’guk ch’anggan shijŏl] *kwanhun chŏnŏl* 132 (2014): 162.

Korea.⁴

The success of the *Weekly Hankook* and the prospect of profit-making through weekly magazines encouraged other daily newspaper companies to also swiftly delve into the weekly magazine industry. The Chungang ilbo (*Choong-Ang Daily*) company started its own weekly magazine, *Weekly Choong-Ang* in August 1968, and the Sŏul shinmun (*Seoul Newspaper*) company launched *Sŏndei sŏul* (hereafter “*Sunday Seoul*”) the following month. *Sunday Seoul* put its highest priority on entertainment qualities, placing stories about scandals, gossip, and sexual content in the front pages. The first issue of *Sunday Seoul* printed 60,000 copies which were sold out within two hours.⁵ Hankook Ilbo Media Group launched a new weekly magazine targeting women, *Weekly Woman* in January 1969. Among all the weekly magazines that emerged in the late 1960s, *Sunday Seoul* and the *Weekly Hankook* were the most popular weekly magazines throughout the 1970s with the average circulation of 200,000.

The readership of weekly magazines reached far beyond the boundaries of Seoul across class and gender. The “letters to the editor” sections show that the readers lived in rural areas in Ch'ungbuk and Kangwŏn. *Sunday Seoul* especially had many readers who were soldiers stationed in Vietnam in the late 1960s. While there are no official demographic data on the readership, referring to the Korea Books and Magazines Ethics Committee (*han'guk tosŏ chapchi yulli wiwŏnhoe*) survey results, journalist Song Kŏnho suggested that weekly magazines were considered low-brow and mostly consumed by the poor working class who, contrary to the rich, had no money to enjoy other sources of entertainment.⁶ However, some studies also suggested that

⁴ Kim Sŏngu, 190.

⁵ Pak Sŏnga, 161.

⁶ Song Kŏnho, “Problems of Korean Weekly Magazines,” [Han'guk chuganji ūi munjejŏm] in *Song Kŏnho's Writing Complete Collection No. 18: The Path of Hardship, the Path of the Truth* [Songgŏnho chŏnjip 18: Konan ūi kil chilli ūi kil] (Seoul: Han'gilsa, 2002), 297. Song Kŏnho's writing was originally published in *Hyŏnshil kwa isang* in 1979;

the readers included university students and young intellectuals.⁷ The editors of *Sunday Seoul*, the *Weekly Hankook*, and *Weekly Woman* assumed their average readers to be salarymen, housewives, and university students.⁸

What groups the *Weekly Hankook* and *Sunday Seoul* together was not just their popularity, but their long-term serialized publication of stories on successful self-made businessmen. The *Weekly Hankook* published a series, “Blood and Sweat Do Not Speak: Stories of Self-made Men” (*p’i wa ttam ūn mal i ōpta: chasu sōngga iyagi*) for 25 weeks from June 19th to December 4th, 1966. Similarly, *Sunday Seoul* published a series of 117 stories called, “Soon-to-be *chaebōl*” (*yebi chaebōl*) which lasted for more than two years from November 24th, 1968, to April 18th, 1971, which will be examined in chapter five.

The popularity of the series in the *Weekly Hankook* especially led to publication of two separate books in 1966. The first book, *Self-Made Men: The Weekly Hankook Serial on Behind-the-Scenes Stories of Success* (*Chasu sōngga: chugan han'guk yōnjae sōnggong pihwa*; hereafter “*Self-Made Men*”) compiled 25 success stories based on the interviews with the entrepreneurs. The second book, *Blood and Sweat Do Not Speak: Memoirs of Self-made Men* (*p’iwa ttam ūn mal i ōpta: chasu sōnggaja ūi sugi*; hereafter “*Blood and Sweat Do Not Speak*”) is a compilation of biographical stories of ten male entrepreneurs and one female entrepreneur. Nine out of eleven entrepreneurs in *Blood and Sweat Do Not Speak* overlap with the ones in *Self-Made Men*, although the narratives are different.⁹ In addition to the biographical stories, *Blood and Sweat Do Not Speak*

Kim Sōnghwan, “*Sunday Seoul* and Popular Narrative in the 1970s,” [1970 nyōndae sōndei sōul-kwa taejung sōsa], *Ōmullonjip* 64 (2015): 248-9. Translation done by the journal editors.

⁷ Kim Sōnghwan, 248-9.

⁸ Yi Wōnjae and others, “Pleadings of the Weekly Magazine Editors,” [Chuganji p’yōnjipcha ūi pyōn] *Shinmun kwa pangsong* 29 (1969): 92-3.

⁹ While the editors’ note suggests that this book is an edited volume, there is no information about authors. However, different narrative styles, for example writing both in first and third person (as opposed to stories in *Self-made Men*

also features a separate section titled, “You Can Also Make Money (*tangshin to ton ūl pŏl su itta*).” This section provides detailed tips on how to make money such as “think of original ideas to make money” and “take notes when ideas pop up in your head.” *Self-Made Men* especially had multiple prints in the following years, suggesting its popularity. The fact that the stories of self-made businessmen in the weekly magazine were published as not just one, but two books with multiple prints, suggests that the Korean audience wanted to possess physical, durable copies. Making a scrapbook from the weeklies was not enough; the readers wanted to have a hard copy of the book with more details so that they could highlight the sentences they wanted to keep in mind.

Both the *Weekly Hankook* and *Sunday Seoul* emphasized that their series on the self-made businessmen reflected popular demand. The editors at the *Weekly Hankook* noted that they had planned to publish only 15 stories, but readers’ demand for more stories made the editors publish ten more installments.¹⁰ In *Blood and Sweat Do Not Speak*, the editors emphasize that this book, different from other books that deal with stories of “great men of history” or *chaebŏl* who seem distant to “our life,” has selected only “ordinary Koreans who coped with the reality with bare fists and eventually succeeded in their businesses.”¹¹

The popularity of this kind of success stories in the print media is not surprising in the context of the 1960s. The increasing sales of self-help books in the mid-to-late 1950s reflected Koreans’ collective efforts to recover from the aftermath of the Korean War. The shared

that are written in third person) and the separate section on how to make money strongly suggest that there are multiple authors. The note also mentions that the editors received the manuscripts from the self-made men who appeared in the book. The two cases that are new in *Blood and Sweat Do Not Speak* are a male Korean living in Japan (*chaeil gyop'o*) who owned a construction company in Tokyo and a female Korean who ran a restaurant in Seoul.

¹⁰ Yi Kūnu, *Self-made Men: Success Stories in the Weekly Hankook* [*Chasu sŏngga Chasu sŏngga: chugan han'guk yŏnjae sŏnggong pihwa*], ed. Yongkyu Pak (Seoul: Hongik ch'ulp'ansa, 1966), 379.

¹¹ Kumisŏgwan p'yŏnjippu, *Blood and Sweat Do Not Speak: Memoirs of Self-made Men* [*P'i wa ttam ūn mal i ŏpta: chasu sŏnggaja ūi sugi*] (Seoul: Kumisŏgwan, 1966), 358-9.

consciousness to restore the nation justified making money and the stories about poor people becoming rich attracted readers' attention. The popularity continued to the mid-to-late 1960s when the print market witnessed rapid publication growth in books on topics like how to become successful, how to make money, and how to become happy in life. The editors of *Self-made Men* also noted that readers' demand for more made the editors of *the Weekly Hankook* publish ten more stories.¹²

On top of the mass consciousness to make money, the Park government's policy on reading also helped the genre of self-development and stories about successful businessmen gain popularity. The Park government emphasized the importance of reading "wholesome" books as a way to mobilize the population and promoted "reading" as a way to catch up with the advanced world. Reading "wholesome" books was to produce "modern, civilized, and educated" subjects.¹³ The genre of "self-development" was much in line with the government promotion of reading as this genre was supposed to teach readers to be better versions of themselves through self-discipline.¹⁴ The disciplinary character of the act of reading also explains why the topic of "self-development" appeared most frequently in print media, not radio or films. The physical act of reading magazines and books reinforced the seriousness of the lessons of successful self-made men, disciplining the readers to be more like them. From the perspective of the Park government, according to Chŏn Sanggi, the repeated appearance of successful people in the weekly magazines

¹² Yi Kūnu, 379.

¹³ Kwŏn Podŭrae and Ch'ŏn Chŏnghwan, *Asking the 1960s: Cultural Politics and Intellect of the Park Chung Hee Era* [1960 nyŏn ūl mutta: pakchŏnghŭi shidae ūi munhwa chŏngch'i wa chisŏng] (Seoul: Ch'ŏnnyŏn ūi sangsang, 2012), 425-431.

¹⁴ Kwŏn and Ch'ŏn, 432-447.

helped justify the “violently enforced ideology of economic development by the authoritarian government.”¹⁵

Publishing weekly magazines was a win-win situation for the newspaper publishers and the Park government. Under Park’s censorship on journalism, newspaper companies were coerced into staying silent on politically sensitive issues and the final say on their reporting was in the hands of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, not the journalists.¹⁶ Accordingly, major newspaper companies like Hankook Ilbo Media Group and Seoul Daily Company, who lost journalistic freedom as well as readership, suffered from the decreasing newspaper sales in the 1960s. Similar to how German publisher Ernst Keil in 19th century Prussia successfully developed the first mass-circulating weekly magazine, *Die Gartenlaube*, by working skillfully in the negotiated space created by state censorship, the Korean publishers had to constantly adapt to the state’s policies on magazines and compromise their political stances.¹⁷ Many Korean publishers believed that entertainment-focused weekly magazines would serve as an alternate and stable source of income under Park’s censorship.¹⁸ Chang Kiyŏng, CEO of Hankook Ilbo Media Group, who was well known for his profit-oriented goals, proactively delved into new genres of magazines, including weeklies.¹⁹ Kim Sŏngu, who was the editor-in-chief for the *Weekly Hankook* from the first September 1964 issue to November 1968, described the weekly as having been the young

¹⁵ Chŏn Sanggi, 231-2. Chŏn further argued, “The *Weekly Hankook* helped justify the purpose of national restoration and normalize the logic of the mass mobilization for the purpose of creating the value of free democracy that was far superior to North Korea’s communism. The *Weekly Hankook* repeatedly reported on the cases of “modernization” efforts such as success stories and the phases of development sites.”

¹⁶ Pak Sŏnga, 162.

¹⁷ Chase Richards, “Ernst Keil vs. Prussia: Censorship and Compromise in the Amazon Affair,” *Central European History* 46 (2013), 533–567.

¹⁸ Pak Sŏnga, 162; Kim Sŏngu, 185; Song Ŭnyŏng, 201.

¹⁹ Chŏn Sangki, 229.

“sole breadwinner” of the company because it generated much profit from sales and commercials.²⁰ *Sunday Seoul*, too, was the last resort to bring profit to the publisher.²¹

For the Park government, shifting Koreans’ attention away from politics to entertainment by having them consume weekly magazines was also a very desirable situation because Park did not want the Korean public to question or threaten his legitimacy by reading dailies.²² The publishers took advantage of the lenient government policy on weekly magazines and the popularity of self-made man stories. Launching weekly magazines and publishing stories about successful businessmen could well serve such goals. The editors were willing to designate two whole pages out of thirty-two pages to write about how men from the rock bottom raised themselves up.

The fact that the medium for these stories was print needs special attention. It was not just a coincidence that two most popular and influential newspaper companies decided to publish a series of stories on self-made businessmen in their newly launched weekly magazines. This kind of “success stories” sold best when consumers could hold a physical copy. Radio or films were not the most effective medium to maximize the popularity and profitability of this particular genre. The disciplinary character of this genre made readers want to make a scrapbook, highlight sentences, and reread them. Accordingly, the weekly magazines started printing stories about successful self-made men which were originally found in book form. In a sense the weekly magazines moved the arena of these stories from books to magazines, making them more accessible both literally and psychologically. Therefore, the popularity of the self-made businessmen literature grew out of the historical context of the nation-building, authoritarian

²⁰ Kim Sŏngu, 190.

²¹ Pak Sŏnga, 162.

²² Song Ŭnyŏng, 201.

government's ironically lenient policy on weekly magazines, and the medium specificity of weekly magazines.

A close analysis of books and magazine articles on successful entrepreneurs shows that these specific print media products helped justify money-making, especially by running one's own business, as exclusively a male and sometimes masculine activity. Women who made money, say by working at textile factories for fourteen hours a day, did not make it into these stories and were not celebrated as self-made people. There were only one or two stories about female entrepreneurs in each weekly series. Male entrepreneurs' journey to success was portrayed as brave, masculine, and war-like while female entrepreneurs' experience appeared abnormal because they did not receive support from their fathers and husbands. The narrative strategies employed in describing self-made men and women effectively strengthened the association between money-making and masculinity while dissociating women from money-making. The authors also portrayed women as subordinate, especially when self-made men talked about their wives, marriage, and family. Furthermore, these stories utilized an anti-Japanese narrative rather than an anti-communist one, which suggests that the writers thought readers would find anti-Japanese sentiment a more appealing motivation to work hard, not anti-communist sentiment despite the Park government's more frequent use of anti-communism.

Making Money with Bare Fists

The most prominent way of portraying money-making as a masculine activity in self-made men narratives was to repeatedly use specific words that evoked a sense of masculinity. For example, the word, "*maen-jumŏk*" (bare fists) repeatedly shows up in almost every story in *Self-made Men*. The author wrote in the epilogue that the meaning of making one's fortune (*chasusŏngga*) is "real

men who raised themselves up with *maen-jumǒk*.”²³ The word “*maen-jumǒk*” not only represented the humble background of these self-made men, but also their masculine qualities. The word, *jumǒk* (fists), had more masculine connotations than the word, *son* (hands). The use of *jumǒk* intentionally depicted these entrepreneurs as masculine men. Usually the narratives read, “he achieved this much success with *maen-jumǒk*” or “he is a real man of *maen-jumǒk* (*maen-jumǒk ŭi sanai*).” For example, the aforementioned chapter on CEO of a shipbuilding company, An Sǒngtal, emphasizes how Mr. An started his career with bare fists. It reads,

As he says, An Sǒngtal is purely from an engineer background. “Shipbuilders are naturally ignorant (*mushik*) [unaware of how the world, especially politics, works] so they have not received even the smallest amount of benefits from the politics [and from networking with politicians]...When I am just a seaman (*paet-nom*) with an engineer background, how would I be able to work with those noble politicians?” He is a person who started [his business] with bare fists. He achieved this much success by starting with bare fists.²⁴

This passage not only emphasizes the humble background where Mr. An started his career with his bare fists, but also suggests that there was no need to know how the world and politics worked to be successful in businesses. This was of course not true in the business world of 1960s Korea where prominent businessmen worked closely with politicians and benefited from their network.²⁵ However, the narrative of “bare fists are all that you need to succeed in businesses” was meant to attract the audiences by giving them a sense of hope.

²³ Yi Kūnu, 379.

²⁴ Ibid., 22.

²⁵ Park’s First Five-Year Plan (1962-66) included a blueprint of what Hyung-A Kim calls “guided capitalism” where Park “established a Confucian military-style master–student relationship between the government and the business community.” The prominent businessmen’s freedom relied on their business performance and their cooperation with the Park government. In return, Park offered “extensive measures of industry support, such as unprecedented protection and privileges, including foreign loan guarantees, financial subsidies, protection from independent unionism and a fixed-wage system.” Hyung-A Kim, 78-80.

In addition to the term, *maen-jumŏk*, the author wrote the stories in a way that qualities like persistence and diligence were considered as something masculine men should have. For example, the chapter on Ch'oe Ch'angkŭn, the CEO of a nylon company, arouses a sense of masculinity in association with Mr. Ch'oe's determination, persistence, and diligence. When Mr. Ch'oe got a small room to rent for him and his wife upon their first arrival in Seoul, Mr. Ch'oe was saddened because he and his wife could not afford a place of their own. But he thought to himself that "In order to realize his dream, his quality of persisting *like a rock but progressing like a torrent* was not going to be shaken by this small pain."²⁶ Phrases like "persist like a rock but progress like a torrent" portrayed Mr. Ch'oe as a very masculine man. His chapter is aptly titled, "Strong Energy that Knows No Failure (*chwajŏl ŭl morŭnŭn pangnyŏk*)."

Other chapters had similar descriptions of self-made men's persistence and diligence as qualities of masculinity. Yi Bong-Su, the owner of a high-rise building in Seoul who made money from running a gas station, was portrayed as a man whose journey to make his own fortune was violent and intense. The chapter describes him as "striking [at business] like an eager beaver (*purak'wi*)" and "once challenged, ceaselessly going at it to see the ultimate outcome (*kkŭtchang ŭl naeda*)"²⁷ The business Mr. Yi did was selling "Yankee products," which was not necessarily a violent activity. Still, the suggested image of Mr. Yi running around selling those products in a violent manner not only portrayed him as a masculine businessman, but also added a greater sense of achievement and success to his business.

In a similar vein, Hwang T'aemun, who ran a dye factory, was also depicted as having extremely persistent qualities. He was a "man of energy (*chŏngnyŏkka*) and an ambitious man

²⁶ Yi Kŭnu, 80-81.

²⁷ Ibid., 144;147.

(*sanai*) who does not know frustration and is tireless and full of undaunted fighting spirit (*pulgul ŭi t'uji*) who walked a thorny path (*kashi patkil*) of several rises and falls.”²⁸ The words, “tireless,” “fighting spirit,” and “thorny path” portrayed Mr. Hwang’s struggle all the more masculine. The word “man of energy” (*chǒngnyǒkka*) especially adds a sense of masculinity as the word is more often used to mean a “man who is full of stamina.” Considering that “stamina” is not necessarily a required aspect of a successful businessman, it is clear to see the author’s intention of portraying Mr. Hwang as a man who is not only successful in business, but also masculine enough to be loved by his partner. Then, the message coming from these stories is that money-making is good for you not only because you get to make money, but also because you become a masculine man. These narratives show how values of diligence, persistence, and strong will began to be associated with masculinity.

Furthermore, these stories had many sentences and phrases that provoked an image of a war. The suggested violence of such narratives strengthened the masculine character of the self-made men. For example, Mr. An’s story depicted his time learning how to run the machines in a factory as if it was a war against complicated machinery:

He decided to fight the machine with his teeth clenched. He did not spare himself (*mom ŭl akkida*). He continuously ran around, throwing himself to complicated machines. ... he even gave up (*chibō ch'iuda*) his holidays. He stayed late in the factory, worked (*chumurŭda*) the machines, and concentrated all his power and efforts (*on'gat him ŭl kiurida*) on it. He did not let his exhausted body lay in bed. He wrestled (*ssirŭm*) with books on mechanical engineering, staying up all night. It was a bloody and desperate effort (*p'i nanŭn noryōk*). There is nothing that cannot be fought (*ssawōsō tojeji annŭn il ŭn ōpta*).²⁹

²⁸ Yi Kŭnu, 180.

²⁹ Ibid., 25.

Words like “with his teeth clenched,” “fight,” “wrestled,” and “bloody effort” drew a picture of a fight scene in a war, not of a person learning how to work with the machine.³⁰ Although the English translation does not convey the full degree of violence suggested in Korean, phrases like “gave up (*chibō ch'iuda*) his holidays” and “there is nothing that cannot be fought (*ssawōsō toeji annūn il ūn ōpta*)” added more masculine character to Mr. An as if it was not only okay but encouraged to be violent in his effort to learn the necessary skills.

Interestingly, the factory where Mr. An had this war-like “fight” against the complicated machinery was Japanese-owned. The factory was where Mr. An started his first career as an engineer although his position was a “mere (*ssaguryō*) apprentice.”³¹ The motivation that drove Mr. An to launch his war against the machinery was also partially coming from his anti-Japanese sentiment. Anti-Japanese sentiment was, as the next section of this chapter will show, stronger and a more recurring theme than anti-communist sentiment in the *Self-made Men* series. Mr. An’s “war” was against Japan, not North Korea despite the fact that South Korea fought a war with North Korea in the recent past.

Yet, it would be a mistake to quickly dismiss this war-like portrayal of the self-made men’s experiences as only being a war against Japan. Portraying these self-made businessmen as not only masculine men, but as “soldiers” fighting in a war has a further implication in the context of the mid-1960s. The Korean population had just gone through the Korean War (1950-53), and about 32,000 Korean soldiers were sent to Vietnam War between 1964 and 1973. Although the memory of the Korean War remained traumatic, the sending of Korean troops to Vietnam was publicly

³⁰ In other stories, even money and saving were qualified with the word “bloody.” For example, the chapter on Chōn Chongkuk, CEO of an automobile company, uses “bloody money” (*p’i nanūn ton*) and “bloody saving” (*p’i nanūn chōch’uk*). Yi, 255. Considering the words, “money” and “saving” were not usually associated with the word, “blood,” it is clear that the intention of the author to describe money and saving in a violent way was to associate money-making with masculinity.

³¹ Yi Kūnu, 25.

praised as a noble act of nationalism both by the Park government and the U.S. Despite the violent and inhumane character of any war, various media content from popular songs to movies provoked a positive sentiment of the fighting of a war in Vietnam.

In this context, it was necessary for the government to also include non-military people into the proud and noble “war” mindset to effectively mobilize them as well. Likewise, it would also benefit the publishers because the stories would sell more if they treated non-military businessmen as important and as masculine as the soldiers in Vietnam. Provoking an image of a war and associating it with money-making was then a strategic choice. Portraying businessmen those who had never even fired a gun before just as militarized as actual soldiers fighting in the war was designed to make those non-military men feel included and important.

The fact that skilled male workers and men in heavy and chemical industries were also dubbed “industrial warriors” (*sanŏp chŏnsa*) by the Park government can also be understood in this light. The Park government promoted the concept of “industrial warriors” to mass produce skilled workers needed for heavy and chemical industrialization in the 1970s.³² By doing so, Park sought to consolidate his political legitimacy by embedding his economic goals into the goals of ordinary, mostly young male, individuals and collective groups.³³ Categorizing men as “warriors” and portraying them as soldier-like would work in favor of the Park government not just in effectively mobilizing a bigger population for various policies of economic development, but also in increasing the legitimacy of the military government itself. In this sense, the “militarized modernity and gendered citizenship” that Seungsook Moon discusses goes beyond soldiers and

³² Hyung-A Kim, “Industrial Warriors: South Korea’s First Generation of Industrial Workers in Post-Developmental Korea,” *Asian Studies Review* 37, no. 4 (2013): 579.

³³ *Ibid.*, 580.

industrial soldiers in heavy and chemical industries.³⁴ The self-made man stories invited entrepreneurs as part of the “militarized modernity.” The militarized portrayal of businessmen not only helped legitimize the military government but also made the population aspire to be involved in the militarized process of modernization. The message to the Korean male audience was that it was very possible for them to be included in the much praised national “war” of modernization if they became successful businessmen.

Money-making as a Nationalist Task

The self-made men stories added a sense of masculinity to the notion of money-making by portraying it as an anti-Japanese nationalist activity. Media other than weekly magazines, such as newspapers and newsreels, often mentioned and praised successful businessmen as the force driving the national economy, but these news reports did not necessarily attract audiences to want to learn about these businessmen’s lives and emulate them. However, serially published writings about self-made businessmen delved into the details of their lives, providing anecdotal descriptions of their childhood experiences under Japanese colonial rule, how they became successful in their businesses and what kind of life they were enjoying at the time of their interview with the magazine editors.

The self-made men in the *Weekly Hankook* were described as having strong anti-Japanese sentiment and such feelings towards Japan served as a reason why they succeeded in their businesses. For example, *Self-made Men*’s chapter on Yi Hakch’öl, CEO of a vessel company, focuses on Mr. Yi’s childhood as the formative period when he developed his anti-Japanese sentiment. The chapter begins with a scene where young Mr. Yi was infuriated with the so-called

³⁴ See Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005).

“Gwangju Student Incident” in 1929 where Korean students were beaten by the Japanese students. While other friends of Mr. Yi’s could not “subdue their boiling feelings, clenching their fists” Mr. Yi could rise above such anger and thought realistically about what to do to revenge against the Japanese.³⁵

The following section shows that anti-Japanese nationalism was a reason Mr. Yi’s ferry business succeeded. Yi Hakch’öl recalled that consumers chose to use his ferry over Japanese ones despite the higher fare because of Koreans’ “pure nationalism.”³⁶ The chapter justifies Mr. Yi’s money-making by describing his efforts as the manifestation of “blood-boiling (*p’i kküllün*) anti-Japanese ideology” rather than profit-oriented goals.³⁷ Mr. Yi recalled that he did not even feel tired despite his intense schedule of going to work at 5 A.M. and working without a break until 10 P.M. every day because [beating the Japanese company] was so satisfying (*t’ongk’wae hada*).³⁸ Here we can see that making profit was not only justified but considered a noble act of nationalism because it meant overthrowing a Japanese company.

Interestingly, despite Mr. Yi’s noble act of nationalism, he actually had been reported for failing to pay a significant amount of tax and had his property seized the same year his story appeared in the *Weekly Hankook*. *Maeil kyōngje* (*Maeil Business Newspaper*) published a list of individuals and companies that did not pay taxes in time in August 1966 and Mr. Yi was included in the list.³⁹ The newspaper report came out three weeks before the *Weekly Hankook* published a piece on Mr. Yi’s story and celebrated his successful business and his purely anti-Japanese and

³⁵ Yi Kūnu, 49.

³⁶ Ibid., 52-53.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “List of Individuals and Companies with High Overdue Taxes,” [Koaek ch’enapcha mit napseja myōngdan] *Maeil kyōngje*, August 5, 1966.

nationalist cause in making profit. Later that year his story turned into a chapter in *Self-made Men*. The coverage of Mr. Yi's self-made success in the *Weekly Hankook* and in *Self-made Men* created an image of Mr. Yi as a selfless, anti-Japanese, and nationalistic businessman who would tear up as fellow Koreans showed "pure nationalism." His not-so-nationalistic deed of not paying the taxes was conveniently forgotten because it did not fit into the narratives of successful self-made men who justified making money as an anti-Japanese, nationalistic activity.

Still, the theme of anti-Japanese sentiment as a justification of making money and succeeding in business recurred especially in the descriptions of self-made men's early career during the colonial period. Again, what was left out of these success narratives was these self-made men's collaboration with the Japanese. For example, An Söngtal, CEO of a shipbuilding company, also emphasizes that his anti-Japanese sentiment motivated him to work hard and led him to a high-ranking position. He recalled that his difficult years as a mere apprentice at a Japanese-dominant factory in the 1930s finally paid off when he became the plant manager (*kongjangjang*). The position where he had Japanese engineers "wrapped around his finger" (*sonagwie chumurŭda*) gave him a feeling of success.⁴⁰

Mr. An's story paints a very emotional scene where Mr. An finally rose to the position of a plant manager after years of hard work he had to endure and after the sorrow he felt as a Korean in the Japanese-dominant workplace. Similarly, the piece on Shin Kyökho, CEO of Lotte Company, adds extra sense of victory to Shin's success because Mr. Shin went through "hunger and bloody labor (*p'i nanŭn nodong*) amidst Japanese people's contempt against Koreans whom the Japanese looked down upon as if the Koreans were unwanted poisonous mushrooms."⁴¹ Not only does this

⁴⁰ Yi Kŭnu, 27.

⁴¹ Ibid., 276.

kind of description give a message that years of hard work would pay off eventually, but phrases like “suppress (*cheap*) the Japanese” and “have the Japanese wrapped around his finger” also strongly suggest that when that hard work pays off, it will also bring a sense of happiness and satisfaction coming from outperforming the Japanese. Suppressing the Japanese was something that Koreans could not even think of during the colonial period, but it became not only possible but encouraged. This sense of pride upon being in superior positions than the Japanese effectively gave a message that making money was not only justified as a nationalist task, but as a masculine thing to do.

However, just like the disparity between Yi Hakch'öl's nationalist cause to make money in the self-made man discourse and his failure to pay taxes in real life, both An Söngtal and Shin Kyökhö later became known for their collaboration with the Japanese in their businesses. Despite the strong anti-Japanese motivation to succeed in business, An Söngtal frequently visited Japan to expand his business in the late 1960s, and collaborated with a Japanese shipbuilding company in 1973 in the state-led initiative to build a large-scale shipyard in Korea.⁴² Similarly, despite the recurring emphasis on his struggle due to discrimination in Japan as a Korean, Shin Kyökhö thrived in doing business in Japan as a Korean-Japanese.⁴³ He also jumped into the speaker-manufacturing industry in collaboration with a Japanese company in 1973.⁴⁴

All three businesses benefited from their collaboration with the Japanese, which was partly the result of the Korea-Japan normalization treaty in 1965. The Park government decided to receive

⁴² “Five Companies to Collaborate with Japan,” [Hanil hapchak 5 kae sa kyölc'höng] *Kyönggyang shinmun*, October 10, 1973, 2.

⁴³ Mr. Shin's business that he has run to this day is a multinational conglomerate company, Lotte Corporation. He died in 2020 and his son now runs the company.

⁴⁴ “150 Million Dollars of Foreign Direct Investment to be Introduced,” [oeja lök 5ch'önman pul toip] *Kyönggyang shinmun*, October 19, 1973: 2.

financial help from Japan after witnessing the US aid decreasing in the early 1960s.⁴⁵ Park needed a good source of economic assistance to support his first Five-year Plan and to legitimize his rule.⁴⁶ Park emphasized that Korea could “justifiably demand money from Japan” and that it would be a “huge loss for the nation if anyone destroys that [financial source] in the name of anti-Japanese sentiment or humiliation.”⁴⁷ The majority of the Korean public were not happy with the decision to “move past” colonial memories and to normalize relations with Japan, organizing protests against the Park government.⁴⁸ The Treaty was after all signed on June 22, 1965. The amount of aid Korea agreed in return for restoring relations with Japan was a total package valued at \$800 million, \$500 million of which was in the forms of government loans and commercial credits.⁴⁹ The Park government not only decided to actively learn the Japanese industrialization model,⁵⁰ but distributed the foreign loans, from Japan and the US, to large conglomerates.⁵¹ In July 1966, only 14 businesses received the loans but the amount was \$50 million, which made some journalists to complain that the loans were only for the “benefits of a few specific individuals” chosen by the

⁴⁵ Hyung-A Kim, 97.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Yi Tosong, ed. *A True Record, Park Chung Hee and Korea–Japan Normalization Talks: From May 16 to the Signing of the Agreement* [Sillok, Pak Chonghŭi wa Hanil hoedam: oilyuk esŏ choin kkaji] (Seoul: Hansŏng, 1995), 32 cited in Hyung-A Kim, 94.

⁴⁸ Hyaung-a Kim, 98. “All Citizens Should Be Able to Accept the Normalization Treaty,” [On kungmin-i naptŭk-hal su innŭn hanil hoedam t'agyŏl-iŏya handa], *Kyŏngnyang shinmun*, January 8, 1965, 3. “ROK-Japan Series No. 7: (3) Issues,” [Hanil che 7 chang (3) munjejŏm] *Tonga ilbo*, February 16, 1965.

⁴⁹ Hyung-A Kim, 98.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 173; 175; 178.

⁵¹ Ibid., 117.

Park government.⁵² Such “preferential” foreign loan arrangements and corruption between politicians and *chaebŏl* received much public criticism.⁵³

However, no mention of collaboration with or receipt of loans from Japan was to be found in self-made men stories in either the *Weekly Hankook* or *Self-made Men*. Instead, anti-Japanese sentiment and determination to suppress the Japanese filled the narratives. This disparity suggests that even the decade of freedom from Japanese colonial rule still did not emotionally free Koreans from their colonial past. When the Park government tried to sign the normalization treaty with Japan, his economy-first nationalism met with strong resistance from the masses. The protesters called his action “anti-nationalist” and performed a funeral of what Park called “nationalist democracy.”⁵⁴ Historian Pak Myŏngrim suggests that there was a contrast between Park’s nationalism and the non-governmental mass’s nationalism. Park prioritized economic development and realistic benefits to the point of forgiving the evil, but the moralist non-governmental mass was not willing to forgive the colonial rule by Japan.⁵⁵

In such context, any mention of the self-made men’s collaboration with the Japanese would defeat the purpose of popularizing the stories. The narratives could work effectively in drawing more attention from the readers and resonating with them emotionally when the self-made men were as anti-Japanese as the rest of the Korean population. The Park government’s signing of the

⁵² “14 Commercial Loans Approved,” [Sangŏm ch’agwan 14kŏn sŭngin] *Kyŏnggyang shinmun*, August 1, 1966, 5; “Foreign Loans’ Dark Side (2) Japan-Dependent System,” [Oeja kŭnŭl (2) taecil ŭjjon ch’eje] *Tonga ilbo*, April 1, 1966, 1.

⁵³ Hyung-A Kim, 117.

⁵⁴ See *June 3rd Comrade Party: June 3rd Student Movement History* [6·3 Tongjihoe: 6·3 Haksaeŋ undongsa] (Seoul: Yŏksabip’yŏngsa, 2001).

⁵⁵ Pak Myŏngrim, “Study on Non-governmental Resistance during the Park Chung Hee Era, 1961-1979: With a Focus on Emergence and Spread of Resistance Agenda,” [Pakchŏnghŭi shidae chaeyauŭi chŏhange kwanhan yŏn’gu, 1961-1979: chŏhangŭijeŭi tŭngjanggwa hwaksanŭl chungshimŭro] *Han’guk chŏngch’i oegyosa nonch’ong* 30, no. 1 (2008), 29-62.

treaty despite the public resistance in 1965 just a year before the *Weekly Hankook* published the self-made men series was too fresh of a memory to consider economic benefits of normalizing the relations with Japan.

By contrast, there was an absence of anti-communism as a justification to make money. Although the Park government repeatedly emphasized anti-communism as a reason for Koreans to work hard, the mention of North Korea is rather brief and in passing. The self-made businessmen who lived in the north moved to the south because “there was no place to settle in North Korea where the whole country was ruled by the Communist Party” and they could not stand the “Communist Party’s bullying (*haengp’ae*) that kept getting worse day by day” and “brutal barbarity (*mudohan manhaeng*).”⁵⁶

The role of these brief references to North Korea or the Communist Party was to tell the message that it was a better choice for these self-made men to leave North Korea and settle down in the south for their business success. Although words like “bullying” (*haengp’ae*) and “brutal barbarity” (*mudohan manhaeng*) portrayed North Korea as an evil enemy, the degree of anti-communist sentiment is a lot less than that of anti-Japanese sentiment presented in the stories. The mention of North Korea only served to tell a message that first it was a better choice for the self-made men to leave North Korea and that South Korea was the “land of freedom.”⁵⁷ Compared to

⁵⁶ Yi Kūnu, 34; 84; 117.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 117.

Park's speeches that portrayed North Korea in bluntly negative terms,⁵⁸ the descriptions of North Korea in self-made man stories were less negative.⁵⁹

The underwhelming mention of North Korea suggests that the discussion of North Korea was unnecessary in selling stories of self-made men. The publishers thought Koreans did not motivate themselves to make money because they feared or hated communism, but were more concerned with surpassing the Japanese economically. Money-making was more of an anti-Japanese nationalist task than an anti-communist nationalist task. Despite the more recent past of the Korean War, Koreans were not as “mad” with North Koreans as they were with the Japanese. South and North Koreans were the same family after all, but the Japanese were not. Even after 35 years of assimilation policy and years of the Park government's efforts to normalize Korean-Japanese relations, Japan still remained as the ultimate enemy to defeat and that goal was crystal clear when opportunities unfolded. The absence of anti-communist narratives suggests that previous studies that attributed Park's top-down anti-communist messages to economic development did not fully take into account the fact that anti-communist messages were not as effective in motivating Koreans to work harder as the government might have expected.

“Continuous, Rational, Capitalistic Enterprise”

Once money-making was normalized as a masculine activity, men strove to find ways to be better at it. The self-made man stories highlighted the value of “continuous, rational, capitalistic

⁵⁸ For example, Park's speech in celebration of the annual Police Day in 1965 frequently mentions the Korean War as the time that the South Korean population experienced hardships, and describes North Korea's current activities as vicious, violent, and threatening. See “Speech in Celebration of the 20th Police Day on October 21, 1965” [che 20 hoe kyōng-ch'al ūi nal e chū-ūm han ch'i-sa] in President Park Chung Hee's Speech Collection No. 2 (Seoul: President's Secretary Office, 1965), 336-37.

⁵⁹ Some of the descriptions about North Korea were even positive. For example, the P'yŏngnam (Northwest of North Korea) people were described as having “strong will.” See Yi, 198.

enterprise.”⁶⁰ Embracing these values meant that the self-made men were to put individual pursuit of money-making as their top priority. As Kwŏn and others suggest, once wealth became the virtue of the era and longing for wealth recognized as a just thing, any means and methods to earn money ahead of others were justified in weekly magazines.⁶¹ Despite the nationalist, anti-Japanese narratives that run through these stories, these men eventually put individualistic causes before the collective, national ones.

The clearest example is the section titled “Let’s Save Myself First” (*Narŭl mŏnjŏ kuhaja*) in Im Chŏngsu’s chapter in *Self-made Men*. As suggested in the title, Mr. Im’s story revolved around his success in putting his fate before the faltering fate of his nation during the colonial period. Mr. Im reminisced that when other students were just singing futility and enjoyed smoking and drinking, helplessly looking at their own homeland being crushed by the suppression of the Japanese, he told himself that he would not let any cigarettes or alcohol touch his mouth before becoming a great person when growing up. The author wrote, “whenever he fell into despair, he raised himself up again with a new determination, *worrying about his future first than the future of his homeland*.”⁶²

Putting oneself before the nation, especially during the colonial period was not something people could proudly talk about. This was particularly so because of popular sentiment against some Koreans who benefitted economically and politically from their collaboration with the Japanese. As mentioned earlier, in the 1960s, the memories of Japanese colonial rule still remained fresh and traumatic. Anti-Japanese sentiment was rampant, and these feelings extended to pro-

⁶⁰ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. trans. Talcott Parsons. 2nd ed. (London, New York: Routledge, 2001), 17.

⁶¹ Kwŏn and others, 255-256.

⁶² Yi Kŭnu, 201. Emphasis added.

Japanese Koreans who not only actively collaborated with the Japanese but also those who did not actively resist colonial rule. The fact that these self-made men stories could proudly put phrases like “let’s save myself first” or “worry about his future first than the future of his homeland” suggests that individual pursuit of money-making was justified to the point where people should not feel ashamed of saving and worrying about themselves even if it meant putting themselves before their homelands.

The self-made men’s prioritizing of individual goals over national goals puts in question top-down nationalist narratives of the economic development of Korea during the Park era. The sheer degree of the Park government’s efforts in mobilizing the Korean population made it seem that those efforts actually worked in mobilizing Koreans to follow the government-led policies and campaigns. However, it has not been at all clear whether such top-down initiatives were the very reason why Koreans actually motivated themselves to work hard, and to make and save money. The success of government initiatives such as the New Village Movement (*Saemaül undong*) is often attributed to government propaganda and effective mobilization. For example, Hyung-a Kim calls the New Village Movement a “top-down rural development campaign” that the Park government launched in 1970 to promote the “renewal of the Korean people’s spirit of self-reliance and independence (*chaju*) and their determination to strive for their own betterment through national development.”⁶³ The state-guided activities included the monthly meeting of neighborhood meetings and Saemaül Leaders’ Training for communal projects ranging from paving the roads to improving rice harvest.⁶⁴

⁶³ Hyung-A Kim, 134.

⁶⁴ Hyung-A Kim, “Ch. 6 Saemaül Movement: From Top-down Rural Development to Yusin Reform,” Hyung-A Kim, *Korea’s Development Under Park Chung Hee: Rapid Industrialization, 1961-79* (London: Routledge, 2004). The author uses the term New Village Movement as it is widely used in Korean studies scholarly work.

Although scholars such as Hyung-A Kim see the New Village Movement as an example of successful state-led mobilization of the population, there was much resistance against the campaign and the motivation to participate was rather individualistic than collective. Although very successful in the beginning– with tangible accomplishments throughout the country, the New Village Movement gradually alienated many people from embracing state guidelines regarding diligence, self-help, and cooperation.⁶⁵ Koreans started to regard this state-enforced movement as a compulsory tool to mobilize the population for the state’s political and economic goals, and not flexible enough to take the population’s changing demand into consideration. Historian Youngmi Kim suggests that the roots of the New Village Movement were in the voluntary, grassroots initiatives that the local villagers started, not the Park government launched.⁶⁶ The top-down aspect of the New Village Movement could not have produced individuals whose motivations and aspirations were almost exclusively economic. The Koreans who were often summed as participants of the movement had varying motivations that sometimes clashed with the government. Still, studies generalize the outcome of the New Village Movement as a big part of successful modernization of Korea and attribute the Park government to its success.⁶⁷

Once individual pursuit of money-making was justified and considered as a norm, men had to compete with others to make more money than them. The self-made man stories explained in full detail what it meant to be ahead of the game. For example, Yi Bong-su, the owner of a high-

⁶⁵ Ko Wŏn, “The New Village Movement in Countryside and Making of Modern Subject during the Park Chung Hee Era,” [Pakchŏnghŭi shigi nongch'on saemaŭl undonggwa kŭndaejŏk kungmin mandŭlgi] *Kyŏngje wa sahoe* 69 (2006): 197.

⁶⁶ Kim Yŏngmi, *Their New Village Movement* [Kudul ui Saemaŭl undong] (Seoul: P’urun Yoksa, 2009).

⁶⁷ In addition to Hyung-A Kim’s chapter, see also Young Jo Lee, “The Countryside” in *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, ed. Pyŏng-guk Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011).

rise building in Seoul who made money from running a gas station, stressed the need for competition to succeed in business:

When others woke up at five in the morning, he woke up at four and opened the door to his gas station; when others ran the gas station until ten at night, he kept the door open and continued doing business until eleven. When his employees ate beef soup, he just had udon [to save money and time]; when his employees enjoyed their holidays, he came to work alone and would let himself be smeared all over with grease.⁶⁸

This rather extreme degree of competition was portrayed as normal and necessary to the point where some degree of suffering such as staying up late, giving up holidays, and substituting a full meal with a cheaper and faster option was justified.

Similarly, Kim Kwangsu who managed to open his shop at Tongdaemun Market recalled how he maximized profit by selling tangerines at a higher price than the wholesale price he had originally paid and doing so repeatedly. Kim Kwangsu's section especially gives a very detailed and emotional picture of how an ordinary man who had not known how to do business transformed into a capitalistic-minded businessman. The section begins with a scene where young Kim Kwangsu smells miso soup outside a restaurant and feels the pain of hunger. Young Kim Kwangsu only has a small amount of seed money, but he has to bring food to his family who is kicked out into the street and waiting desperately for him to return with food. He buys a box of tangerines in the fruit section of the Tongdaemun Market and tries to sell them at a higher price. At first, he is too timid and shy to yell out to customers to buy his tangerines, but he gains confidence upon having the first customer. His voice goes up and he sells all the tangerines with enough profit to buy rice for his family. He does not stop there but continues to buy more boxes of tangerines so that he could make more profit.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Yi Kūnu, 149.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 155-160.

This way of maximizing profit was certainly not something new that just came out of the 1960s. Merchants even during the Chosŏn period had this practice. However, the narrative that this book employs to tell the story of this particular self-made man is doing something else. It is not just detailing how to make money, but it is also creating a relatable message with a very personal and emotional voice. The readers are invited to easily dream about transforming themselves into capitalistic-minded businessmen and succeeding in business with easy first steps. Also, the emotional tone that this section generates makes Mr. Kim Kwangsu's transformation from a starving little boy to someone who is enlightened and reborn as a capitalist-minded man more dramatic and relatable.

It was not just buying something at a cheaper price and selling it at a higher price that these stories passed on as tips on money-making. Different kinds of tips, from taking full advantage of the propitiousness of the times to seizing all possible opportunities to make money, were laid out in detail. For example, Hwang T'aemun of a chemical company realized the advantage of cheap labor in Korea when he stated, "Because the labor wage is cheaper here in Korea compared to other countries, it is profitable [to do an export business]." ⁷⁰

Also, being able to predict the trend in the market was portrayed as something that these self-made men had in common. For example, Mr. Im Chŏngsu's chapter describes how Mr. Im started a nail manufacturing factory because he had predicted that new hopes for the future after liberation would generate a construction boom. His firm belief allowed him to have confidence in borrowing money to start the business. As he predicted, the nails sold well and he made large

⁷⁰ Kumisŏgwan p'yŏnjippu, 230. Interestingly, Mr. Hwang seemed to have taken the lesson of maximizing profit too far as he was reported in a newspaper for not paying the taxes on time and for malfeasance in office just a few years after his story was published in the *Weekly Hankook*. "Stealing Company Money for Private Business," [hoesa konggŭm ppaenae, kaein saŏp e ssŏ] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, April 23, 1968, 3; "340 Million Won Overdue," [koæk ch'enap i 34 ŏk] *Maeil kyŏngje*, December 1, 1969, 3.

profit.⁷¹ Despite the fact that these men started their career with “bare fists,” they were already enlightened with skills necessary for their business success and they had a sharp eye on where they could make money. These stories effectively encouraged the readers to also look carefully at where opportunities might pop up and read the market trends.

What is also interesting about Mr. Im’s story is that he even risked borrowing money (incurring debt; *pit ŭl ōtta*) to establish a nail manufacturing company because he was so sure he could make money. Borrowing money (*pit ŭl ōtta*) often had a negative connotation as it was a risky thing to do and generally it was not accepted as an ideal way of making money. However, many stories in self-made man books portrayed it as a courageous thing to do and a necessary step for business success. The chapter on Chang Hakyŏp, CEO of a *soju* (Korean spirit distilled from rice, wheat, or barley) company is a good example:

Although he established a company after he came to Seoul with three million hwan, because his family was so large, that money was quickly spent as living expenses in just a few months. So, he had no choice but to solely rely on private loans for his business funds. He went looking for people he knew and started borrowing money from them. At the same time, he mobilized his wife and [his colleagues’] wives to gather their money from *kye* that was popular during that time. He borrowed any money where he could get his hands on regardless of how high or low the interest rate was.⁷²

This chapter effectively eliminates the negative stigma attached to the notion of borrowing money and incurring debt:

The interests from private loans he made for the business funds kept accumulating, and the living expenses for a big family were huge. So, naturally the only thing that was increasing was debt. However, Mr. Chang carried out with his original plan without being even a little anxious about facing the immediate reality [of having to pay off the debt].⁷³

⁷¹ Yi Kūnu, 203.

⁷² Ibid., 235.

⁷³ Ibid., 235-236. In major newspapers in the 1960s, the word, “debt” appeared most frequently in association with negative words such as death, suicide, and murder.

Mr. Chang, with his unshakable determination and a “long-term perspective,” kept borrowing money with a firm belief that he would make money one day.⁷⁴ He spent money on advertising his soju throughout the country in various forms of media and doing research for the better quality of soju. In this chapter, the fact that he continued to borrow money and accumulate debt is not depicted as a negative or irrational activity. It is clearly portrayed as a necessary and courageous step for a bigger cause. His soju company indeed made a lot of money from such investment.

The act of borrowing money to start a business is portrayed as something that marks a transformation from an ordinary man into a fully capitalist, profit-making businessman. The message was that you were not courageous and masculine enough if you felt too unsure and timid about borrowing money to do business. The normative way of making money was perhaps to work in a big company after graduating from a prestigious university. Succeeding in businesses was still considered something rare that could only happen to a very few lucky people.⁷⁵ However, the frequent mention of these self-made men’s decisions to “borrow money” to start a business started to eliminate the stigma and negative connotation attached to it. In these stories, the decision to borrow money did not mean betting on something that was risky and irrational. It meant a rational business decision based on the firm belief in succeeding in the business.

Furthermore, these stories portrayed that it was okay to change business fields to make more money although it was also as risky as speculating on the market. The consistent emphasis on pursuing one career path and working hard to succeed in that specific field (*han umul ūl p'ada*), did not necessarily mean that a self-made man should only stick to that field. It was not only okay but encouraged to change the business field if it meant making more profit. Many self-made men

⁷⁴ Ibid., 236.

⁷⁵ “A Quarter Century Since Liberation: Young People Today Series No. 2 – Perspectives on Success in Life,” [Haebangsa pan segi: onŭl ūi chŏlmŭnidŭl 2 ipshin ch'ulse rŭl ponŭn nun] *Tonga ilbo*, August 11, 1970, 5.

actually made more money by switching and expanding their business fields. For example, Kim Tongsik, CEO of a furniture company, also made money by doing real estate business during and after the Korean War. Mr. Kim started buying real estate property because “when things were unstable and the sounds of gunfire were still loud in the north, the price of the real estate in Seoul was very much like a giveaway price.”⁷⁶ The price of the real estate he had bought rose exponentially after the recapture of Seoul by the UN forces and brought him huge profit.

This section paints a clear picture of speculation that was happening as early as during the Korean War period. Previous studies often trace the history of real estate speculation to the 1970s when the Kangnam area was being developed, but Mr. Kim’s story tells us that the practice of buying and selling real estate property by speculating had existed much before. Furthermore, speculation was portrayed as something desirable. Mr. Kim was “born to a poor farming family, barely managed to finish primary school, went through the childhood period with a depressing future.”⁷⁷ So, when he finally made money through his bloody struggles, it was not only okay that he made profit from speculation, but it was something he deserved. The author even clearly justified the process in which he made a lot of money from his furniture business by saying “Kim Tongsik did not cheat in his business [*pudanghan hyöpchap*] in devastated postwar Seoul. He was only making a pitch in the ‘money-making’ [*ton böri*] by fair buying and selling.”⁷⁸ The firm voice the author is making in this section not only confirms the fairness of the process by which Mr. Kim accumulated profit, but also eliminates possible questions and doubt that could come from the readers.

⁷⁶ Yi Kūnu, 72.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 62.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 72.

Just like how money-making through speculation was portrayed as an acceptable and justified way of money-making, values that had been thought to be associated with cunning merchants in the past began to be celebrated as necessary qualities of men in the new era. Values such as creativity, competitiveness, and reading the market trend emerged as more important values than the long-cherished values such as integrity, honesty, and cooperation. Pak Sichun in *Self-made Men* who ran a candle and laundry soap company recalled how it was thanks to his own “clever idea” to build a separate machine for producing candles and to sell both candles and laundry soap that he became rich. He then stated that success comes when one targets a niche area that no other people can think of, and diligently plans ahead of other people.⁷⁹ Similarly, in the story of Kim Sukūn, the owner of a briquette company, the author credited the “timing” (*kaekkwanjōgin shiun*) of his briquette business because it was when the government was pushing towards more use of briquette instead of wood for fuel.⁸⁰ Yi Hakch'öl, CEO of a vessel company, also attracted more ferry passengers even when the ferry fare was more expensive than the other company by giving out souvenirs to the ticketed passengers.⁸¹ When these men realized very means of maximizing profit with capitalistic thinking and a sense of competition, they were enlightened and became totally different men.

Dissociation of Women from Money-making

Historian Mary A. Yeager argues that the history and historiography of business have made women invisible.⁸² Although recent scholarship made efforts to bring women to the fore in business history,

⁷⁹ Yi Kūnu, 89-92.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 100.

⁸¹ Ibid., 52.

⁸² Mary A. Yeager, “Gender, Race, Entrepreneurship,” in Teresa da Silva Lopes et al., *The Routledge Companion to the Makers of Global Business* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 71.

“masculinism” in business history stays rather unchallenged.⁸³ As Yeager suggests, attention to “literary sources, to advertising, branding, and other visual and media technologies” shed light on the impact of gendered representations and images of entrepreneurship, and the print media in 1960s Korea serves as a good example.⁸⁴ The way popular Korean magazines and books associated men with entrepreneurship, thus reinforcing the “masculinism,” was not simply through the absence of female entrepreneurs’ stories, but also through different narratives used to portray men and women. Of course, there were comparatively a lot fewer women’s stories in both *Self-Made Men* and the “soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” series, but what dissociated women from money-making was the way these stories portrayed women’s success and journey differently from men. Most explicitly, in contrast to how self-made men’s stories provoked a sense of masculinity through descriptions of war-like anti-Japanese nationalism, there was absence of the anti-Japanese and nationalist voice in self-made women’s stories. Neither Kim Jaeun in *Self-made Men* nor Sin Ukyŏng’s story in *Blood and Sweat Do Not Speak* had anti-Japanese narratives. The dissociation of women from nationalism attests that making money as a nationalist task was only applicable to men, not women. Specific words to describe self-made men and their qualities as masculine were also either absent or replaced with different words that did not provoke a sense of masculinity. For example, the word, *jumŏk* (fists), which was most frequently used to portray self-made men as masculine was replaced with the word “*son*” (hands) when the story was about a female entrepreneur.⁸⁵

The fact that the self-made men series in the *Weekly Hankook* and the two books published based on the series each had only one story of a female entrepreneur deserves attention. Despite

⁸³ Yi Kŭnu, 69.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 78.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 305.

being about female entrepreneurs, these two stories actually strengthened the association between men and money-making. These women were portrayed “exceptional” because they had no husbands doing the “self-making” of fortunes. The only businesswoman in *Self-made Men*, Ms. Kim Chaeŭn, was the CEO of an entertainment company that had US soldiers as primary customers. She was a widower who lived with her only daughter. In contrast to the other 24 stories about male businessmen, her story seems to have been written to evoke a feeling of sympathy rather than that of admiration. Ms. Kim’s husband died of an illness during the Korean War, and she had worked as a teacher when her husband was alive. She could not go back to teaching after her husband’s death because it would remind her of “unbearable memories of her happy days with her husband.”⁸⁶ Here, the story created a message that her career options and ways to self-make her fortune were bound by the absence of her husband. While other self-made men were ambitiously chasing after opportunities to make money even if it meant leaving their wives at home, in this case, Ms. Kim still had to think about her late husband in dealing with financial difficulties, and the author depicted it as a normative thing to do.

The author created a more apparently gendered narrative in a way that women were considered to be dependent on men in the description of when Ms. Kim was presented with a new opportunity to make money. When Ms. Kim’s cousin suggested making a business out of the junk materials from the US army base, Ms. Kim hesitated despite the profitability and feasibility of the business. Then the author wrote, “was it because she did not yet mature from the college version of herself who had dreamed of touring the world by becoming a wife of a diplomat?”⁸⁷ This kind of speculation and portraying Ms. Kim as a passive woman who waited for opportunities to unfold

⁸⁶ Yi Kŭnu, 300.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

through a man not only took away her agency, but also sent a message that women's upward mobility and success had to be dependent on men.

Contrary to how marriage was portrayed as something supplemental to self-made men, it was portrayed as something essential in Ms. Kim's case. The author quoted Ms. Kim's account, "some people advise me that I get a fake husband (*kidung sŏbang*) at least if I do not want to be looked down on ... but I get annoyed whenever I hear something like that."⁸⁸ The author then added, "but she says it is true that she feels lonely sometimes at night after a busy day at work thinking what all this trouble is for."⁸⁹ In addition to the emphasis on her marital status, the depiction of Ms. Kim's family as "small and simple" (*tanch'ol*) also stressed the fact that her case was abnormal and deserved some sympathy because other stories clearly set the normative family as consisting of a self-made father, a supporting wife, and children. This kind of story put more psychological pressure on men to be the sole breadwinner of a household because these women were clearly suffering because of the absence of husbands.

Furthermore, once self-made men's money-making was associated with a masculine sphere of activity, their wives' position in the money-making process was relegated to a secondary one. Many stories relegated women's role to the domestic sphere ironically by giving credit to the wives for their role in supporting the self-made men. For example, Kim Sukŭn, the CEO of a briquette company acknowledged his wife's *naejo* (domestic support) for his success. His wife's *naejo* of managing the household allowed him to solely focus on his business.⁹⁰ Thanking their wives, these self-made men effectively confined women's role to the domestic sphere. Clear

⁸⁸ Yi Kŭnu, 305-6.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 306.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 105.

boundaries were drawn for what women were expected to do when men were busy trying to establish themselves as self-made men.

In some stories, self-made men leaving their wives and mothers behind in pursuit of business opportunities sounded normal. For example, Kim Tongsik, CEO of a furniture company, reminisced that he went to Manchuria in 1944 to take the opportunity of making money because the carpentry market was doing better in Manchuria than in the Korean peninsula.⁹¹ So, Mr. Kim left his pregnant wife, mother, and younger siblings behind. Through the use of words like “hope” or “bravery,” the author depicted Mr. Kim’s abandonment of family as not just normal, but noble because he was chasing after opportunities to make money for his family.

Furthermore, even when women were in the public sphere working with men, there was a clear gendered division of labor which regarded women’s role as secondary. For example, Mr. Pak Sichun’s story gave all the credit to Mr. Pak for the success of his candle and soap business when his wife also played an important role. While Mr. Pak manufactured the candles, the wife was in charge of selling them.⁹² Despite the fact that the success came from both Mr. Pak and his wife, the author mainly credited Mr. Pak for the success, not Mr. Pak’s wife.

The other part in which women became visible in these self-made men stories was when the stories mentioned self-made men’s marital status and the composition of family. Even in these parts, women were still portrayed as people who played a secondary role. For example, Chang Yǒngpong (the CEO of an aluminum company)’s chapter reads, “Now that Mr. Chang Yǒngpong

⁹¹ Yi Kūnu, 68. Kim Tongsik’s furniture company stayed successful well into the 1980s. Newspaper articles reported on the news related to his furniture company. See “Tongil Furniture to Hold Exhibition in October,” [Tongil kagu 10wŏl e kagu kongyep’um chŏnshihoe] *Maeil kyōngje*, September 13, 1975; “Eyes on Tongil Furniture’s Frequent Changes in Executives,” [Tongil kagu chajūn kyōngyōngjin kaep’yŏn e kwanshim] *Maeil kyōngje*, January 30, 1986, 7.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 283.

proudly (*ōyōshi*) welcomed a wife, he is settled as a proud head of household.”⁹³ The author depicted marriage as something that self-made men should have achieved to be acknowledged more seriously.

Not only was marriage necessary for a self-made man, a “pretty, supportive, and polite” wife was what completed the ideal image of a self-made man. In the chapter on Kim Susam, CEO of a construction company in Tokyo, the author depicted Mr. Kim’s wife as someone who wholeheartedly supported his decision, without standing in the way of her husband’s noble journey to success:

Although Mr. Kim welcomed a pretty wife, he was not ready to settle down... he asked his wife one night. “Dear, I cannot be satisfied with just making our ends meet. I would like to go to Japan, study, make money, and live with pride and honor (*ttōttōt’age*). I was going to get married after I make some money, but I gave in to my old mother’s earnest wish for my marriage ... What do you think [about my plan]?” The wife, who was listening politely, only could shed tears as if it was raining on her face. ... “I am already your wife. Don’t you know that I’d live my life looking up to you as if you are my god even if I’d starve to death? How can I dare say anything about what you do? I just hope that everything goes to your plan, and I will do everything in obedience to your instructions.”⁹⁴

This narrative of women’s submission to self-made men’s ambition was done to an extreme degree here, but it was a recurring theme.

Not only did the author depict women’s position as subordinate, he also described the concept of family as something that supplemented the ideal image of self-made men. The author always ended the stories with a description of the self-made men’s family members. And this was also the case in the “soon-to-be *chaebōl*” series in *Sunday Seoul*. Generally self-made men’s children were students at prestigious universities or studying abroad in the U.S. Such detailed

⁹³ Yi Kūnu, 127.

⁹⁴ Kumisōgwan p’yōnjippu, 100.

information about the family members and sentences like “he is a happy head of a household (*kajang*)”⁹⁵ created a normative image of self-made men who not only succeeded in their businesses, but also in building a happy family. Through the narratives that portrayed hard-working men as masculine husbands and proud fathers of a household as the norm, the institutions of marriage and a nuclear family were also promoted.⁹⁶

Conclusion

A close analysis of self-made man stories showed that the medium of print, especially the newly emerged medium of weekly magazines, strengthened the association between money-making and masculinity while dissociating women from money-making. The authors of both *Self-made Men* and *Blood and Sweat Do Not Speak* portrayed money-making as a masculine, nationalist task. Pursuing wealth for the nation to surpass Japan economically was a recurring theme in these self-made man stories. The authors also depicted such anti-Japanese nationalism as a masculine trait. Also, the authors used words that provoked a sense of masculinity to describe characteristics, including “bare hands,” persistence, and diligence.

However, the “masculine” words and narratives that depicted male entrepreneurs were either absent or replaced with feminine ones in female entrepreneurs’ stories. The gendered vocabulary suggests the authors’ intentional effort to strengthen the association between money-making and masculinity. The only two self-made women were portrayed as abnormal because they

⁹⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁹⁶ On the institution of marriage, Joan Wallach Scott argues, “Marriage ensured not only the protection of family property but guaranteed the (racial, ethnic) homogeneity of the “people,” who were imagined to be the nation’s constituents. ... Gender asymmetry was at the heart of these definitions of marriage.” Joan Wallach Scott, *Sex and Secularism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 77.

had no husbands. This kind of story put more psychological pressure on men to be the sole breadwinner of a household because these women suffered from the absence of husbands.

At the same time, through these narratives, the institutions of marriage and the nuclear family were also promoted. The self-made man stories created a normative image of men as people who had supportive wives and children. The authors portrayed marriage and formation of a nuclear family as something that an ideal self-made man should achieve, along with success in business. In a sense, stories about self-made men served as a guide for men to establish themselves as ideal husbands, proud fathers, and national citizens. The following chapter explores how these male-centered messages about money-making and wealth were visualized and cinematized via newsreels and how the notions of industrialization became gendered.

Chapter 3: Visualizing Male-led “Modernization” 1964-1967

In July 1966, the United States Information Services-Korea (hereafter “USIS-Korea”) asked the Regional Research Center in Manila, Philippines, to conduct research on the motion picture audience in Korea. The study was done mainly to assess the audience reception of *Liberty News*, a newsreel that the USIS-Korea had produced and disseminated to the Korean population since 1952. The outcome of the research, “Liberty News: Audience Characteristics and Reactions,” which came out in March 1967, revealed a significant relationship between motion pictures and how Koreans received news of current events. The report stated, “Motion pictures (presumably newsreels) were named as a major source of news by nearly half the urban adults.”¹ The research had surveyed 2,074 “urban adults” (men and women over 16 years of age), including students, college graduates, other young adults, and workers.² Despite the availability of conventional news sources, such as print and radio, almost half of the adult respondents answered that they received news from motion pictures. However, what was presented to the Korean audience as “news” was mostly propaganda messages manufactured by the Park government and the USIS-Korea.

The revelation that motion pictures constituted a major source of news for Koreans reflected the burgeoning number of movie theatres throughout the country, most of all in urban centres, where newsreels were shown before every movie started. The mid-1960s was about a decade before televisions became widely available to the Korean population. Since the early 1960s, the filmmaking industry grew, albeit under Park’s censorship, and more Koreans started to go to

¹ “Korean Newsreel Survey – *Liberty News*,” March 22, 1967, RG 306, Research Projects, East Asia, 1964-73, Box 8, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, 4. Accessed through the National Archives of Korean History online database.

http://archive.history.go.kr/image/viewer.do?catalog_id=AUS001_16_00C0008_024&gid=AUS001_16_00C0008

² Ibid.

movie theatres regularly. By 1966, two-thirds of urban adults were going to the movie theatre at least once a month and more than one third saw a movie at least once a week.³ Anyone going to the theatre had to see at least one newsreel segment before the movie started.⁴ As a result, the same gendered narratives of Koreans would have consumed through print media and radio, as examined in chapters one and two, were now cinematized for audio-visual consumption.

Liberty News was not the only newsreel that was available to the Korean audience. There was also *Taehan News*, produced by the Park government, that was being shown as frequently as *Liberty News* in the theatres. Soon after Park took power, realizing the power of film as a popular cultural medium, he rushed to take control of the film industry by establishing the National Film Production Centre (*kungnip yŏnghwa chejakso*) on June 22, 1961. The Centre then took over the responsibility of producing the state propaganda newsreel, *Taehan News*, along with other films and documentaries which mostly served as propaganda.⁵ *Taehan News* had been produced since 1953, but under the dictatorship of Park, it overtly served the purpose of legitimizing his rule and circulating statist ideological messages.

Most studies of newsreels in the Park era have focused on *Taehan News* in the context of the Park government's top-down mobilization of the Korean population. For example, Yi Ha-na explores how the state utilized films, including *Taehan News*, as a tool of achieving national

³ Ibid.

⁴ Hō Ūn et al., *Visual Media Projects History: Modern Korean History Audio-visual Sources Collection V.3* [Yŏngsang, yŏksa rŭl pich'uda: han'guk hyōndaesa yŏngsang charyo haejeip V.3] (Seoul: Tosŏ ch'ulp'an sŏnin, 2017). *Taehan News* and *Liberty News* were the two newsreels that had to be shown in the beginning of every movie in the theatre. Some theatres chose one over the other and some would play both of them.

⁵ The Centre also produced commercial films, including the P'aldogangsan series, a total of five movies with different directors. The series gained huge popularity from the Korean audience and has received frequent academic attention. See Han Sang Kim, "My Car Modernity: What the U.S. Army Brought to South Korean Cinematic Imagination about Modern Mobility," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 1 (February 2016): 63–85; "Burdensome Service," [Kosaengsŭrŏun ssŏbisŭ] *Tonga ilbo*, January 22, 1960: 4.

restoration.⁶ Pyŏn Cheran similarly sees *Taehan News* as an instrument that visualized government policies, especially the ones on family-planning.⁷ While these studies shed light on the important role that newsreels played in disseminating government policies via a non-conventional, more entertaining medium, they have not attempted to answer the important question of how the Korean audience received and responded to such state propaganda. They seem to have assumed that the Korean audience easily accepted and embraced the messages from *Taehan News*. A careful examination of *Liberty News*, by contrast, provides a more useful case study because the aforementioned USIS-Korea report provides us with data on the reach and impact of *Liberty News*.

This chapter argues that newsreels in the 1960s played a central role in disseminating gendered notions of work and citizenship to the Korean audience. The ideal Korean woman was portrayed as confined to the domestic sphere as a subservient wife and mother, while female wage-work in Korea's burgeoning light-industries was cast as abnormal, temporary, and of secondary importance to male-dominated heavy industries. However, the reproduction of such patriarchal ideals was not intended to actually keep women at home and out of the work force – women's wage labour in light industries was essential for the state's industrialization goals. Such narratives served to transpose patriarchal domination from the family unit into the workplace in service of the hyper-exploitation of Korean women workers, while securing the loyalty of male citizens through a gender ideology that emphasized their superiority and dominance over women. In contrast to the portrayal of female labour as undignified and of secondary significance, male workers in heavy and chemical industries were valorized as national heroes and representative of

⁶ Yi Hana, *The Nation and Film: Cultural Restoration of the "Republic of Korea" and Film in the 1950s-60s* [Kukka wa yŏnghwa: 1950-60 nyŏndae "taehan min'guk" ūi munhwa chaegŏn kwa yŏnghwa] (Seoul: Hyeon, 2013).

⁷ Pyŏn Cheran, "Daehan News, Cultural Film, and Family Planning Programs as Modern Project," [Taehan nyusŭ, munhwa yŏnghwa, kŭndaejŏng kihoek-ŭrosŏ ūi "kajok kyehŏk"] *Yŏnghwa yŏn'gu* 52 (2012): 207-235.

a masculine ideal. Despite the sharp contrast in how male and female labour was valued in the newsreels' narratives, both served to mystify the labour exploitation process that was happening under Park's "big push" to rapid industrialization. Many male workers in heavy and chemical industries were struggling to make their ends meet because of the Park government's wage-cutting efforts. Numerous women workers had to endure long working hours and brutal working conditions. The newsreels obscured the crucial role of women workers in Korea's rapid industrialization process, and white-washed male workers' grievances. This double mystification served to maintain a docile workforce in line with the state's industrialization strategy.

Newsreels in Postwar Korea

Newsreels first became part of Korea's media landscape in the 1950s. At a time when the number of movie theatres (or any other cultural infrastructure) was limited, newsreels were shown at the USIS Centers or American Cultural Centers (*mi munhwawŏn*) and through a few mobile "theatres" that the USIS ran throughout the country.⁸ However, it was not until the 1960s when a large portion of the Korean population received news as a motion picture for the first time thanks to the growing number of commercial films and theatres.

Liberty News was a newsreel that the USIS-Korea created and disseminated in Korea since 1952 in the midst of the Korean War as part of its Cold War propaganda campaign. In 1952, the USIS established a film production company, Liberty Production, in Ch'angwŏn, Kyŏngsangnamdo, which was solely responsible for producing propaganda materials, from newsreels to short

⁸ *Liberty News* was disseminated through various methods for an effective propagation to a larger population. In the early years in the 1950s, it was broadcast on radio. *Tonga ilbo* in 1957 had schedules of radio programs which included the broadcasting of *Liberty News* on HKLZ; In the 1950s, it was disseminated through "mobile units," vehicles which toured the country playing various USIS-produced films, reaching a great number of people. Wol-san Liem, "Telling the 'truth' to Koreans: U.S. Cultural Policy in South Korea during the early Cold War, 1947-1967" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 2010), 143.

films. The USIS hired Koreans for the production of the newsreel, who would later become commercial film directors.⁹

The format of news as a motion picture was so new to the Korean audience that they at first thought the newsreel was a documentary film and called it “news film” (*nyusŭ yŏnghwa*).¹⁰ In contrast to the earlier periods when Koreans thought news via print media and radio was primarily serving the role of information delivery, now the audience started to see news as something interesting and entertaining to watch.¹¹ This changed perception about news was also something that contributed to the popularity of *Liberty News*.

Compared to *Taehan News*, which viewers mostly regarded as bluntly propagandistic,¹² *Liberty News* was seen as a source of entertainment and something that covered “enlightening” topics from the West. A reporter wrote in *Tonga ilbo* in May 1960,

Since the production of its first newsreel on May 19th, 1952, Liberty Production has greatly contributed to enlightening Koreans with democratic thoughts and democratic ways of citizen life, and played an important role in introducing Western lifestyles, custom, and traditions to Koreans.¹³

⁹ Pak Sŏnyŏng, “Identity and Practice Issues Surrounding News Films during the Cold War Era — Focusing on Liberty News,” [Naengjŏn shigi nyusŭ yŏnghwa ūi chŏngch'esŏng kwa shilch'ŏn ūi munje - Ribŏt'i nyusŭ ūi yŏksa wa oegung chaehyŏn ūl chungshim ūro] *Sarim* 65 (2018): 302.

¹⁰ This is perhaps not unique to Korea. Other parts of the world also called (and still call) it news film.

¹¹ Based on the audience survey done by the USIS in 1966, “About two-thirds of urban moviegoers in Korea see *Liberty News* newsreel at least once a month, one-third being exposed to two or more editions of *Liberty News* during the month. In terms of the total adult population (moviegoers and non-moviegoers), 46% of all adults in cities are exposed to *Liberty News* monthly, some 20% during the average week. Projecting these percentages into numbers, we find that *Liberty News* reaches close to 2,500,000 urban adults each month, and that more than half of these see two or more editions of *Liberty News* during the month. Roughly 1,050,000 different urban adults are exposed to *Liberty News* in the average week.” 46–47. The report also mentions “Cities” here are broken down into three sizes: large cities include Seoul, Pusan, Taegu, Inchon, and Kwangju; medium size cities include Taejon, Chonju, Masan, Mokpo, and Suwon; small cities are not specified.

¹² “Burdensome Service,” [Kosaengsŭrŏun ssŏbisŭ] *Tonga ilbo*, January 22, 1960, 4.

¹³ “News Film Should Play Its Proper Role,” [Nyusŭ yŏnghwa che kushil haeya hal tan'gye] *Tonga ilbo*, May 25, 1960, 4.

At a time when there were not many other windows to the outside world, *Liberty News* served as an important space where Korean viewers were introduced to cinematic images of what was out there for the first time. The coverage of “life, custom, and traditions of the West” made Korean viewers think that *Liberty News* was more “competitive” than *Taehan News* which they thought was “too occupied with “PR” aspects and lacked entertainment quality.”¹⁴ The aforementioned research report, “Liberty News: Audience Characteristics and Reactions,” also noted that *Liberty News* was more popular than *Taehan News*, especially in large cities. Out of thirty percent moviegoers who expressed a preference for either one of the two newsreels, twenty percent of them responded that they preferred watching *Liberty News* to *Taehan News* (see figure 3.1).¹⁵ When the Liberty Production ceased to produce *Liberty News* at the end of May in 1967 after fifteen years of production, many Koreans remembered *Liberty News* as having altruistically served Koreans in terms of improving the film-making industry and bringing democratic values to Korea.¹⁶

¹⁴ “News Film Should Play Its Proper Role,” [Nyusŭ yŏnghwa che kushil haeya hal tan'gye] *Tonga ilbo*, May 25, 1960: 4.

¹⁵ “Opinion of Liberty and Daehan Newsreels,” in “Korean Newsreel Survey – *Liberty News*,” March 22, 1967, RG 306, Research Projects, East Asia, 1964-73, Box 8, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, 9. Accessed through the National Archives of Korean History online database. http://archive.history.go.kr/image/viewer.do?catalog_id=AUS001_16_00C0008_024&gid=AUS001_16_00C0008

¹⁶ “After 15 Years of Service – Liberty News to Cease,” [Yujong 15 nyŏn pongsa ribŏt'i nyusŭ p'yemun] *Maeil kyŏngje*, June 2, 1967.

Figure 3.1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a set of four charts, under the heading “Opinion of Liberty and Daehan Newsreels,” showing varying degrees of popularity of *Daehan (Taehan) News* and *Liberty News* in large cities, medium cities, small cities, and in total.

Original source: U.S. Information Agency; Office of Policy and Research Media Analysis Division, “Liberty News: Audience Characteristics and Reactions” (Regional Research Center, U.S. Information Services Manila, 1967), 9.

Archived in National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, USA, RG 306, Research Projects, East Asia, 1964-73, Entry 1017, Box 8.

Accessed through the National Archives of Korean History (*Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe*) online database.

http://archive.history.go.kr/image/viewer.do?catalog_id=AUS001_16_00C0008_024&gid=AUS001_16_00C0008.

Figure 3.1 “Opinion of Liberty and Daehan Newsreels” (1967)

Despite such positive reception of *Liberty News* compared to *Taehan News*, there has been little study done on *Liberty News*. The few studies that examine *Liberty News* mostly do so in the context of the US Cold War propaganda during and after the Korean War (1950-53) and rarely touch upon the coverage of the Korean domestic news within *Liberty News* in the 1960s.¹⁷ For example, Kim Ryösil explores how the US portrayed its involvement in the Korean War as a

¹⁷ When studies do mention *Liberty News*, the analysis is still top-down and confined to a political analysis of the Cold War framework. They focus on the American and Korean use of *Liberty News* as an ideological tool of making Koreans hate and fear communism and North Korea, but to love and admire the American version of democracy and capitalism. These studies have not fully explored the media specificity of newsreels or examined the audiences' perception of the medium and their reception of the content. For example, Wol-san Liem, “Telling the ‘truth’ to Koreans: U.S. Cultural Policy in South Korea during the early Cold War, 1947-1967”; Pak Sönyöng, “Identity and Practice Issues Surrounding News Films during the Cold War Era — Focusing on Liberty News,” [naengjön shigi nyusü yŏnghwa ūi chŏngch'esöng kwa shilch'ŏn ūi munje: riböt'i nyusü ūi yöksa wa oeguk chaehyŏn ūl chungshim ūro], *Sarim* 65 (2018): 299-339; Kim Ryösil, “Newsreel War - U. S. War Newsreels and the Birth of Liberty News during the Early Days of the Korean War,” [Nyusüiril chŏnjaeng: Han'gung chŏnjaeng ch'ogi migung ūi nyusüiril kwa riböt'i nyusü ūi t'ansaeng] *Hyöndae yŏnghwa yŏn'gu* 25 (2016): 69-105; Han Sang Kim, “Who Views Whom through Whose Lenses?: The Gazes in USIS Film Propaganda in South Korea,” in Poshek Fu and Man-Fung Yip, eds., *The Cold War and Asian Cinemas* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

“humanitarian intervention against communist’s brutal aggression” in *Liberty News*.¹⁸ Similarly, Han Sang Kim highlights the ways in which the USIS visualized the American superiority through the newsreels in the 1950s.¹⁹ Pak Sönyöng does examine *Liberty News* in the 1960s, but mainly its coverage of the US involvement in the Vietnam War.²⁰ While these scholars shed light on the US use of cinema in propagating American values during the Cold War, they have not studied the gendered meaning of newsreels on Korea’s own economic development and urbanization.

Liberty News covered a wide range of topics, from news on American aid to Korea to sports events. The aforementioned report shows that the Korean audience remembered the coverage on Vietnam as the most frequently covered topic.²¹ This is not surprising considering that *Liberty News* was the product of Cold War American foreign cultural policy when the American goal of spreading the American values of liberty and capitalism was heightened with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. The messages *Liberty News* most frequently propagated changed overtime in accordance with the changes in what the US would deem most concerning in Korean society.

Between the 1950s and the early 1960s, Liberty Production focused on ideological content, praising America’s version of democracy and condemning communism. For example, “The Ideal Citizen” (1960) dealt with the concepts of participatory democracy. In the newsreel, the “ideal” citizens were the ones who cast votes in elections to defend themselves from the “aggression of

¹⁸ Kim Ryösil, 104.

¹⁹ Han Sang Kim, “Who Views Whom through Whose Lenses? The Gazes in USIS Film Propaganda in South Korea.”

²⁰ Pak Sönyöng, “Identity and Practice Issues Surrounding News Films during the Cold War Era — Focusing on *Liberty News*.”

²¹ “Liberty News: Audience Characteristics and Reactions,” in “Korean Newsreel Survey – *Liberty News*,” March 22, 1967, RG 306, Research Projects, East Asia, 1964-73, Box 8, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, 53. Accessed through the National Archives of Korean History online database. http://archive.history.go.kr/image/viewer.do?catalog_id=AUS001_16_00C0008_024&gid=AUS001_16_00C0008. The topics on Vietnam were most remembered by the Korean audiences (48%) and actually most covered (18%), which is not surprising considering that the Korean troops had just started to be sent to Vietnam in 1964.

the communists” and for the economy that would “provide the basics for our living.”²² The direct mention of communism as something to defeat reflected the US efforts to contain communism from spreading from the North. Furthermore, historian Hō Ŭn suggests that this particular clip meant to discourage the Korean public from organizing protests against the government and encourage them to participate in politics through voting.²³ USIS Korea produced this short film right after President Syngman Rhee stepped down as a result of a nation-wide movement against Rhee’s corruption and more importantly fraud election in March 1960. Hō notes that at the National Security Council in the U.S., which was held on April 28th, 1960, multiple participants, including the U.S. president, were quite concerned with the direct influence of mass protests on political decisions in Korea.²⁴ Liberty Production was telling the Koreans that casting votes than organizing mass protests was a more democratic way of establishing democracy and becoming an ideal citizen. In this way, *Liberty News* was instilling American values of democracy throughout the 1950s and the early 1960s when to the American eyes the Korean government was faltering and not strong enough to defend itself from communist influence.

However, in the mid-1960s, the anti-communist messages in favour of American democracy were gradually being replaced by more economy-focused narratives that showcased the fruits of capitalism. From the inception of the US, the virtues of commercial capitalism and the free market were as central to the American ideology as the ideas of liberty.²⁵ During the Cold

²² Hō Ŭn et al., *Visual Media Projects History: Modern Korean History Audio-visual Sources Collection V.4* [Yōngsang, yōksa rūl pich'uda: han'guk hyōndaesa yōngsang charyo haejejip V.4] (Seoul: Tosō ch'ulp'an sōnin, 2017), 101.

²³ Ibid., 99.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Odd Arne Westad, “The Empire of Liberty: American Ideology and Foreign Interventions,” in Odd Arne Westad, ed. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 9-12.

War period, the US foreign policy makers realized that incorporating the “Third World” into the American capitalist market was as important as containing communism, and started to pour an extensive amount of aid onto the developing countries in the hopes of making a tightly connected capitalist world.²⁶ *Liberty News* started to cover much more about the economic achievements in and out of the Korean peninsula.²⁷

Accordingly, the second most remembered topic that Korean viewers responded in the 1966 survey was on “economic development.”²⁸ Such responses suggested a significant level of interest in the coverage of economic news in Korean viewers because *Liberty News* reported slightly more about the topics of “arts, music, and entertainment” (12%) than the topic of “economic development” (9%) in the months prior to the survey.²⁹ Yet, Korean viewers recalled economic news far more (10%) than the arts news (3%).³⁰ The outcome, suggesting that a big portion of what Koreans “took away” from *Liberty News* was its message about economic progress, serves as the context for which newsreels are examined in this chapter.

²⁶ Ibid., 31.

²⁷ There were two reasons. First, to the U.S., Park was an extremely anti-communist leader who was strong enough to stabilize the previously unstable politics. While the U.S. officials did not fully approve of the authoritarian policies Park implemented, in the Cold War context, containing communism was a top priority. Park’s economy-first policy resonated with the American strategy of spreading capitalistic values as a way to deter South Koreans from leaning towards the north. Secondly, Park himself strove to bring rapid economic growth so that he could legitimize his rule. He had witnessed resistance from the public for his military coup in 1961, but he needed to win over their minds for the May 1967 presidential election. Newsreels were a good channel to justify his longer rule, opposed to his initial promise that he would hand over the power to the civilian government. Visualizing the economic improvement that Korea achieved in the early 1960s was an efficient way of legitimizing his rule. *Liberty News* therefore focused a lot more on economic news, from openings of large-scale factories to export revenues.

²⁸ The National Archives and Records Administration has archived 624 newsreels that the USIS-Korea produced and disseminated during the period between 1952 and 1967. Hō Ūn et al., *Visual Media Projects History: Modern Korean History Audio-visual Sources Collection V.3* [Yōngsang, yōksa rŭl pich’uda: han’guk hyōndaesa yōngsang charyo haejeip V.4] (Seoul: Tosō ch’ulp’an sōnin, 2017).

²⁹ “Liberty News: Audience Characteristics and Reactions,” 53.

³⁰ Ibid.

The messages about poverty, wealth, industrialization, and urbanization created and strengthened the idea of male-led “modernization.” Similar to how profit-seeking radio programs associated poverty with women as examined in chapter one, *Liberty News* highlighted impoverished women’s experiences in the reporting of foreign aid to Korea, feminizing the notions of poverty. Newsreels on female-dominant light industries portrayed women workers as disposable and short-lived, creating the idea that women were making less contribution to the economic growth than men. On the contrary, newsreels on heavy and chemical industrialization, businesses, and urbanization highlighted men’s long-term and significant contribution to the building of national economy.

Women in *Liberty News*

Seungsook Moon in *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (2005) argues that women were marginalized in production industries and mobilized to be domestic under Park’s doctorship.³¹ According to Moon, the state persistently exposed women to domesticating instructions, such as family planning, but excluded them from vocational training programs widely accessible to men in the 1970s when the Park government pushed heavy industrialization. She suggests that such top-down measures created gendered citizenship to Korean men and women. However, the creation of gendered citizens, especially confinement of women to the domestic sphere, was not solely due to state institutionalization of gendered mobilization. As this chapter will show, newsreels in the mid 1960s were already normalizing the idea that women ought to stay in the domestic sphere, providing what Moon calls “a backdrop to their mobilization as mothers and housewives.”³²

³¹ Seungsook Moon, 44-67.

³² Ibid., 69. But this ideal of women as mothers and housewives was not new but rooted in the Confucian tradition. Scholars, including Hyaewol Choi, have explored how missionaries promoted such ideas in the late 19th century in

The producers of the newsreels chose to portray women as the ones who should be protected in the home, not to be working in the public sphere. Such portrayal was common regardless of the status of women who appeared in the newsreels. First of all, similar to the radio programs examined in chapter one, *Liberty News* mainly highlighted women in its reporting of impoverished Koreans. In such reporting, impoverished women were confined to the opportunities in the domestic sphere. For example, the 1966 *Liberty News* segment “Women’s Centre” (see figure 3.2) reported the news on one of the Women’s Centres in Seoul where women received vocational training that could help them get a job. The narrator said,

War widows and poor (*puruhan*) women who struggle from financial difficulties are receiving vocational training thanks to this Women’s Center in Seoul. Here, the center is teaching skills such as sewing, quilting, aesthetics, typewriting, and childrearing and they even help women getting a proper job after a four-to-six-month training according to their skills.³³

Figure 3.2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a scene from *Liberty News* newsreel, showing a group of women in a classroom-like setting.

Original source: *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusū] 653, “Women’s Centre” [Punyō saōpkwan] (1966; Ch'angwōn: Liberty Production).

Archived in National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, USA.

Accessed through Korea University Korean History Research Centre Modern Korean History Audio-Visual Source Archive [Koryō taehakkyo han'guksa yōn'guso yōksa yōngsang yungham yōn'gu t'im han'gung künhyōndae yōngsangak'aibū] (hereafter “Korea University Archive”) http://kfilm.khistory.org/?mod=26&MOVIE_SEQ=5004&KIND_CLSS=15.

Figure 3.2 *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusū] 653, “Women’s Centre” [Punyō saōpkwan]

Korea. See Hyaewol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

³³ *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusū] 653, “Women’s Centre” [Punyō saōpkwan] (1966; Ch'angwōn: Liberty Production). Accessed through Korea University Korean History Research Centre Modern Korean History Audio-Visual Source Archive [Koryō taehakkyo han'guksa yōn'guso yōksa yōngsang yungham yōn'gu t'im han'gung künhyōndae yōngsangak'aibū] (hereafter “Korea University Archive”) <http://kfilm.khistory.org>.

Despite the fact that these women were out in public looking for jobs, the skills that the center taught were for domestic works of sewing, quilting, and childrearing. The scenes of women learning how to sew effectively associated women with the domestic sphere and reinforced the image of poverty that was mainly feminine.

The association of impoverished women and “vocational” training that put women back to the home was an editorial decision because the Women’s Center, run by the City of Seoul, operated a wide range of programs and classes which were not necessary targeting poor (*puruhan*) women or only teaching domestic skills. The Center offered various classes, including “Women’s Self Identity and Awareness,” “China and Women’s Lives,” and “Practical Writing.”³⁴ However, those classes were not highlighted in the newsreel.

Even when the news was about middle-to-upper class women of Seoul, the coverage still tied them with the domestic sphere. The elite women of Seoul were often portrayed as having social interactions with foreign women and Korean men. These Korean women were portrayed as having mastered the skills that made them good housewives, such as arranging flowers. In 1965 *Liberty News* produced a newsreel segment titled, “Flower Arrangement Exhibition,” (see figure 3.3) which showed nicely dressed Korean women appreciating well-arranged flowers at exhibitions in Seoul.³⁵ The places where these exhibitions were held included the main building of the Korea Development Bank which was not easily accessible to many Koreans. While the elite women were certainly portrayed as being freer and had more cultural and social opportunities, they were still tied to the traditional roles and expectations in the domestic sphere.

³⁴ “Women Events,” [Yösöng haengsa] *Tonga ilbo*, March 3, 1966, 6; “Classes for Women,” [Yösöng kyoyang kangjwa] *Kyöngnyang shinmun*, February 9, 1966, 6.

³⁵ *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusü], 639, “Flower Arrangement Exhibit” [Kkotkkoji chönsi] (1965; Ch'angwön: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. <http://kfilm.khistory.org>.

Figure 3.3 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a scene from *Liberty News* newsreel, showing a few people looking at arranged flowers.

Original source: *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusŭ] 639, "Flower Arrangement Exhibit" [Kkotkkoji chönshi] (1965; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production).

Archived in National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, USA.

Accessed through the Korea University Archive.
http://kfilm.khistory.org/?mod=26&MOVIE_SEQ=5085&KIND_CLSS=15.

Figure 3.3 *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusŭ] 639, "Flower Arrangement Exhibit" [Kkotkkoji chönshi]

But the most significant way of visualizing male-led modernization was the stark contrast between the portrayals of female-dominant light industries and male-dominant heavy and chemical industries. As the Park government implemented an export-oriented economic policy in June 1964, there was an unprecedented need for cheap, productive, and docile labour.³⁶ In January 1965, Park proclaimed that increasing national exports was the highest priority for his administration and designated the years 1965 and 1966 as Working Years (*il hanŭn hae*).³⁷ However, as Seung-kyung Kim argues, young women hesitated to work in factories in the 1960s. Traditionally, young women were expected to remain in the home under the male head's moral supervision and there were few opportunities to work outside the homes.³⁸ When the opportunities to work in factories opened up, Korean families, especially the poor ones in rural areas, still preferred sending their daughters as housemaids to rich families because a kind of moral supervision was available in the reputable households. The Korean families with young daughters as a source of income to the family finance thought that the inadequately managed young women in factories would be easily exposed to bad

³⁶ Hyung-A Kim, *Korea's Development under Park Chung Hee*, 170.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 116.

³⁸ Seung-kyung Kim, *Class Struggle or Family Struggle*, 57.

influences and could become morally loose, eventually negatively affecting their reputations and marriage prospects.³⁹

In this context, it was crucial for the Park government to have the newsreels, which had quickly become accessible to a large portion of the Korean public, positively portray young women workers working in the factories. While there is a lack of sources directly indicating the Park government's influence on the production of *Liberty News*, the frequent and positive coverage of export-led industrialization was a shared propagandistic agenda by the Park government and the USIS. The U.S. was providing a significant amount of aid to the Park government, part of which was directly used in many export-led light industries, such as textile industries.⁴⁰ The USIS, with its goal of positively portraying the US aid to Korea and of incorporating the Korean economy into the US-led capitalist system, made it known that some leading light industries that were generating high export revenues had received loans from the US.⁴¹

With the shared goal of publicizing the importance of export-led industrialization, Liberty Production, in 1965 alone, produced at least five different newsreel segments on the achievement of export-led light industries. The newsreels focused on five different commodities of leathered goods, shoes, wigs, umbrellas, and textiles. Each newsreel proudly reported on the rapid growth in the export revenues with images of women workers in the factories. The newsreels, as the Park government wished, exposed the audience to the image of young women working in factories, making the idea more “normal” than before when there was a high degree of hesitance towards working in and sending daughters to factories. According to Seung-kyung Kim, factory work for

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Hyung-A Kim, *Korea's Development under Park Chung Hee*, 215.

⁴¹ The most representative case was the 1965 newsreel, “Textile Factory Aided by the US” [Miguk ch'agwan padūn pangjik kongjang].

young women became more acceptable throughout the 1960s and fewer women worked as housemaids as they were rapidly recruited into factories.⁴² The number of female factory workers increased 232 percent from 179,000 in 1963 to 416,000 by 1970.⁴³

To some women, visibility of women workers in the newsreel might have signified liberation of women from the domestic sphere and inclusion of women in the national modernization drive. A 1966 *Tonga ilbo* article on the survey by the Economic Planning Board on working women aptly noted,

The Economic Planning Board statics revealed that one of three legally eligible women above fourteen years old is actually working and contributing to production (*saengsan*)...This means that women who were previously regarded as weak and in need of protection are now entering into society and playing a big role in the development of industry.⁴⁴

Thus, from the perspective of some women whose main concern was their absence in the media, women workers finally visible on the news were “symbols of political aspirations and social change” towards a more inclusive and gender-equal society.⁴⁵

However, while newsreels helped lessen the degree of reservation towards the idea of young women working in factories and made women workers visible in the media, such change did not mean that women workers were portrayed as equally dominant in the public sphere or making significant contribution to the national economy. The “opportunities” presented to young women in factories were not to liberate women from the domestic sphere. Rather, young women fell victim to the developing country’s strategy to maximize the use of the “undervalued labor” of

⁴² Seung-kyung Kim, *Class Struggle or Family Struggle*, 57-58.

⁴³ The number continued to grow in the 1970s to 1,219,000 in 1979. National Statistical Office [T’onggyech’öng], *Chinan 20-yŏn’gan koyong sajŏng ŭi pyŏnhwa*, 282; 291, cited in Hawsook Nam, *Women in the Sky*, 125.

⁴⁴ “One out of Three is Working Woman,” [Semyŏng chung hanmyŏng i il hanŭn yŏsŏng] *Tonga ilbo*, September 22, 1966: 7.

⁴⁵ Margaret Gallagher, “Media and the Representation of Gender,” in *The Routledge Companion to Media and Gender* eds., Cynthia Carter, Linda Steiner, and Lisa McLaughlin (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 25.

young women.⁴⁶ They were constantly encouraged to behave as “dutiful daughters toward their families, their employers, and the state.”⁴⁷

The portrayals of their labour in newsreels reflected this position. Women workers were portrayed as disposable and short-lived despite their contribution. Furthermore, women factory workers were depicted as if they were working in patriarchal home-like settings where they were still treated as docile members of households.

Liberty News portrayed women workers’ contribution as short-lived and disposable by subsuming their contribution under the raw number of export revenues the industries generated, rather than highlighting the labour and contribution of individual women workers. In contrast, the newsreels on male-dominant heavy and chemical industries, which will be discussed later in this chapter, emphasized the long-term significance of male workers’ contribution to the economy. The newsreels on leather goods, shoes, wigs, umbrellas, and textiles, which mostly women workers manufactured, commonly highlighted the dollar amount of export revenues each industry had made so far and was expected to make in the future. For example, the news segment, “Leather Goods Being Exported” (*such'ul toenŭn kajuk*) (1965) stated, “This factory recently achieved export revenue of 30,000 dollars by exporting leather handbags to the UK and Singapore. Various leather goods made in Korea are of high quality, so its future in the international market is very promising.”⁴⁸ The narration, while highlighting the amount of export revenue, made no mention of women workers even during the scenes that showed their work. The other newsreel, “Wigs

⁴⁶ Seung-kyung Kim, *Class Struggle or Family Struggle?*, 9. Seung-kyung Kim writes, “The use of women in labor-intensive industries in South Korea reveals striking parallels with earlier phases of capitalist industrialization (especially in the United States).”

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁸ *Liberty News* [Ribŏt'i nyusŭ] 632, “Wigs Being Exported” [Such'ul toenŭn kabal] (1965; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. <http://kfilm.khistory.org>.

Being Exported” (*such'ul toenŭn kabal*) (1965) also emphasized that the wigs manufacturing company generated 2,000,000-dollar revenue.⁴⁹

The images of women factory workers in the newsreels powerfully rendered visual the notions of disposable and cheap female labour. The women factory workers on screens appeared in endless rows and columns on the shop floor, wearing the same uniforms. For example, the “Wigs Being Exported” (1965) showed the young women workers manufacturing wigs with their “nimble” hands, and they were wearing aprons with numbers on them. The number “40” (see figure 3.4) in the young woman worker’s apron captured the disposability of the women workers in light industries.

Figure 3.4 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a scene from *Liberty News* newsreel, showing rows of young women workers manufacturing wigs.

Original source: *Liberty News* [Ribŏt'i nyusŭ] 639, “Wigs Being Exported” [Such'ul toenŭn kabal] (1965; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production).

Archived in National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, USA.

Accessed through the Korea University Archive.

http://kfilm.khistory.org/?mod=26&MOVIE_SEQ=5085&KIND_CLSS=15.

Figure 3.4 *Liberty News* 639, “Wigs Being Exported” [Such'ul toenŭn kabal]

The newsreels also highlighted the “domesticity” of the export products as if it only had to be women who manufactured them. The aforementioned segment on wigs narrated, “[the wig factory] purchases human hair, the material for wigs, mostly from rural women. Some wigs are machine-made, but of course wigs that are handmade with care are much more expensive.”⁵⁰ In

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ *Liberty News* [Ribŏt'i nyusŭ] 632, “Wigs Being Exported.”

this narration, the provoked image of the wig industry was women workers carefully producing wigs with the hair that impoverished rural women sold for cash. Such image strengthened the idea that women inherently belonged to light industries which produced “domestic” products and women were not accepted in other spheres of economic activities. The coverage of “domestic” products, such as wigs, shoes, and umbrellas, was an intentional editorial decision to link women with domesticity because there were other commodities, including electronics, that women workers were mobilized to manufacture.⁵¹ Yet, those women who manufactured “unfeminine” products or those who worked in heavy and chemical industries were not visible in newsreels.

When newsreels were the first medium that visualized industrialization, the recurring images of young women workers producing “domestic” commodities on the shop floor in a submissive manner newsreels repeatedly circulated the fixed notions of cheap, short-lived, and disposable female labour, which pushed women further to the domestic sphere. Unlike in the history of the multinational Singer Sewing Machine Company, examined in Paula de la Cruz-Fernández’s recent work, where women workers exercised power and agency in shaping the production and consumption practices related to sewing machines through sewing and embroidering practices, the state and media rarely gave long-term significance to Korean women workers in the “domestic” product manufacturing sector.⁵²

And such portrayals impacted women’s working conditions and their treatment, which also provided the backdrop to their fight against the male-dominant management and the state in the 1970s. The portrayals of these women factory workers did not describe the long hours, low wages,

⁵¹ Hwasook Nam, *Women in the Sky. Gender and Labor in the Making of Modern Korea*. (Ithaca: ILR Press Ithaca, 2021), 112.

⁵² See Paula de la Cruz-Fernández, *Gendered Capitalism: Sewing Machines and Multinational Business in Spain and Mexico, 1850-1940* (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2021).

unsafe working environment, and sexual harassment that they had to endure. Just as fleeting and disposable female labour was portrayed in the newsreels, numerous injustices against women that occurred in the factories appeared as short-lived and undemanding in public discourse. Women industrial workers who were channelled into export industries were controlled by the male-dominated system, which simply did not regard the structural discrimination against women workers as a problem.⁵³ Women who worked in factories were portrayed as being in “exceptional” conditions and their temporary stay further justified little to no efforts to make their working conditions better.⁵⁴

Therefore, the state efforts to promote normal and positive images of women factory workers only did enough to circulate the idea that women also worked outside the home, but not to the degree that factory work was considered an ideal, or even socially acceptable, pathway for young, unmarried women. Even after young women were working outside the homes, family continued to be central to the lives of women factory workers. In her interviews with the Korean women who had worked in factories during the Park era, Seung-kyung Kim found out that many of them saw themselves as temporary and thought they would leave the factories to become full-time housewives.⁵⁵ Hwasook Nam also argues that although the state actively mobilized young women for its export-led industrialization, the relationship between the state and women was still mediated by the family.⁵⁶ The tendency to view women who were outside the normative family realm and traditional roles as “potentially harmful to the morality of the society,” must have

⁵³ Hwasook Nam, *Women in the Sky*, 112.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵⁵ Seung-kyung Kim, *Class Struggle? Family Struggle*, 172.

⁵⁶ Hwasook Nam, *Women in the Sky*, 116.

affected how newsreels portrayed women workers and, at the same time, newsreels reinforced this view within society.⁵⁷

The narration in the newsreel on wigs manufacturing aptly indicates the public perception of women's contribution in the light industries. The segment, "Wigs Being Exported" (Such'ul toenŭn kabal) (1965), started off by saying "despite the fact that this peculiar export product is expected to have generated 2,000,000-dollar revenue, it is oddly not well known."⁵⁸ Wigs produced in Korea became rapidly popular in the U.S. market since they began to be exported in 1964. The number of wig manufacturing companies increased from only about seven to forty in 1965.⁵⁹ The export revenue in 1965 was projected to have jumped by seventeen times more than the amount in 1964.⁶⁰ While the narrator found it "odd" that the achievement in the wigs industry was unknown, the anonymity was partly due to the stigma attached to the idea of women's factory work despite the active state mobilization of young women in the labour force.

In this way, women were further marginalized in the spheres of economic activities and pushed back to the domestic sphere even in the era of opportunities for them to work in the public sphere. *Liberty News* feminized the notions of poverty through its portrayal of women as the main beneficiary of the state efforts to help the poor. The newsreels on female-dominant light industries portrayed women workers as short-lived and disposable by subsuming their contribution under the raw number of export revenues and staying silent on their labour. Light industries were considered as a quick way to bring foreign capital, in contrast to heavy and chemical industries which were conceived as long-term investments as the rest of the chapter will show.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ *Liberty News* [Ribŏt'i nyusŭ] 632, "Wigs Being Exported."

⁵⁹ Hŏ Ŭn et al., *Yongsang, yoksa rul pich'uda: Han'guk hyondaesa yongsang charyo haejejip V.2*, 321.

⁶⁰ *Liberty News* [Ribŏt'i nyusŭ] 632, "Wigs Being Exported."

Men in *Liberty News*

In contrast to how female-dominant light industries were portrayed as short-lived, *Liberty News* portrayed male-dominant heavy and chemical industries as making long-term and much more important contributions to the national economy. The most distinctive way of highlighting the importance of male-dominant heavy and chemical industries was to utilize the “modernization” rhetoric in the coverage. The word “modernization” (*kūndaehwa* or *hyōndaehwa*) that Park and many others so frequently used has a longer history that stretches to the colonial period, but it only began to be widely used in the mid 1960s.⁶¹ The term became popular when American economist Walt Rostow reintroduced it in the context of the Korean economic development. Rostow visited Korea in May 1965 and positively assessed that Korea’s economy had entered the “take-off” stage of “modernization.”⁶² In his 1960 book, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-communist Manifesto*, Rostow proposed the “take-off” stage to be centered on investment in infrastructure, manufacturing, export, and urbanization.⁶³ Phrases like “our nation’s modernization” (*choguk-ŭi kūndaehwa* or *hyōndaehwa*) became a catchphrase that not only the government but also various media platforms often used. *Liberty News* also started using the word, “modernization,” in the mid-1960s, mostly in its coverage of heavy and chemical industries and the growth of cities.

Yet, there is a lack of studies which examine the history of the term, “modernization,” and its gendered meaning. Pyōn Cheran explores Park’s use of the modernization rhetoric in *Taehan*

⁶¹ According to the Naver newspaper library, the term, *kūndaehwa*, started to emerge in newspapers a lot more in the early 1960s and peaks in the late 1960s-early 1970s.

<https://newslibrary.naver.com/search/searchByKeyword.naver#%7B%22mode%22%3A1%2C%22sort%22%3A0%2C%22trans%22%3A%221%22%2C%22pageSize%22%3A10%2C%22keyword%22%3A%22%EA%B7%BC%E B%8C%80%ED%99%94%22%2C%22status%22%3A%22success%22%2C%22startIndex%22%3A1%2C%22page%22%3A1%2C%22startDate%22%3A%221920-03-05%22%2C%22endDate%22%3A%221999-12-31%22%7D>

⁶² “Dr. Rostow’s Speech Summary,” [Rosūt’ou paksa ŭi yōnsöl yoji] *Tonga ilbo*, May 4, 1965. 3

⁶³ Steven H. Lee, “Development without Democracy: The Political Economy of US–South Korea Relations, 1958–1961,” in *Transformations in Twentieth Century Korea*, ed. Yun-shik Chang and Steven Hugh Lee (London: Routledge, 2006), 175.

News newsreels. Pyŏn argues that newsreels effectively propagated messages of “modernization of the homeland (*choguk kŭndaehwa*)” which translated as “growth-centered economic development and cultivation of modern life attitudes.”⁶⁴ While Pyŏn explores the gendered aspect of the “modernization” rhetoric in terms of how women’s bodies figured in such rhetoric, she does not explore the male-centered aspect of the term.

As the rest of the chapter will show, *Liberty News* used the term, “modernization,” primarily in its coverage of male-dominant heavy and chemical industries and male businesspeople. From the beginning of his rule, Park envisioned heavy and chemical industrialization as the main way to solidify his authoritarian rule and create an economy that was less independent on the US aid and the market. If light industries were considered as a quick way to bring cash to the country in the beginning of his reign in the 1960s, heavy and chemical industries were to be the foundation of the long-term economic growth in the 1970s and onwards. In accordance with Park’s stance on heavy and chemical industries as the male-led backbone of the Korean economy, newsreels on male-dominant heavy and chemical industries were embellished with the grandiose modernization rhetoric and the images of authoritative figures, including Park and American ambassadors who visited the plants. Such portrayals created a stark difference from how light industries were portrayed.

As early as 1962, the newsreels on heavy and chemical industries stressed that these male-dominant industries were going to modernize the nation. The newsreel segment, “Groundbreaking Ceremony of the Ulsan Industrial Zone” (*ulsan kongŏp chigu kigongshik*), produced in February 1962, celebrated the state plan to establish the country’s first large industrial zone in Ulsan, a rural area in the southeast part of the country which was not yet a city in 1962 but later became the

⁶⁴ Pyŏn Cheran, 216.

fastest-growing city precisely because of the state plan to develop the area as the national industrial hub. The Ulsan Industrial Zone was where heavy and chemical industries, from an oil refinery to steel and fertilizer companies, were going to be established.

Unlike the ones on light industries, the newsreel on Ulsan directly called the heavy and chemical industries a steppingstone towards Korea's modernization (*hyōndaehwa*) and the images shown with the modernization rhetoric effectively created the association between heavy and chemical industries and masculine men. The narration started with the fact that around two hundred government leaders and foreign ambassadors had traveled to Ulsan to witness the ceremony.⁶⁵ The image showed the all-male group of authoritative figures getting off the train from Seoul and then getting off the cars when they arrived at the ceremony site. Then rows of soldiers opened the car doors for those government elites. Here, the presence of soldiers made the scenes appear more serious and masculine. What came after the all-male scenes created a stark contrast between how men and women were portrayed in the newsreel. In the following scene, long lines of schoolgirls were waving the Korean flags at the visitors to welcome them. Only girls, not boys, seemed to have been mobilized to greet the officials in the important national event. The drastic transition from the all-male officials and soldiers to innocent-looking girls suggested a gendered division of work in building an industrial city.

In addition to the contrasting images, the appearances of Park and the American ambassador also indicated the significance of the heavy and chemical industries. Park, who was not yet elected president, but the chairman of the National Restoration Committee which was organized after his seizure of power through a military coup in May 1961, was one of the

⁶⁵ Hō Ŭn et al., *Visual Media Projects History: Modern Korean History Audio-visual Sources Collection V.2* [Yōngsang, yōksa rŭl pich'uda: han'guk hyōndaesa yōngsang charyo haejejip V.2] (Seoul: Tosō ch'ulp'an sŏnin, 2017), 147.

government officials who visited the site. The image showed Park pressing the switch of the dynamite explosion and then zoomed in his hand on the switch. The newsreel then showed the construction site being exploded and the nearby river making a huge spray of water from the impact of the explosion. This scene portrayed both Park and the groundbreaking ceremony in a very masculine way. The next scenes showed Ambassador Samuel D. Berger giving a celebratory speech in front of people who gathered. There were flags of foreign nations that sent delegates to Korea, creating the idea that this ceremony was not just a national celebration, but also a global one. The scenes of Park and ambassador Berger were accompanied by the images of myriad schoolgirls watching the podium where all male government officials stood, waving the flags and looking emotional.

The narration, too, added a sense of masculinity to the heavy and chemical industries being established in Ulsan. During the scenes of the dynamic explosion, the narrator said,

This plan [of creating an industrial zone] made its first step with Chairman Park pressing the button to the groundbreaking ceremony of the Five-Year Economic Plan and the following detonation and the earthshaking rumble...Ambassador Berger commented that this opportunity reflected the spirit and the stamina (*chǒngnyŏk*) that Koreans showed in their efforts to modernize (*hyŏndaehwa*) the [economic] system and increase the source of wealth.⁶⁶

The words, “detonation,” “earthshaking rumble,” and “stamina” heightened a sense of masculinity to the already manly scenes. The word, “stamina,” especially seemed to have been an intentional way of translating the word, “energy,” to make the ambassador’s celebratory speech sound more masculine.

Furthermore, the word, “modernize,” as suggested above, was directly used to depict heavy and chemical industries, which was not the case in the newsreels on light industries. As opposed

⁶⁶ *Liberty News* [Ribŏt'i nyusŭ] 445, “Ulsan Industrial Complex Groundbreaing Ceremony” [Ulsan kongŏm chigu kigongshik] (1962; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. <http://kfilm.khistory.org>.

to the short-lived and disposable nature that was suggested in association with light industries, the newsreel on Ulsan promoted a sense of long-term investment and lasting importance of heavy and chemical industries. The narrator's mention of the Five-Year Economic Plan is meaningful in that sense because Park's First Five-Year Plan, which was launched in 1962, focused more on the development of light industries, not heavy and chemical industries. Yet, the newsreel on Ulsan mentioned the Five-Year Plan while newsreels on light industries did not. Therefore, the way the ground-breaking ceremony was described in *Liberty News* in reference to the Five-Year Plan, modernization, and the "source of wealth" strongly suggested a path to economic growth that was led by masculine workers.

Such portrayals of male-led industrialization continued well into the late 1960s when the Park government was actively transitioning from its focus on light industries to heavy and chemical industries. The industries that Park targeted included shipbuilding, steel, and fertilizer. In July 1966, a *Liberty News* newsreel reported on the expansion and new establishment of shipyards in Pusan. Titled, "Pusan Shipbuilding Industry Expansion and Ground-breaking Ceremony" (*pusan chosŏnŏp shisŏl hwakchang mit kigongshik*), the newsreel highlighted the active growth of the shipbuilding industry in Pusan, a port city in the southeastern part of the Korean peninsula. Similar to the 1962 newsreel on Ulsan, the one on Pusan portrayed the shipbuilding industry as male-dominant and making the long-term contribution to the national economy. The scene of the Ground-breaking Ceremony showed rows and columns of male workers standing in front of the stage, wearing safety helmets with their hands clasped behind their backs, a posture that indicated the social status of a middle-aged and somewhat respectable class. The big banner on the stage read, "Five-Year Economic Plan: Expansion Ground-breaking Ceremony, Korea Shipbuilding and Engineering Corporation (currently Hanjin Heavy Industries;

hereafter KSEC).” President Park attended the ceremony and gave a celebratory remark, calling the expansion of KSEC another piece of evidence that Korean shipbuilding industry made “rapid progress” (*kŭpchinjŏk palchŏn*).⁶⁷ The newsreel ended with a scene of male workers clapping their hands to Park’s speech.

Such depictions which were very similar to the ones in the newsreel on Ulsan strategically left out a crucial aspect of the KSEC which could harm the image of the shipbuilding industry as an integral part of the male-led industrialization. KSEC, Korea’s largest shipyard, was founded originally in 1937 during the Japanese colonial period and was placed at the centre of Park’s attention since the early 1960s because of his vision for the heavy and chemical industrialization. The push for “rapid progress” as Park called it, resulted in workers’ grievances coming from long hours and low wages. In 1965, just a year before the *Liberty News* newsreel positively presented the news about the growth of the shipbuilding industry in Pusan, the KSEC shipbuilding union organized a struggle with the slogan, “Secure the Minimum Livelihood Wage!”⁶⁸ The union activism was a part of nationwide multi-year struggle against the Park government’s wage-cutting efforts. While the unionists’ activism was widespread across regions and labour sectors, including the KSEC union, their existence and activities were not covered in the newsreel. When the male workers at the KSEC were not even guaranteed the “minimum livelihood wage,” on screen they stood proud in front of the masculine national leader who was supposedly guiding Korean men towards “modernity.”

⁶⁷ *Liberty News* [Ribŏt’i nyusŭ] 676, “Pusan Shipbuilding Industry Infrastructure Expansion and Grounbreaking Ceremony [Pusan chosŏnŏm shisŏl hwakchang min kigongshik] in “Current Affairs” [Irŏn il chŏrŏn il] (July 1966; Ch’angwŏn: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. <http://kfilm.khistory.org>.

⁶⁸ Hwasook Nam, *Women in the Sky*, 121.

Other newsreels on heavy and chemical industries in the late 1960s followed a similar trajectory of creating an image of male-led industrialization. The 1967 newsreel, “Steppingstones of Modernization,” (*kūndaehwa ūi palp'an*) most clearly utilized the modernization rhetoric in the description of heavy and chemical industries. The two cornerstones were fertilizer and steel industries. The title scene showed a drawing of large chemical plants (see figure 3.5), highlighting the title and directly suggesting that the “Steppingstones of Modernization” meant heavy and chemical industries. The use of a drawing for the title was rare in *Liberty News* which usually showed the titles over the actual images of the news coverage. The drawing of chemical plants suggested a higher level of significance to the topic, “steppingstones of modernization.”

Figure 3.5 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an image from *Liberty News* newsreel, showing the title scene with drawings of chemical plants.

Original source: *Liberty News* [Ribōt'i nyusū] 715, “Steppingstones of Modernization” [Kūndaehwa ūi palp'an] (April 15, 1967; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production).

Archived in National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, USA.

Accessed through the Korea University Archive.
http://kfilm.khistory.org/?mod=26&MOVIE_SEQ=4070&KIND_CLSS=15.

Figure 3.5 *Liberty News* [Ribōt'i nyusū] 715, “Steppingstones of Modernization” [Kūndaehwa ūi palp'an]

Similar to the newsreel on Ulsan, the newsreel, “Steppingstones of Modernization,” added a sense of significance to the coverage by showing images of important figures. The chemical fertilizer plant was being built in Chinhae and the steel factory in Masan, both in the southeastern part of the Korean peninsula. Expectedly, many government officials, including President Park and the American ambassador Winthrop G. Brown, visited the plant completion ceremony. During the portion of the fertilizer plant visit, multiple scenes showed President Park and Ambassador

Brown giving celebratory speeches, other government officials and foreign ambassadors listening to the speeches sitting on the stage, and numerous spectators standing behind the press line (see figure 3.6). The all-male authoritative figures also visited the nearby steel plant in Masan, and the narrator said, “Another big step towards modernization of the nation has been achieved with the establishment of a steel company.”⁶⁹ The combination of such a grandiose statement about modernization of the nation and the scenes of authoritative figures such as President Park effectively created a message that male-dominant heavy and chemical industries were to be praised as foundations of the national economy.

Figure 3.6 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a set of four images from *Liberty News* newsreel, showing President Park and the American ambassador Winthrop G. Brown giving a speech behind a podium and spectators looking at the stage.

Original source: *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusŭ] 715, “Steppingstones of Modernization” [Kündaeſhwa ŭi palp'an] (April 15, 1967; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production).

Archived in National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, USA.

Accessed through the Korea University Archive.
http://kfilm.khistory.org/?mod=26&MOVIE_SEQ=4070&KIND_CLSS=15.

Figure 3.6 *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusŭ] 715, “Steppingstones of Modernization” [Kündaeſhwa ŭi palp'an]

In addition to male-dominant heavy and chemical industries as more integral to national modernization than female-dominant light industries, *Liberty News* also portrayed male business owners as primary actors of modernization, while women were portrayed as playing a secondary role. The newsreels on businessmen utilized the modernization rhetoric and images of authoritative

⁶⁹ *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusŭ] 715, “Steppingstones of Modernization” [Kündaeſhwa ŭi palp'an] (April 15, 1967; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. <http://kfilm.khistory.org>.

figures just as the coverage of heavy and chemical industries did. In March 1964, the Chamber of Commerce proclaimed that May 12 every year be the “Businesspeople Day” (*Sanggongin-ŭi nal*) to celebrate and recognize successful businesspeople. Such a decision and the announced plan to make the event extravagant were much ridiculed by the Korean public who thought creating more jobs for the unemployed was more important than celebrating the few business owners.⁷⁰ But *Liberty News* swiftly reported on the ceremony held in celebration of the first Businesspeople Day. In the ceremony the Chamber of Commerce recognized exemplary businesspeople and gave awards.

The coverage showed all male awardees and stressed their importance in national economic growth. The narration started off by saying, “The business sector, an important element of Korea’s economic development celebrated the first Businesspeople Day.”⁷¹ Then the image showed two thousand male businessmen in suits who attended the ceremony (see figure 3.7). The overwhelming presence of those who all seemed to be men in a quick glance left no room to imagine women as successful businesspeople. The newsreel zoomed in on Prime Minister Chŏng Ilkwŏn who gave a remark to the attendees and the “exemplary businessperson award” to eight different businessmen. The narrator added that Prime Minister Chŏng asked the two thousand businesspeople to make “continuous contributions to achieve a self-reliant national economy.”⁷²

⁷⁰ “Economic Development,” [Kyŏngje manbo] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, March 7, 1964, 4.

⁷¹ *Liberty News* [Ribŏt’i nyusŭ] 563, “The First Businesspeople Day” [Che 1 hoe sanggongin ŭi nal] (May 1964; Ch’angwŏn: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. <http://kfilm.khistory.org>.

⁷² Ibid.

Figure 3.7 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a set of two images from *Liberty News* newsreel, one showing rows of men sitting and the other highlighting four awardees sitting in the front.

Original source: *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusŭ] 563, "The First Businesspeople Day" [Che 1 hoe sanggongin ũi nal]).

Archived in National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, USA.

Accessed through the Korea University Archive.

http://kfilm.khistory.org/?mod=26&MOVIE_SEQ=4888&KIND_CLSS=15.

Figure 3.7 *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusŭ] 563, "The First Businesspeople Day" [Che 1 hoe sanggongin ũi nal]

American Ambassador Berger also joined the ceremony and emphasized the importance of creating the environment where entrepreneurs could maximize their potential. The reference to a "self-reliant national economy" and the presence of elite bureaucrats powerfully indicated that businesspeople were male, and they were making significant and long-term contribution to the economy.

The following scenes further divided men and women in the business world. One of the awardees was Yu Ilhan who was praised for his pharmaceutical company and philanthropic acts. When the newsreel described his "exemplary" deeds as a businessman, the scenes made a transition from him proudly receiving the award from the Prime Minister in front of two thousand businessmen to the endless rows of young women factory workers in the assembly line, presumably of Yu's company, wearing same white uniforms and putting products in boxes (see figure 3.8). The narration did not make a verbal recognition of the female workers. The labour of women factory workers who actually produced the commodities was portrayed as secondary to the businessmen and subsumed under the male business owners' success narratives.

Figure 3.8 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a set of two images from *Liberty News* newsreel, one showing a man on the right receiving award from another man on the left, and the other showing rows of women workers in white uniforms in the assembly line.

Original source: *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusü] 563, "The First Businesspeople Day" [Che 1 hoe sanggongin ūi nal] (May 1964; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production).

Archived in National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, USA.

Accessed through the Korea University Archive.

http://kfilm.khistory.org/?mod=26&MOVIE_SEQ=4888&KIND_CLSS=15.

Figure 3.8 *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusü] 563, "The First Businesspeople Day" [Che 1 hoe sanggongin ūi nal]

The following scene of a vocational school that Yu established only showed boys as students, suggesting men were to be the primary beneficiaries of "skilled" work training. The scenes were included to explain one of the philanthropic acts Yu did a few years prior – establishing a vocational school for impoverished boys and providing free room and board. But the striking visual difference between all-female factory workers in the assembly line and all-male students in the vocational school indicated a gendered division of work in the national efforts to improve the economy.

Another newsreel on businessmen normalized the gendered division of labour between husbands and wives. The 1966 newsreel "Other Events" briefly introduced the "Nationalist Award" (*minjoksang*) ceremony. The Park government launched the "Nationalist Award" program in 1966, in celebration of the fifth-year anniversary of the May 16 coup, to recognize Koreans who made a "remarkable contribution" to the national development. In the newsreel the narrator mentioned Park's emphasis on the meaning of the May 16 not simply as a coup, but rather a "national

revolution for the homeland's modernization.”⁷³ The narrator continued, “this kind of award system will greatly help Korea's modernization.”⁷⁴ Eight individuals received the “Nationalist Award,” and all of them were male. The scenes showed President Park giving awards to male awardees on the stage and their wives standing right beside them. While the awardees wore “modern” suits, their wives were wearing the traditional Korean costume, *hanbok*. In contrast to the men who were standing straight and making eye contact with President Park, the wives were looking down on the floor, which was socially perceived as a gesture of submission. The wives politely bowed to Park and left the stage following behind their husbands. The series of scenes that showed different “normative” behaviors between men and women suggested a message that it was ideal that men go out in the public sphere making contribution to the homelands' modernization while women stay home and assist their husbands.

Another way *Liberty News* masculinized modernization visually was through images of urban spaces and infrastructure. Despite the dominance of women in Seoul working in the manufacturing and service sectors, *Liberty News* portrayed Seoul as being built as a modern and urban space by the efforts of masculine male workers and soldiers. The topics *Liberty News* covered included the establishment of the infrastructure, such as highways and apartment buildings. For example, the 1965 newsreel, “Civil Activities [of Soldiers],” reported on the pavement completion ceremony of the highway between Seoul and Ch'unch'ŏn, a city located 75km east of Seoul. Ch'unch'ŏn was to the far west territory of Kangwon province, located on the northeast coast of the Korean Peninsula. Ch'unch'ŏn in 1965 was not a city yet, and the project of connecting Seoul to Ch'unch'ŏn through national highways, which had begun in 1962, signaled the

⁷³ *Liberty News* [Ribŏt'i nyusŭ] 668, “Current Affairs” [Irŏn il chŏrŏn il] (1966; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. <http://kfilm.khistory.org>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

government plan to industrialize Kangwon Province where natural resources like coal and high-quality limestone existed.

Newspapers praised the completion of the highway pavement as having marked another step towards “modernization.” *Chosŏn ilbo* wrote that the paved highway between Seoul and Ch'unch'ŏn opened the path towards industrial development (*sanŏp kaebal*).⁷⁵ High-ranking government officials, including Park, the minister of defence, the minister of construction, the army chief of staff, and the commander of the Eighth US Army attended the ceremony, along with some ten thousand Kangwon Province residents.⁷⁶ According to the newspaper coverage, Park gave a celebratory remark, saying that the government was planning on developing an industrial complex in Kangwon Province.⁷⁷ He also asked for the Kangwon residents' active cooperation in making their hometown “a good place to live,” emphasizing the benefits of the project in urbanizing the rural areas of Kangwon Province.⁷⁸

While the newspaper coverage did not provoke a masculine image of the pavement project, *Liberty News* did. The reason why the newsreel was titled “Civil Activities” was to highlight the efforts of soldiers in completing the project. The narrator said, “In his celebratory speech, President Park said that the pavement of the road will greatly help national development of industries. ... Korean soldiers played a great role in the completion of this pavement project.”⁷⁹ The newsreel then showed a scene of a ceremony where Park gave a speech and endless rows and columns of

⁷⁵ “Path to Industrial Development: Seoul-Chuncheon Freeway Pavement Project to Begin,” [T'ŏnoūn sanŏm kaebal ũi kil, kyŏngch'un kukto p'ojang chun'gong] *Chosŏn ilbo*, December 4, 1965.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Liberty News* [Ribŏt'i nyusŭ] 645, “Civil Activities” [Minsa hwaltong] (Exact year unknown; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. <http://kfilm.khistory.org>.

Korean soldiers were standing firmly in front of the stage (see figure 3.9). The masculine portrayal of soldiers was contrasted with the following scenes of a large spectator crowd of men, women, and schoolchildren who were gathered to see the ceremony and were eager to catch the glimpse of all-male, militarized ceremony.

Figure 3.9 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a set of two images from *Liberty News* newsreel, one showing rows of soldiers standing in the schoolground and the other showing a group of spectators.

Original source: *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusū] 645, "Civil Activities" [Minsa hwaltong] (Exact year unknown; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production).

Archived in National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, USA.

Accessed through the Korea University Archive.

http://kfilm.khistory.org/?mod=26&MOVIE_SEQ=5112&KIND_CLSS=15.

Figure 3.9 *Liberty News* [Riböt'i nyusū] 645, "Civil Activities" [Minsa hwaltong]

The image of male-led urbanization was also promoted clearly in the newsreels on heavy and chemical industries which were discussed earlier in this chapter. The newsreels, "Groundbreaking Ceremony of the Ulsan Industrial Zone" (1962), "Pusan Shipbuilding Industry Expansion and Groundbreaing Ceremony" (1966), and "Cornerstones of Modernization" (1967) all highlighted the course of urbanization as a male-led, masculine one primarily by showing male workers as the participants of such processes. On the other hand, newsreels on Seoul hardly emphasized the extensive existence of light industry factories where numerous women worked. The newsreels on the achievement of light industries likewise did not make a connection between the export revenues and urbanization of Seoul. Therefore, motion pictures introduced urbanizing spaces to the Korean audience was done in the form of motion picture for the first time in the

1960s, the portrayal of urbanization as male-led in *Liberty News* strengthened notions of male-led modernization.

Conclusion

When newsreels started to serve as one of the most popular, accessible, and trusted sources of news, *Liberty News* circulated ideas of male-led “modernization.” The newsreels on “economic development,” a topic that the Korean audience found memorable, portrayed women and men’s roles in the process towards economic growth under Park’s dictatorship in different ways. The newsreels on female-dominant light industries, while emphasizing the importance of the industries in generating export revenues, portrayed women workers as short-lived and disposable. While the Park government wanted to make the idea of young female factory workers socially acceptable to mobilize them for export-led industrialization, young women on the shop floor were still expected to behave like docile daughters, preserve traditional values, and to return to the domestic sphere. The depiction of women-dominant light industries did not make any suggestion that women workers, or light industries, were to make the long-term contribution to the national economy.

On the contrary, the newsreels on male-centred heavy and chemical industries and the business sector highlighted the long-lasting significance of male workers and businessmen’s role. The newsreels explicitly used the word, “modernization,” in the portrayals of male-dominant spheres of activities, suggesting that masculine men were the ones who would achieve “modernization” of the home country. Such rhetoric was absent in the coverage of women-dominant light industries. The newsreels visualized the gendered division between men and women as those who were celebrated and admired versus those who were celebrating and assisting.

The portrayal of men as the primary actors of “modernization,” not only excluded women in the process, but also burdened men by expecting them to be the sole breadwinners of households. The positive depiction in the newsreels did not equivalently translate into a decent treatment of male workers in heavy and chemical industries. The Park government’s wage-cutting efforts throughout the 1960s pushed workforces to endure long working hours and low wages, which resulted in unionized activism throughout the country. In their struggle, male workers expressed their grievances coming from the pressure to provide a decent living for their family. The celebratory narratives in newsreels that praised the achievement of male-led industrialization only further justified the unfair treatment of the workers.

In 1968, even after *Liberty News* ceased in 1967, the Liberty Production created a short propaganda film on the growth of Ulsan under the title “Boom Town,” which epitomized the expectations that *Liberty News* created towards men in the mid-1960s. The film, reminding the audience of the 1962 *Liberty News* newsreel on the initial phase of the development of Ulsan as a full-scale heavy and chemical industrial zone, proudly presented the progress that the city of Ulsan had achieved in the past few years. The film included a few interviews with the male workers who worked and resided in the apartment complex which was newly built for the employees. One man, with his wife sitting beside him, said, “As my work became stable and the wage fairly decent, I was able to afford to buy my own home.”⁸⁰ The narration added that three quarters of the company employees now owned homes, suggesting that the growth in Ulsan allowed its workers to make enough money to afford homes.⁸¹ Another male worker, again with his wife sitting by him, said “I

⁸⁰ *Boom Town* (1968; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. http://kfilm.khistory.org/?mod=25&MOVIE_SEQ=6986&KIND_CLSS=24.

⁸¹ Ibid.

felt rewarded in life (*sam-ŭi poram*) because I was able to provide these nice things (picking up a gift box from the table) to my family.”⁸²

The remarks of the two male workers conclusively indicated that the Park government’s push towards heavy and chemical industrialization and its request for men’s sacrifice were visually manifested as the opportunity for men to own modern homes and provide for the family. The male worker’s finding of the meaning in life via his ability to bring good material things to his family provided the context in which male workers endured long hours and low wages. The *Liberty News* newsreels, in addition to radio and print, further strengthened the association between Korean men’s masculine identity and their capability to make a decent living for their family.

⁸² Ibid.

Chapter 4: Fantasized Image of Seoul, 1965-1970

The images of the gendered process of urbanization were not only visible in newsreels, but also in commercial movies and serialized novels in weekly magazines. State-directed urbanization since the beginning of Park's rule led to massive construction projects in Seoul, drastically changing the landscape of the capital city.¹ The growth of the weekly magazine and film industries in the mid-1960s provided a platform where film directors and novelists expanded their creativity to produce fictional stories about urban lives. Many film directors in the 1960s and the 70s chose urban spaces, especially Seoul, as the cinematic background of their stories. For film directors as well as moviegoers, Seoul was a "place of hope and dream."² One of the most prominent film directors in the 1960s and the 70s, Sim Usöp, reaffirmed the significance of Seoul as the premier cinematic setting when he said, "A person in the countryside would think that they could easily have a successful life once they get to Seoul... my films are about those people."³ The message, "if the protagonist can succeed in Seoul, anyone can also do the same" was one of the recurring themes of many popular movies.

Weekly magazines also provided a window to the lives of Seoul, covering topics from the housing market to the number of cars in the streets. The Hankook Ilbo Media Group which had published Korea's first tabloid-style weekly magazine, the *Weekly Hankook*, in September 1964 newly launched *Weekly Woman* in January 1969. Both the *Weekly Hankook* and *Weekly Woman* served as an arena where well-known fiction writers such as Pang Yöngung and Chöng Pisök published their literary works that explored the lives of Seoul. While serialized novels published

¹ Myungji Yang, *From Miracle to Mirage*, 22-23.

² Kim Chin and others, *Korean Films: The Renaissance of the Korean Cinema* no. 3 [Han'guk yönghwa rül mal handa: Han'guk yönghwa üi rünesangsü no. 3] (Seoul: Han'guk yöngsang charyowön, 2007), 265.

³ Ibid.

in dailies received critical attention, the ones in weeklies were rarely studied.⁴ This chapter examines how popular films and serialized novels in weekly magazines portrayed Seoul and the role of the media portrayals of Seoul in creating gendered notions of individual pursuit of wealth.

The images of a new landscape of tall buildings, apartments, and highways seemingly placed Seoul in an equal position with the rest of the capitalist world. Newly introduced material goods such as cars, TVs, and sunglasses were portrayed as what defined the life of Seoul people. These visual images of Seoul became known to Korean eyes for the first time with the growing accessibility and production of movies, newsreels, and magazines, many published in colour. These images, however, were representative of only a very few people, for example owners of *chaebŏl* who gained wealth through their close relations with the Park government or those who became real estate millionaires also because they had sources in the government telling them certain areas were going to be developed.⁵ Still, many Koreans fantasized their Seoul lives according to the false representations in the media. It was only rational to want to purchase apartments, cars, and sunglasses because those commodities were associated with a happy life of luxury in the capital.

Through an analysis of popular weekly magazines and films, this chapter argues that

⁴ For example, Yi Hosŏk's 1966 work, *Seoul is Pack to Capacity* [Sŏul ūn manwŏn ida], was serialized in *Tonga ilbo* from February 8, 1966 to November 26, 1966 and is frequently in studies of post-liberation Seoul. See Song Ŭnyŏng, *The Birth of Seoul: A Social History of Seoul from the Analysis of Korean Literature in the 1960s and the 1970s* [Sŏul tansaenggi: 1960-1970 nyŏndae munhang ŭro pon hyŏndae toshi sŏurŭi sahoesa] (Seoul: P'urŭn yŏksa, 2018), 30. Similarly, Chŏng Pisŏk's *Madame Freedom* [Chayu puin], which was published in the daily, the *Seoul Shinmun*, in 1954, received more academic attention. See Sim Chinkyŏng, "The Gender Politics of Lady Libertine: On the Sexual Masquerade and Political Desire," [Chayu puin ŭi chendŏ chŏngch'i: sŏngjŏk kamyŏn kwa chŏngch'ijŏk yongmang ŭl chungshim ŭro] *Han'guk munhak iron kwa pip'yŏng* 46, no.3 (2010): 153-175; Yi Yunchŏng and Han Sŭngu, "American Recognition and Changes Revealed in Jeong Bi-seok's Novels: Focusing on Dr. Shin and Divorce and Madame Free," [Chŏngbisŏk sosŏl e tŭrŏnan amerik'anijŭm e taehan inshik kwa pyŏnhwa yangsang] *Uri munhak yŏn'gu* 73 (2022): 383-417. Translations of the article titles are done by the journal publishers. However, to the author's knowledge, there is no study that examines Chŏng's serialized novel, *Apartment* [Ap'at'ŭmŏnt'ŭ] (1964), which was published in the *Weekly Hankook*.

⁵ Myungji Yang, 23.

popular media portrayed Seoul as a space where not just the making, but also *spending* of money was justified and lauded as something that men should do. Previous chapters have explored how radio, weekly magazines, and newsreels in the early-to-mid 1960s feminized notions of poverty, while assigning the role of making money to men by masculinizing the act of money-making and celebrating male-dominant heavy and chemical industrialization. This chapter explores the media portrayal of individual pursuit of wealth represented by recurring images of what money could buy in Seoul in the mid-to-late 1960s and the early 1970s when Koreans gradually saw tangible signs of economic progress, such as apartments and cars. Unlike previous chapters that focused on one specific medium, by melding multiple media together, this chapter shows how the gendered messages of consumption and urban lives were mediated across print media and cinema. In the period when popular media were rapidly embedded in the everyday lives of Koreans as the main source of entertainment, the Korean audience began to consume messages about the virtues of consumerism. The study of the popular mass media in the mid-to-late 1960s and the early 1970s will provide more background context to the studies that locate the beginning of consumerism in Korea in or after the late 1970s.⁶

Consuming Seoul through Apartments

One of the most representative commodities that embodied Seoul in popular media was high-rise apartments. Popular weekly magazines and films in the mid-to-late 1960s created fantasized images of everyday life in the apartments of Seoul. Fictional stories that took place in apartments served as the main way to imagine apartment life in Seoul for the majority of the population as

⁶ These studies include Myungji Yang (see especially pages 56-58), Richard Westra, "The Capitalist Stage of Consumerism and South Korean Development," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 36, no.1 (2006): 3-25, and Laura Nelson, *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

apartments were not a common space of living during that time. Traditionally, houses were single-story, made of materials found in nature such as soil, straw, or timber. From the destruction of many houses from the Korean War (1950-53), even in Seoul most houses were made of cardboard and were not in any sense “modern.” With the construction of the first large-scale apartment complex in Seoul in 1962, Koreans built more and more apartments, a phenomenon which reached accelerated in the late 1970s.⁷ To the Park government, providing decent housing in Seoul was very much needed not only to solve the overpopulation problem, but also to stabilize politics.⁸ The introduction of high-rise apartments and the associated notions of modernity can easily be found in non-Korean contexts, for example in post-Second World War West Germany where high-rises symbolized an “ideological marker of a new start” for the new, urban reconstructing of spaces.⁹ But in Korea, the craze to build more apartments continued to the point where scholars like Valérie Gelézeau have called Korea a “republic of apartments” or a “country of apartments, by apartments, for apartments.”¹⁰ Seventy percent of new housing that was built in the 1970s were apartment complexes and the percent went up to 90 percent in the 1980s and the 1990s.¹¹ Koreans saw living in apartments in Seoul as an essential quality of the affluent and cultured middle-to-upper class lifestyles.¹²

⁷ Song Ŭnyŏng, 422. Song writes, “Between 1975 and 1980, in the Chamshil area in Gangnam, Seoul alone, a supersize apartment complex of more than 10,000 units was built. This successful case inspired the government and construction companies to plan more large apartment complexes, and that plan became continuous success.”

⁸ Myungji Yang, 70.

⁹ Dorothee Leasing, “Engaging the High-Rise in German Media Culture: Aspects of Vertical Living from 1945 to 2020” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2021).

¹⁰ See Valérie Gelézeau, *The Republic of Apartments: Korean Apartments in the Eyes of a French Geography Scholar* [Ap'at'ŭ konghwaguk p'ŭrangsŭ chiri hakcha ka pon han'gung ŭi ap'at'ŭ] (Seoul: Humanit'asŭ, 2007); Kang Chunman, “The Republic of Apartments – Crazy about Apartments” [Ap'at'ŭ konghwaguk – ap'at'ŭ e mich'ida], *Inmulgwa sasang* (2009): 62-71.

¹¹ Valérie Gelézeau, 91, cited in Myungji Yang, 70.

¹² Myungji Yang, 25.

However, contrary to what the “republic of apartments” might suggest, in the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, most Koreans did not want to live in an apartment, but in an individual house (*tandok chut'aek*).¹³ How, then, did apartments become the object that Koreans longed for when they aspired to live as a middle-to-upper class in Seoul? Scholars like Valérie Gelézeau and Myungji Yang trace the history of the “affluent and cultured lifestyles” notions of high-rise apartments in the Park government’s initiatives to build large apartment complexes in Seoul, especially the Gangnam area, south of the Han River, and to promote such images to salaried white-collar families in collaboration with the *chaebŏl* construction companies.¹⁴ However, these top-down analyses primarily look at the 1970s and rarely examine the role popular mass media played in creating and popularizing ideas and images associated with apartment living in the earlier periods.

In the late 1950s and in the early 1960s before weekly magazines and commercial films were not accessible to the majority of the Korean population, newspapers and newsreels merely portrayed apartments as a practical solution to solve the overpopulation problem in Seoul and a necessary step towards modernization (*kūndaehwa*). A 1959 newspaper article emphasized the need for more apartments because “building more apartments would help people save a lot of space, share cultural facilities, and enjoy lower living expenses.”¹⁵ As apartments were not common in Korea during this time, the media turned to the west to learn about apartments. A newspaper reporter’s stay in Munich, Germany, in 1960 confirmed that automated features in the German apartment complex such as elevators and buzzers were only possible in the west and something

¹³ Song Ŭnyŏng, 418-9.

¹⁴ Myungji Yang, 25.

¹⁵ “Housing of the Modern Era (7): Urgent Need to Build Apartments,” [Hyŏndae ŭi chut'aek: ap'at'ŭ kŏnsŏl shigŭp] *Tonga ilbo*, June 27, 1959, 4.

that “Korea could not achieve for a while.”¹⁶ Similarly, newspaper coverage of apartments in the U.S. in 1961 reaffirmed the need for Korea to catch up with the advanced world, highlighting modern features of American apartments such as an electric stove, garbage disposal sink, and automated heating system.¹⁷

As a necessary step toward modernization, the construction of apartments became part of the Park government’s first Five Year Economic Plan (1962-66). Together with the Korea National Housing Corporation, Park launched the construction of the first largest apartment complex in Mapo-gu, Seoul in December 1962. From the government perspective, the building of the Mapo apartment complex was supposed to be a leap towards more convenient and advanced living and a practical solution for overcrowding in Seoul. The complex, comprised of six high-rises, was named “Mammoth Apartment” (*mammosŭ ap'at'ŭ*) and was to provide 450 units of apartments of the “finest features” such as a shower, balcony, and built-in landlines that Koreans had never seen before.¹⁸ Numerous newspaper articles celebrated the birth of the country’s largest and most advanced apartment complex.

However, contrary to what the Park government expected, many Koreans were not happy with the “unprecedented modern features” of apartments. Common complaints were that the water pipes for heating would freeze in winter and there was no underground space to store kimchi and

¹⁶ “Travel Around the World in 100 Days (1): Life in Apartments,” [100 ilgan ŭi segye ilchu: ap'at'ŭ saenghwal] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, October 31, 1960, 3.

¹⁷ Pak Ch'anung, “Faces of America (7): Apartments,” [Amerik'a chŏmmyo: ap'at'ŭ] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, December 14, 1961, 1; “Faces of America (8): A Student Studying Abroad,” [Amerik'a chŏmmyo: ŏnŭ yuhaksaeng] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, December 15, 1961, 1.

¹⁸ “Residents to be Selected Soon for Mapo Apartment: Construction to Begin Early November,” [Wŏlch'o chun'gong hal map'o ap'at'ŭ kot ipchuja ppobŭl tŭt] *Tonga ilbo*, October 18, 1962, 8.

other preserved food.¹⁹ Koreans did not yet develop an “emotional attachment” to the apartments as their home.²⁰ Under titles like “Modernization Being Achieved,” newsreels also emphasized that building more apartments would bring a brighter future to Seoul with more highways, residential areas, and industrial complexes. The 1967 newsreel segment proudly announced the construction of an apartment complex in Ich'on-dong in Seoul as “part of the plan to make Seoul a modern and new city.”²¹ It stated, “the old, underdeveloped, and poor area (*p'anjach'on*) will be completely replaced with these fresh-looking and tall apartment buildings with modern features such as the western style heating system, plumbing, and the kitchen.”²² Yet, despite the repeated focus in newspapers and newsreels on the modern features of apartments and the prospect for providing homes for a lot of people in newspapers and newsreels, living in apartments was not popular in the 1960s.²³

Furthermore, the discourse on apartments in newspapers in the early 1960s especially made Koreans think that apartments were for the working class in Seoul who could not afford to buy houses or for those who were not originally from Seoul. A statement from the Korea National Housing Corporation that “the Mapo apartments are for those who do not have enough money to live in houses in Seoul” only made the apartments sound like a low-class housing option, not an

¹⁹ “Modern Style to Give in to Cold Weather,” [Ch'ui e kulbok'an hyōndaeshik] *Kyōnghyang shinmun*, January 11, 1963, 7; “Traditional Mode of Life Living Together with Modern Lifestyle in Apartments,” [Ap'at'ū saenghwal ūi chushik hyōndae wa tonggōhanūn chaeraeshik] *Tonga ilbo*, April 9, 1965, 7.

²⁰ “Life in Apartments: Pros and Cons from the Residents,” [Ap'at'ū saenghwal: choūn chōm nappūn chōm ipchujadūri kyōnghōmdam] *Tonga ilbo*, March 28, 1963, 7.

²¹ *Liberty News*, 717, “Modernization Being Achieved” [Iruk Toenūn Kūndaehwa] (Exact year unknown: Ch'angwōn: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. <http://kfilm.khistory.org>. While the exact date of the production and showing of the newsreel is unknown, considering that the construction completion ceremony of the civil servants' apartments (*kongmuwōn ap'at'ū*) in Ich'on-dong took place on April 27, 1967, the author assumes that the production and showing year of the newsreel was in 1967.

²² Ibid.

²³ “Steam Function on Top of Shower,” [Syawō e sūt'im kkaji] *Kyōnghyang shinmun*, November 15, 1962; “Newly Built Apartments Unpopular,” [In'gi ōmnūn shinsōl ap'at'ū], *Kyōnghyang shinmun*, June 28, 1967, 7.

attractive commodity.²⁴ Even in popular weekly magazines, apartments had little to do with the middle or upper class. A 1969 *Weekly Woman* special section, “Seoul, Now in the Era of Apartments” pessimistically stated, “whether they like it or not, it seems inevitable for the working class (*sŏmin kyegŭp*) of Seoul to live in apartments” because the government was pushing towards building more apartments despite the growing complaints, and the working class could not afford to buy houses.²⁵ With this logic, apartments should not have become an expensive and luxurious commodity, but a government-subsidized necessity. Then how did apartments from the mid-1970s onwards become an attractive and expensive commodity that the working class could not afford?

Fictional stories in weekly magazines and films during this time, however, were drawing a completely different picture of apartments and helped get rid of the stigma that Koreans had towards living in high-rise apartments. Instead of the practical function as a housing option which was highlighted in newspapers and newsreels, apartments were portrayed as a space of modern and luxurious living that guaranteed privacy, allowed sexual immorality, and promised upward mobility. Many novelists and film directors took advantage of this newly emerged space called apartments and projected their imaginations onto print and screen. As color magazines and movies now portrayed the inside of the apartments visually for the first time, Koreans could see what an apartment looked like even if they did not live in one. Romance stories that took place inside the apartments invited magazine readers and moviegoers to also imagine their romantic lives inside the apartments. In contrast to what some media said about the inconvenience of living in apartments, what was portrayed in weekly magazines’ serialized novels and films was something that only the rich could afford. Material goods such as sunglasses, cars, lamps, beds, and curtains

²⁴ “Public Hearing for Apartments and Standing-up Lifestyle: Path to Solve Housing Problem,” [Ap'at'ŭ wa ipshik saenghwal ŭl wihan chwadamhoe: chut'aengnan haegyŏl ŭi kil] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, April 18, 1963, 3.

²⁵ *Chugan yŏsŏng*, April 16, 1969, 16-19.

that were considered modern and expensive frequently came up in descriptions and scenes about apartments. The message was clear: living in apartments requires a lot of money.

What apartments promised was more than just a life of modern and luxurious material goods. Apartments were also portrayed as a space of privacy and love affairs. Two movies, *Woman in Apartment* (1969) and the *Woman Who Wanted an Apartment* (1970), particularly portrayed apartments as a space for love affairs, and especially adultery.²⁶ *Woman in Apartment* (1969) is about Kyöngsuk, a woman who is having a love affair with a *chaebö* but then falls in love with another man, Chun'gil, who has just killed his wife's secret lover. Kyöngsuk keeps Chun'gil in her apartment because her apartment is the only secure place where Kyöngsuk and Chun'gil could freely continue their secret love affair.

The notion of privacy frequently comes in the movie despite the fact that the concept was quite new in 1960s Korea. The police officer who chases after Chun'gil is suspicious of Kyöngsuk, so he keeps visiting her place. Finally, Kyöngsuk says to the police, "Is there no law to punish a police officer who violates someone else's privacy?"²⁷ The police officer cannot enter Kyöngsuk's apartment, nor can he ask her family members because Kyöngsuk lives alone. The message is that if you have an apartment where you live by yourself, you can do anything because even police force cannot violate your privacy.

At the end of the movie, the apartment also becomes the reason why their romantic relationship comes to an end. Kyöngsuk inevitably leaves the apartment because of her mother's death, and Kyöngsuk's absence gives Chun'gil ample time to think about his relationship with Kyöngsuk. He eventually decides to turn himself in to the police. The police officer does not charge

²⁶ I use the translation of the movie titles done by the Korean Film Archive. Also, note that adultery was illegal in South Korea from 1953 to 2015.

²⁷ *Woman in Apartment* [Ap'at'ü üi yöin], directed by Yi Söngku (1969; Seoul: T'aech'ang hüngö), script.

Kyöngsuk for harboring Chun'gil because Chun'gil turned himself in “because of Kyöngsuk’s power of love.”²⁸ Chun'gil whispers, “I loved you,” in the police car, watching Kyöngsuk run towards him, crying. Even a crime of hiding a felon is romanticized here. Furthermore, Kyöngsuk decides to wait for Chun'gil against his will, which is depicted in a romantic way. This ending seems to have projected the movie as a kind of moral tale, but it certainly did not discourage people from imagining adultery inside the private space of apartment. Throughout the movie, Kyöngsuk’s apartment serves as the space where she sustains her true love.

The *Woman Who Wanted an Apartment* (1970) is about a newly married couple who wants to live in an apartment. The couple is not rich enough to own their house and wanders around the outskirts of the city for a place with cheap rent. The wife, Hyeshil, narrates in the beginning of the movie, “Every Sunday we move. Every time the rent goes up, we are chased away from the center of the city to the outskirts. We do not have savings and only rely on monthly salary, so we can’t afford a higher rent.”²⁹ When the husband’s company starts to provide apartments for the bachelor employees, the couple decides to lie that the husband, Yöngmin, is single so that he can get an apartment. The couple gets excited about living in an apartment:

Yöngmin: If you are okay with it [my suggestion to live in apartments lying that I am single], we can live in an apartment!

Hyeshil: Really? Apartments?

Yöngmin: It’s a one-bedroom with a bathroom, modern kitchen, all necessary furniture, and even a lock system to the door! What do you think?

Hyeshil: Honey! Is that apartment the one that I saw in my dream?

Yöngmin: Yes! Your dream was right! It came true!³⁰

²⁸ *Woman in Apartment* [Ap'at'ü üi yöin], directed by Yi Sönggu (1969; Seoul: T'aech'ang hüngöpp), script.

²⁹ *Woman who Wanted an Apartment* [Ap'at'ü rül katko ship'ün yöja], directed by Chöng Inyöp (1970; Seoul: Asöng p'illim), VOD.

³⁰ Ibid.

For Hyeshil who is tired from moving to places, living in an apartment sounds like a dream. Yŏngmin's description of the apartment in this scene implies that it is modern and different from a traditional house. The couple moves into the apartment and Hyeshil enjoys her new life (see figure 4.1) although she has to hide inside the apartment because of a security guard who surveils what the bachelor employees are doing.

Figure 4.1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a scene from the film, *Woman Who Wanted an Apartment* [Ap'at'ũ rŭl katko ship'ũn yŏja], showing a woman spinning with her arms up and a man in bed reading something.

Original source: *The Woman Who Wanted an Apartment* [Ap'at'ũ rŭl katko ship'ũn yŏja], directed by Chŏng Inyŏp (1970; Seoul: Asŏng p'illim), VOD.

Accessed through the Korean Film Archive (Han'guk yŏngsang charyowŏn).

Figure 4.1 *Woman Who Wanted an Apartment* [Ap'at'ũ rŭl katko ship'ũn yŏja]

The reason why Yŏngmin's boss provides apartments was to confine a few competent male employees in the "Bachelor Apartment" and choose the most desirable one to marry his daughter. The daughter of Yŏngmin's boss falls in love with Yŏngmin whom she thinks is single. Hyeshil, aware of this love affair between her husband and another woman, cannot reveal herself because she wants to keep the apartment (see figure 4.2). The portrayal of apartments as containing numerous layers of secrets adds a sense of secrecy and fantasy to the notions of apartments.

Figure 4.2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a scene from the film, *Woman Who Wanted an Apartment* [Ap'at'ũ rŭl katko ship'ũn yŏja], showing a woman hiding under the bed behind two sets of legs of those who are sitting on the bed.

Original source: *The Woman Who Wanted an Apartment* [Ap'at'ũ rŭl katko ship'ũn yŏja], directed by Chŏng Inyŏp (1970; Seoul: Asŏng p'illim), VOD.

Accessed through the Korean Film Archive (Han'guk yŏngsang charyowŏn).

Figure 4.2 *Woman Who Wanted an Apartment* [Ap'at'ũ rŭl katko ship'ũn yŏja]

The significance of apartments in both movies is closely tied to the newly emerged notion that apartments provided privacy. Having individual units of apartments that guaranteed privacy was new to the Korean society. Traditionally, Koreans lived with their extended family and had to share bedrooms with multiple family members. To foreigners' eyes, most Korean houses in the 1960s "lacked privacy" because of the poor soundproofing and locks to the front door.³¹ Thus, Yŏngmin in *the Woman Who Wanted an Apartment* being excited about the lock system not only proves that private living was a new concept during that era, but also shows that the cinematic setting of apartments as a private space itself effectively increased a sense of secrecy and fantasy. The portrayal of protagonists living in apartments by themselves or just with their partners came as a fantasy to a lot of people. Furthermore, the implied message was "you can do whatever you can" in the apartments. The frequent appearance of apartments in popular movies made it seem that Korea was already enjoying the privacy that the new living space of apartments offered.

Of course, privacy was not given for free. In both movies, privacy came with apartments which were portrayed as an expensive commodity. Just like Yŏngmin says in *the Woman Who Wanted an Apartment*, apartments were equipped with expensive features such as a modern

³¹ "Wives of Foreign Ambassadors Speak: Housing in Korea," [Chwadam chuhan oegyogwan puindŭl ūn mal handa: han'guk ūi kajŏng] *Maeil kyŏngje*, March 24, 1971, 15.

kitchen, bathroom, and furniture. In *Woman in Apartment*, scenes of Kyöngsuk's apartment bedroom reveal her luxurious life. Kyöngsuk tells Chun'gil:

Why don't you take a bath when the water is warm? There is a bar of soap and towels in the bathroom... If you feel hungry, eat food from the fridge. Don't answer the call even if the phone rings. The curtains are quite thick so if you have them down, you can probably turn on the small lamp (*sūt'aendŭ*) over there.³²

Things that are easily available in apartments now such as a warm bath, soap, towels, a fridge, a phone, curtains, and a lamp were not available to a lot of Koreans in the late 1960 and even in the 1970s. Kyöngsuk listing all these material goods available in her apartment signals that her life in the apartment is not just about privacy, but also about luxurious and modern living. Contrary to what the Park government emphasized, frequent appearances of material goods in both movies such as a vanity table, bed, and couch all suggested that an apartment was only for the rich, rather than an affordable housing option for all.

In addition to movies, fictional stories in weekly magazines also contributed to the fantasized image of apartments. A novel, *Apartments* (*ap'at'ŭmōnt'ŭ*), was published in serial form in the *Weekly Hankook* from November 1964 to July 1965. The author, Chöng Pisök (1911-1991), was one of the best-known novelists of postwar Korea. He became most popular for his novel, *Madame Freedom* (*chayu puin*), which he published in the daily, the *Seoul Shinmun*, in 1954. Similar to what he did in *Madame Freedom*, in *Apartments* Chöng explored the themes of women's seemingly liberated romantic lives and sexuality.³³ While a dance hall, a space of "moral corruption due to American influence," served as the setting where the female protagonist

³² *Ap'at'ŭ rŭl katko ship'ŭn yōja*, directed by Yi Söngku (1969; Seoul: T'aech'ang hŭngöpp), script.

³³ The theme of women's liberated romantic lives was more imaginative than representative of the reality because women's sexuality was "always challenged" by patriarchal norms. Ko Sönhŭi, "Sexuality and Capitalistic Subjectivity Formation in Chöng Pisök's Novel," [Chöng Pisök sosöl ŭi seksyuöllit'i wa chönhu ŭi chabonjuŭijök chuch'e kusöng] *Han'guk sasang kwa munhwa* 84 (2016): 93.

experienced sexual freedom in *Madame Freedom*,³⁴ in *Apartments*, apartments served as the perfect space for the theme. From the beginning of the story, the author specifically portrayed apartments as a private space where lovers could be together in private without interruption. A fictional apartment complex, *Towŏnjang*, where 75% of the residents were single women of “abnormal lives” whose occupations were mostly dancers and waitresses served as the setting of the story.³⁵ The reason why these women preferred living in *Towŏnjang*, a “singles’ apartment,” was because they “always wanted to avoid the eyes of the society,” and the apartment provided privacy.³⁶ The stories that happen in the novel revolve around secret love affairs of these female residents in *Towŏnjang*.

Another serial novel, *Four Seasons* (1969) in *Weekly Woman*, also based its story on apartments where privacy was guaranteed. The author, Pang Yŏngung (1942-), had gained popularity for his novel, *Pullye’s Story* (*Pullyegi*), published in 1967.³⁷ Contrary to *Pullye’s Story* where the author narrated a tragic story of a helpless woman, Pullye, in the rural area where “doomed poverty, old custom, and violence” ruled,³⁸ *Four Seasons* was a story about two sisters of different mothers living in an apartment complex called, “Culture Town” (*munhwach’on*) which actually existed in Seoul. In the first episode, the elder sister, Kyŏngae, and her lover, Yŏngho, go to a nearby hill to have a private conversation. But Kyŏngae keeps getting bothered by the presence of other people. Then the two decide to go to Kyŏngae and her sister Kyŏngju’s apartment. The

³⁴ Ibid., 94.

³⁵ *Chugan han’guk*, November 15, 1964, 27.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ It seems that the space of apartments gave Pang Yŏngung inspired him to write a story about what could happen in the apartments. The setting of *Pullye’s Story* was a countryside where the author presented “the reality of the countryside” where “doomed poverty, old custom, and violence ruled.”

³⁸ Kim Yŏngch’an, “Pang Yŏngung’s *Pullye’s Story* and Paek Nakch’ŏng’s Realism,” [Pang yŏngung ūi pullyegi wa paek nakch’ŏng ūi riŏllijŭm], *Kyŏre ōmunhak* 56 (2016): 36.

scenes in the following episode leading up to their arrival at the apartment create a sense of secrecy: It is late at night; everyone in the apartment seems to be asleep; Kyōngae walks with her body leaning against Yōngho, and Yōngho feels nervous about his visit happening so late at night. When Kyōngae and Yōngho arrive at the apartment, Kyōngju opens the door, and Yōngho sees Kyōngju's body that is only covered with transparent lingerie, which pleasantly surprises Yōngho. Overall, the notion that the apartments guaranteed privacy creates and enhances the atmosphere of secrecy and romantic tension.

This new notion of privacy within apartments that emerged in the late 1960s seems to have inspired the authors to choose apartments as the setting for their romance stories. Just around the same time as the writing of *Four Seasons*, newspaper advertisements of the Culture Town apartment complex were highlighting the aspect of private life in the apartments. Advertisements features phrases like “Your independent living is guaranteed as you enter your unit through the separate stairs!” intrigued Koreans to imagine their private and independent lives inside the apartment.³⁹ Such an intriguing notion of privacy surely made novelists like Pang Yōngung explore possible love stories that could happen to women living by themselves in the apartments.

Some might suggest that the female protagonists in *Apartments* (1964-65) and *Four Seasons* (1969) as well as *Woman in Apartment* (1969) signaled more agency of female characters in romance stories. Previously female protagonists were portrayed as passive agents of romantic relationships. For example, in *Pullye's Story* (1967), the author of *Four Seasons* (1969) portrayed the main character, *Pullye*, as a helpless female victim in the rural area where traditional patriarchy was still the norm to the extent that “rape-like sexual relationships seemed to be the natural

³⁹ “Advertisement: Munhwachon Apartments for Sale,” [Munhwach'on chōngnūng ap'at'ū punyang annae] *Kyōnghyang shinmun*, November 11: 1.

order.”⁴⁰ The emergence of apartments not only provided a new stage for romance movies, but also an opportunity for women to be portrayed as active actors in romantic relationships. The message to the female audience was that apartments set women free from the patriarchal domestic sphere where they had to be submissive daughters and wives.

Such a sense of emancipation drawn from female characters living in apartments is often the explanation many scholars give for apartments’ popularity. Anthropologist Cho Hanhyechōng argues that the birth of apartments in Seoul granted women with the “wife power,” (*anae kwōn*) empowering their status from a submissive daughter-in-law in an extended family in the countryside to a modern and educated wife in a nuclear family in Seoul.⁴¹ The move from the countryside to the city required more responsibilities from young wives, which finally allowed them to surpass their mothers-in-law in status. Cho argues that the husbands respected the knowledge and the skills of their wives in purchasing apartments. Thus, it was only rational for young wives to want to move into the apartment where their rights and status could immensely increase.

However, the question remains as to whether the novelists and film directors actually meant to empower women through their stories. Their previous works suggest that the images of women in apartments were there to serve and satisfy the male fantasy about “single women living in the apartments alone.” The two novelists’ previous works are known for their particular “male gaze” towards women. Pang Yōngung’s *Pullye’s Story* (1967) is known for the lewd description of sexual violence done against the female character, Pullye.⁴² Also, Chōng Pisōk’s *Madam Freedom*

⁴⁰ Kim Uyōng, “*Ch’angjak kwa pip’yōng* in its Early Days and the Meaning of *Pullye’s Story*,” [Ch’ogi ch’angjak kwa pip’yōng kwa pullyegi ūi ūimi] *Han’guk hyōndae munhak yōn’gu* 49 (2016): 393.

⁴¹ Cho Hanhyechōng, *Introspective Modernity and Feminism* [Sōngch’alchōk kūndaesōng kwa p’eminijūm] (Seoul: Tto hana ūi munhwa, 1998), 150-51.

⁴² Kim Uyōng, 384.

(1954) is said to have been written from the perspective of a “male moralist who condemns women’s sexual immorality.”⁴³ Scholars argue that the fantasy that the male novelists and male directors wanted to create was the product of the “gender-blindness” prevalent during the Park era, rather than a feminist move towards empowerment of female characters.⁴⁴ It is evident that the images of women living in apartments alone were used frequently as a source of fiction because they maximized a sense of secrecy, mystery, and fantasy.

In addition to the notions of privacy that created a fantasy, apartments were portrayed as a place where the dream of upward mobility could come true. The current-day symbol of apartments as a marker of class has encouraged many scholars to study the social history of apartments. But they have mainly focused on the 1970s and the later periods when the drive to build apartments accelerated. However, the two serialized novels in weekly magazines, *Apartments* (1964-65) and *Four Seasons* (1969), show that there was a notion of a mid-to-upper class attached to apartments as early as the mid-1960s. In *Apartments*, Chŏng Pisŏk portrayed the Mapo apartment complex, the first large-scale apartment complex in Korea, as only available to the upper class. He described that the Mapo apartments were “nothing Korean” but western because they were more advanced and modern.⁴⁵ Chŏng also wrote, “All the residents were dressed in western style suits, so outsiders thought as if they were somewhere in America or Europe.”⁴⁶

The author’s portrayal of apartments as “western,” especially “American,” was an extension of his fascination with the American culture that was recurring from his previous works. In the 1950s serial novels in newspapers, descriptions of American lifestyle such as dance halls,

⁴³ Sim Chinkyŏng, 154.

⁴⁴ Kim Uyŏng, 397.

⁴⁵ *Chugan han'guk*, November 15, 1964, 26.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

pop music, coffee, and chocolate easily represented the lives of the middle-to-upper class.⁴⁷ In his previous work, *Madame Freedom* (1954), Chŏng's choice of the background setting to make his characters middle-to-upper class was an American-style dance hall where well-dressed men and women enjoyed dancing and drinking. In *Apartments*, the Mapo apartments became the property of the upper class through the author's description of apartments as "western." Thus, while the description, "the unemployed or people with low income would not even dare to live in the Mapo apartment because 85 % of the residents were those who earned high salaries"⁴⁸ was fictional, it effectively created a sense of class exclusivity.

Similarly, *Four Seasons* (1969) in *Weekly Woman* also portrayed apartments as a place which only the rich could afford. In the second episode, the scene where the two protagonists see an imported foreign car, a Toyota Corona, sliding up to the apartments suggested that the residents of the apartment were rich enough to afford foreign cars.⁴⁹ Since restoring relations with Japan in 1965, Korea started to import Japanese goods, including automobiles. In every month in 1967, 2631 cars on average were imported.⁵⁰ Korean automobile industries were not yet equipped with producing domestic cars, so the wealthy who could afford to buy cars purchased foreign cars which were sold at a higher price in Korea than in the exporting countries.⁵¹ The mention of Japanese

⁴⁷ Im Ŭnhŭi, "A Study on the Reorganization and Gender Characteristics of Tastes in Serial Stories in the 1950," [1950 nyŏndae shinmun sosŏl e nat'an an ch'wihyang ŭi chaep'yŏn kwa chendŏsŏng], *Han'guk munye pip'yŏng yŏn'gu* 45 (2014): 257.

⁴⁸ *Chugan han'guk*, November 15, 1964: 26. Ironically, the author of *Apartments* also viewed apartments as a way to solve the overpopulation problem, not a way to gain upward social mobility. When he was invited to a public hearing to discuss the status of the housing problems in Seoul in 1970, he stated that the overpopulation of Seoul was not just a natural outcome of industrialization, but a problem caused by the government. Together with others, he viewed building more apartments for the working class would only make the overpopulation problem worse. See "Basic Way to Disperse Big City Population: On the Public Hearing Content," [Tae toshi in'gu punsan kibon panghyang ũn: kongch'ŏnghoe naeyong ŭl chungshim ŭro] *Maeil kyŏngje*, January 23, 1970, 3.

⁴⁹ "Sagyejŏl," *Chugan yŏsŏng*, January 8, 1969, 56.

⁵⁰ "Increase in Automobile Imports," [Chadongch'a suip kyŏkchŭng] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, June 17, 1968, 3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

commodities as an example of what rich men could enjoy in *Four Seasons* suggested that the kind of anti-Japanese rhetoric, which was prevalent in the self-made man discourse examined in chapter two, gradually faded and was replaced with the sentiment of longing for modern products that a more advanced country could offer. In addition, various household goods that were thought to be high-class and that many women during this time coveted such as a bed, a vanity table, and curtains functioned in the novel to signal mid-to-upper class lifestyles in the apartments. The frequent mention of Kyōngae and Kyōngju taking a taxi to their apartments also implied that they were not in any sense poor.

The repeated association of apartments with wealth created a fantasy about the life of the upper class that seemed to be predicated upon living in an apartment. As stated in the beginning, newspaper articles during the same time portrayed apartments as serving the working class in Seoul who could not afford to buy houses. But the fictional portrayal of apartments as an exclusively high-class property gradually eliminated the notion of the low-class status that had been attached to the apartments. By the 1970s when more apartments were built, Koreans “quenched their thirst” for upward mobility by consuming apartments as one of the most attractive commodities of Seoul.⁵² The eagerness to gain upward mobility through apartments only strengthened to this day as one’s apartment is still one of the most distinctive markers of class.⁵³

Therefore, the fictional stories that took place in apartments made the notion of living in apartments many Koreans’ ultimate fantasy. The promises of privacy, secret romance, and upward

⁵² Song Ŭnyōng, 429. Song further writes, “The cultural desire for the modern life projected onto apartments in the 1970s was not only the image of life that the middle-class should be able to enjoy, but it was also an attractive image for the lower-class who wanted to blur the class differentiation by mimicking the upper-class. The significant economic growth since the mid-1960s allowed Seoul to be a space where Koreans could satisfy their cultural desire through commodity consumption.”

⁵³ Mun Chōngp’il, “Spatial Time and Space That Should Be Added to the Republic of Apartment Houses,” [Ap’at’ū konghwaguk e tōhaejyōya hal changsojōk shi konggan] *Sahoe sasang kwa munhwa* 21, no.2 (2018): 270. Translation is done by the journal editors.

mobility were added onto the convenience and modern features of living in apartments that newspapers and newsreels emphasized.⁵⁴ The fantasized images transformed apartments from a mere housing option to one of Koreans' most coveted commodities. By the 1970s, apartments started to sell rapidly despite being one of the most expensive commodities. As Valérie Gelézeau suggests, the success of apartments in Korea lies in the popularity of the image, not the reality of apartments.⁵⁵ The analysis of serialized novels in weekly magazines and movies provides a fuller understanding on why apartments became popular to the point Korea became a “republic of apartments.”

Locating Seoul Globally through Hotels, Sunglasses, and Cars

Popular media portrayed modern objects such as hotels, sunglasses, and cars as symbols of modernity and at the same time the exclusive property of rich men in Seoul. First of all, the construction of hotels in Seoul put the city in a global setting in popular media. A 1968 *Sunday Seoul* special series, “New Seoul, Big Seoul” celebrated the hotel construction boom. The article highlighted that the increasing number of hotels meant that the capital was becoming an international tourist destination. The article proudly dubbed hotels a “messenger of modernization”

⁵⁴ Based on their analysis of three different women's magazines, Kim Chonghui and Kim Yŏngch'an argue that the popularity for large-scale apartments in Gangnam was because of the discourse on sanitation and modern technologies such as TV in women's magazines. Kim Chonghui and Kim Yŏngch'an, “Formation of the Cultural Discourses of ‘Modern Home’ in Women's Magazines of the 1960s through the 1970s,” [1960-1970-nyŏndae yŏsŏngji e nat'an'an kŭndaejŏk chugŏ konggan mit chugŏ munhwa tamnon e kwanhan yŏn'gu] *Midiŏ chendŏ munhwa* 10 (2008): 109-155. Translation is done by the journal editors.

⁵⁵ Valérie Gelézeau, 190. Surely, the government policy of building more apartments and the marketing strategy of apartment construction companies did their part to sell the apartments. For example, scholars like Kim Aram have suggested that the private apartment construction companies' marketing slogan of “my home” made people cultivate a false hope of owning an apartment regardless of their capacity to buy an apartment. However, these studies' focus on the “modernity” and “convenience” do not fully explain the emotional attachment that Koreans had to the notions of owning an apartment. See Kim Aram, “A Study on Characteristics of Housing Policy and Legacy of Development in the 1970s,” [1970 nyŏndae chut'aek chŏngch'aek ŭi sŏnggyŏk kwa kaebal ŭi yusan] *Yŏksa munje yŏn'gu* 29 (2013): 47-84.

(*kūndaehwa ūi chōllyōng*) and stated that hotels were booming because “international conferences were continuously held in Seoul and foreign tourists constantly visited the land of the morning calm.”⁵⁶ The article portrayed Seoul as a modern place worthy of visiting not just from a domestic point of view, but also from an international perspective.

Locating Seoul in the global context was important to increasing the sense of pride Koreans felt about Seoul, and also in legitimizing the fast pace of industrialization. Seoul at this time was not part of the transnational networks which Saskia Sassen identifies as having made possible the development of cities like New York, London, or Tokyo as “global” cities in the decades following the end of the Second World War.⁵⁷ But propagandistic channels, including *Liberty News* examined in chapter three, showcased the images of modern American cities through newsreels, including “Chicago in Progress” (*palchōnhanŭn shik'agoshi*), “The Skyview of New York” (*nyuyok hanŭl kyōngch'i*), and “The Mood of New York” (*nyuyok ūi mudŭ*). The scenes of advanced cities with their high-rise buildings, highways, and commute helicopters gave a sense of hope that Seoul could also be one day as modern and advanced.

These images of modern American cities were then juxtaposed with those of Seoul. For example, the *Liberty News* newsreel, “Seoul, Making Steps Forward” (*chōnjin hanŭn soul*) (1967) featured the mayor of Seoul, Kim Hyōnok’s visit to modern cities in the world including Washington D.C. Mayor Kim met with Walter Tobriner, then President of the Board of Commissioners of Washington, D.C. and toured the White House. The mayor then appeared in the newsreel and gave a speech stating,

From my visit I have witnessed that Seoul is not too behind other capital cities of the advanced allied countries. However, if we try to copy American cities only because they are great, we will only generate those cities here. If we copy Tokyo of Japan

⁵⁶ *Sōndei sōul*, November 24, 1968, 19.

⁵⁷ See Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

because it is great, Seoul will be just another Tokyo. Seoul has 600 years of long history. I am confident that when all four million citizens of Seoul play a part of this noble project of making a new Seoul based on the 600 years of long history, Seoul will be a great city that is by no means inferior to capital cities of advanced countries.⁵⁸

This tone of hope and possibility was to make Koreans think that it was very possible for Seoul to be as great as other capital cities in the world. Mayor Kim's call for participation in that effort suggested that it was considered normative to modernize Seoul and to work hard to be part of that modernization drive.

At the same time, the portrayal of hotels as the “messenger of modernization” also defined who the normative citizens of Seoul were. First of all, hotel stays were for the rich only. The aforementioned article suggested the hotels were not for “common people (*sōmin*)” and staying at a hotel would still be a “dream” for the low-income class, despite the increasing number of hotels.⁵⁹ Furthermore, normative guests of hotels were male. Under the subheading “Who are the women who knock on the hotel room door at 11 P.M.?” the article described how some hotels provided the service of sending “call girls” (*k'olgŏl*, prostitutes) to the guests. By implying that the hotel guests were male and creating a “male guests vs. female prostitutes” binary, the article effectively put men as the normative users of hotels in Seoul, despite the fact that there were more female residents in the city.⁶⁰ The article then fixated this gender binary because that was also the case in the U.S. It wrote, “in America, the birthplace of hotels, male guests are not allowed to bring their girlfriends to their rooms,” making male guests the normative users of hotels because that was the

⁵⁸ *Liberty News*, 701, “Seoul Making Progress,” [Chŏnjin hanŭn sŏul] (January 11, 1967; Ch'angwŏn: Liberty Production). Accessed through the Korea University Archive. <http://kfilm.khistory.org>.

⁵⁹ *Sŏndei sŏul*, November 24, 1968, 18-19.

⁶⁰ The second article of this special series was on various statistical data about Seoul, and it noted that there were 930,000 more female residents than men as of October 1967. *Sŏndei sŏul*, November 24, 1968: 21.

case in America.⁶¹ This description excluded women as the “messenger of modernization” and called upon wealthy men as the primary actors of modernization, alluring them with a fantasy about “call girls” in hotels.

It was not just hotels that put Seoul in the global setting and at the same time called upon men to be the “messengers of modernization.” Newly introduced products such as sunglasses and cars made frequent appearances in weekly magazines as the commodities of Seoul and of masculine identities. A 1969 article in *Sunday Seoul*, “There Are Only Blind People in Seoul: The Sunglasses Boom that Shocked an Old Man from The Countryside,” clearly differentiated Seoul from the countryside. The author claimed, “sunglasses are ‘exclusive property’ (*chōnyumul*) of the city people. It would be weird to see a farmer with a carrier on his back wearing sunglasses.”⁶² In making sunglasses tied to Seoul exclusively, not to all of Korea, the article created a message that modernization was happening exclusively in Seoul. Similar to how men were implied as the only hotel guests, this article on the sunglasses also made it a norm that it was men who had this “exclusive material good.” It did so by only mentioning men who knew how to “properly” wear sunglasses such as General Douglas MacArthur, military police officers during the Korean War, and Al Capone.⁶³ From the perspective of readers in rural areas, this kind of media portrayal of Seoul suggested that the adaptation to the modern culture was exclusively happening in Seoul, specifically to the rich men.

Similarly, the most prominent example of the “exclusive property” of Seoul’s rich male residents was cars. Various media praised automobiles as the symbol of wealth and modernity. *Sunday Seoul* often had featured sections on the increased number of cars, including a special

⁶¹ *Sōndei sōul*, November 24, 1968, 20.

⁶² *Sōndei sōul*, July 20, 1969, 41.

⁶³ *Sōndei sōul*, July 20, 1969, 41.

series of articles, “Special Series: The Era of Cars” in November 1968. The author, while celebrating the increased availability of cars, created a message that not everyone could afford them. Titles such as “Let’s Have a Dream of Riding Your Own Car” suggested the increased possibility of owning a vehicle.⁶⁴ The high demand despite the high price made the reporter ask “when did Koreans’ income become so high that the supply for cars cannot catch up with the demand?”⁶⁵ Revealing how much certain cars cost, especially the ones that celebrities and entrepreneurs owned, the article ended with a message that cars were only for the rich in Seoul and you needed to make a lot of money to dream of owning one.

Furthermore, not only did these articles make the dream of owning an expensive car sound like a fantasy to the “ordinary” readers, but the media also portrayed cars as a gendered commodity. For example, the article “Whose Car Is No.1?” ended with a sentence, “according to the car dealers, just like how playboys roam around different women (*yŏsŏng p’yŏllyŏk*), *chaebols* like to tour around different cars.”⁶⁶ Here, those who can afford to buy cars are all male and their ability to change from one car to another is depicted as what a playboy does. The absence of women as car owners and the objectification of women as cars made cars an exclusive property of men.⁶⁷

Interestingly, women’s weekly magazines, which were thought to empower women, also made cars a property of men. The February 19th issue of *Weekly Woman* in 1969 had a special section on the “*maik’a* (my car)” boom. The four-page section categorized female car owners based on how they were able to own cars. Two out of five categories were female car owners who owned

⁶⁴ *Sŏndei sŏul*, November 10, 1968, 52.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶⁷ Hang Sang Kim, “*My Car* Modernity: What the U.S. Army Brought to South Korean Cinematic Imagination about Modern Mobility,” 81. The “cultural logic of locomotive modernity,” according to Han Sang Kim, recognized the modern self as the “male head of a nuclear family unit.” Kim stated, “the imagined individual self with free will, in this sense, was the male breadwinner who might be imagined as the driver of the family-owned car.”

the cars “thanks to their husbands.”⁶⁸ The first category was wives of rich businessmen who bought cars for their wives. The article listed the names of female car owners and their car models. In parentheses the article also listed the names of the husbands and their places of work. The second category was female writers who owned their own cars or drove their husbands’ cars. The article portrayed the female writers as having the fortune of driving cars because they were successful in getting married to rich men, despite the fact that these women’s occupation as writers would not make enough money to buy cars.⁶⁹ The presence of rich husbands as the reason why these women could even be called “car owners” implied that men were financially responsible for buying expensive commodities for women.

Also, cars symbolized American lives. Similar to how modernization was defined by the images of the advanced cities in the U.S., cars were also regarded as something “advanced” Americans enjoyed on an everyday basis. Automobiles had been associated with the U.S. since the occupation period (1945-49) as the U.S. utilized “mobile units” such as jeeps and trucks for propaganda purposes.⁷⁰ The jeeps and trucks marked most Koreans’ first encounters with automobiles. In the 1960s, the *Liberty News* newsreels frequently showed images of cars on busy highways in the U.S.

Popular weekly magazines created a fantasy about cars in America. A 1968 article in *Sunday Seoul*, “American Citizens Who Cannot Live without Cars: They Use Driver’s Licenses Instead of Citizen Cards,” emphasized that cars were at the center of the American life. It wrote, “Highways – America’s car roads – are the symbol of American civilization... For Americans who

⁶⁸ *Chugan yŏsŏng*, February 19, 1969, 15.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁰ Hang Sang Kim, “*My Car Modernity*,” 70; Wol-san Liem, 118.

know how to enjoy the weekend, cars are the most important necessity.”⁷¹ While it is true that cars were far more common in the U.S. than in Korea, it was not only because Americans enjoyed the “weekend.” The article did mention the reasons why cars were a necessity to Americans such as sparse living space and distance to supermarkets. However, the overall tone and pictures of a nuclear family in a car going on a picnic made it seem like Americans had cars because they knew how to enjoy their lives.

Cars were also portrayed as a necessity for male courtship. The aforementioned *Sunday Seoul* section on American life and cars wrote, “Without a car, one cannot even have a date.”⁷² Again, the article reaffirmed the need to have cars, not as a method of commute, but for courtship. Such descriptions of cars in American life had not changed much since the early 1960s when newspaper articles about young Americans’ life stated, “in order to have a good time with a girlfriend, one needs time and a car.”⁷³ The repeated association between cars and courtship throughout the 1960s gave all the more reason, despite not being practical, to own a car: you need to buy a car to get a date, marry, and enjoy weekends with family. Even if one did not need to have a car, the popular media put pressure on Korean men to have one.

These articles then functioned to encourage readers to spend money by consuming commodities like cars. Under the title, “My Car: from an Era of the Virtue of Saving to an Era of the Virtue of Consuming,” the 1969 special article predicted that by 1976 when the third Five Year Plan would finish, Korean people would enjoy spending money because, by that time, Korea would

⁷¹ *Sŏndei sŏul*, November 10, 1968, 57.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ “Faces of America (14): Occupation and Income,” [Amerik’a chŏmmyo: chigŏp kwa suip] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, December 22, 1961, 4.

enter a prosperous era when the virtue would be to spend money, not to save money.⁷⁴ Here, the spending and consuming were represented as “my cars.” Cars represented hope for a better economy where everyone could own a car. The portrayal of cars created a message that any healthy men should be able to buy a car in the era of consuming. In order to “spend” money, men had to earn money before that era would begin in 1976. As Han Sang Kim argues, the slogan of “my car” was a “slogan designed to mobilize people” for economic development.⁷⁵ The message of “my car” added a sense of urgency and served as a justification for making money and doing so by any means.

Conclusion

This chapter showed how the portrayal of apartments, hotels, cars, and sunglasses in Seoul created a notion that men should dream of living in Seoul, enjoying all these commodities. To have that dream come true, men should strive to make money. The majority of the Korean population during that time did not have enough money to afford to live in apartments, stay in a hotel, or to buy cars and sunglasses. But they were encouraged to have the collective dream of consuming those commodities because the media repeatedly focused on few wealthy Koreans or created fictional stories about the rich, defining them to be the normative citizens of Seoul and of Korea.

The popular media created a fantasy about new commodities, making the demand high, and the price higher. New commodities that were not necessities, such as, cars were imagined as necessities and the things that did not necessarily have to be expensive, such as apartments, became expensive. These new commodities were also portrayed as something men should be able to

⁷⁴ “My Car: From an Era of the Virtue of Saving to an Era of the Virtue of Consuming,” [Maik'a, chöch'uk ün midök shidae esö sobi ka midök shidae ro] *Söndei söul*, October 12, 1969, 26.

⁷⁵ Han Sang Kim, “*My Car* Modernity,” 78.

purchase. The media created an image that the primary users and providers of these commodities were men, but not just any men, only those who were financially capable of consuming them. These images did not reflect the reality of Seoul. The modern lives portrayed in different media were only applicable to very few people. Many Seoul residents were still living in shanty towns. As of June 1970, 35% of all housing in Seoul (53% nationwide) consisted of shacks in shanty towns, amounting to 187,554 units in number.⁷⁶ One journalist found it doubtful that the city of Seoul could solve the problem of overpopulation in the capital city in ten years.⁷⁷ Yet, the fantasized images of Seoul in popular media continued to instill a sense of hope of living a successful life in Seoul and a Korean version of the American dream.

⁷⁶ “Unpleasant Guests – Shacks in Shanty Towns,” [Pulch'ōnggaek p'anjatchip] *Kyōnghyang shinmun*, July 6, 1970, 8.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 5: Money and Courtship, 1968-1971

This chapter examines the role of weekly popular magazines in the transformation of cultural values and customs related to courtship by examining the two most popular weekly magazines of the time, *Sunday Seoul* and *Weekly Woman*. Launched in 1968 and 1969 respectively, these publications were at the forefront of disseminating new ideas and attitudes about money and courtship. Three specific multi-year series, “Yebi *chaebŏl*” (hereafter “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*”) “My Proud Daughter,” and “Husband Material” worked together to produce a new and seductive capitalist fantasy: the happy union of the successful, patriotic businessman with the beautiful, dutiful housewife, joined together in a world of material comfort.

With rapid economic growth throughout the 1960s, the average income of a Korean household increased, but the benefits of the economic growth were not distributed equally.¹ Yet, the idea that men should make a lot of money to be considered as ideal husbands seemed to have become the norm by the end of the 1960s. A male reader in the correspondence columns of *Kyŏnghyang Daily Newspaper* (*Kyŏnghyang sinmun*) on November 5, 1970, wrote, “It is deplorable that women only regard men who make more than 50,000 *wŏn* per month as ideal husbands.”² Referring to the recently conducted survey on young women’s perspectives on marriage, he stressed how difficult it was for most men to make that much money; he wished that

¹ The GNI increased from 1.36 million won in 1961 to 2.56 million won in 1970. Statistics Korea. <http://www.index.go.kr/unify/idx-info.do?idxCd=8086>.

² Yi Kyubaek, “Future Together, Even If the Husband Has No Money: Women’s Regrettable Perspectives on Marriage,” [Ton ŏpsŏdo mirae rŭl: Yŏsŏng ŭi kŏnjŏnhan kyŏrhon'gwan ashwiwŏ] *Kyŏnghyang Shinmun*, November 5, 1970, 3.

women would have a sound perspective of choosing husbands based on their good personality even if men made less than 10,000 *wŏn* per month.³

Similarly, a 1970 *Tonga ilbo* special, “Youth Today,” revealed that the younger generation now valued individual pleasure and economic competence in choosing spouses. The article described the youth as those who “grew up without knowing the repression of the colonial period, feeling fearful of the civil war, or being politically conscious of important events like the April 19th Movement and the May 16th military coup.”⁴ According to the series, those who were in their twenties in the 1970s spent their adolescent years in the 1950s and the 1960s increasingly buying foreign goods and thinking that consumption was a virtue.⁵ This evaluation of the 1970s youth set the tone for the rest of the series – these young people had unavoidably more practical (*shillijŏk*) and pleasure-seeking (*hyangnakchŏk*) values in their perspectives on love, relationship, and marriage.⁶ They preferred to use the English word, “date” (*teit’ŭ*) than the equivalent Korean term, *yŏnae*, to describe their courtship habits, which in the eyes of the reporter meant that they now wanted to freely date others without committing to marry.⁷

The most highlighted aspect of modern courtship in “Youth Today” was men’s financial capabilities. According to the survey *Tonga ilbo* conducted, the majority of the female respondents in their twenties said that the ability to make a living (or resourcefulness, *saenghwallyŏk*) was the

³ Ibid. The average monthly income of a household in the city for the period between 1964 and 1970 was 31,360 won according to the research done by the Economic Planning Board cited in “Salary to Be Slashed due to High Prices,” [Mulgae nullil wŏlgŭp pongt’u] *Tonga ilbo*, January 9, 1971, 3.

⁴ “A Quarter Century Since Liberation: Young People Today Series No. 3 – Perspectives on Courtship and Marriage,” [Haebangsa pan segi: onŭl ŭi chŏlmŭnidŭl 3 yŏnae kyŏrhon’gwan] *Tonga ilbo*, August 12, 1970.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

most important quality in future husbands.⁸ When asked why she preferred dating a salaryman instead of a college student, a college girl respondent replied, “Of course it is because college boys do not have any money. I would only be drinking tea at a café [if I dated a college boy].”⁹ By contrast, money was not the most sought-after quality that males prioritized.¹⁰ In the new era when the young could theoretically more freely choose whom to date or marry, it was only those who had access to money who were able to enjoy the culture of modern courtship. The author pessimistically concluded that a nineteenth-century style single-hearted devotion would not work in winning over a woman’s heart.¹¹

The frustration of the male reader in *Kyŏngnyang sinmun*, the individualistic hedonism *Tonga ilbo* diagnosed in the young adults of the 1970s, and the female survey respondents who professed that wealth was the most important quality they sought in a male partner – all reflect the manner in which romantic courtship was being shaped in the Park era under the pressure of state-driven capitalist development. Popular weekly magazines, which became a lucrative industry with a mass audience in the Park era, played a key role in this cultural shift. These publications created a new masculine ideal in the form of the successful businessman, which was celebrated as both what women desired and what men should aspire to become. This new masculine ideal was not only wealthy, hard-working, ambitious, and innovative, but also patriotic and loyal to the state and its nation-building project. Some scholars have assumed that the individualism and self-indulgence normalized in such popular weekly magazines were problematic for the conservative Park

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ The most sought-after quality in future wives was “sophistication (or gentle personality, *kyoyang*)” which sixty-eight percent of male students chose.

¹¹ “A Quarter Century Since Liberation: Young People Today Series No. 3 – Perspectives on Courtship and Marriage,” [Haebangsa pan segi: onül ūi chŏlmūnidŭl 3 yŏnae kyŏrhon'gwan] *Tonga ilbo*, August 12, 1970.

government,¹² but this chapter argues that they in fact proved complimentary to the state's anti-communist nation-building project, by lionizing the ideal of the self-made and patriotic entrepreneur who benefited from government policies and enjoyed the fruits of Korea's emerging capitalist modernity.

The birth of numerous entertainment-focused weekly magazines provided a popular platform where the aspiring lower to middle class consumed ideas about money, consumption, and gendered identities. *Sunday Seoul* especially gained huge popularity since its first issue was published in September 1968. Filled with sensual images and stories, the magazine established itself as a “secret sex education textbook” for adolescent men, a “must-read” for soldiers in the barracks, and as the general Koreans' favourite mass-circulating journal.”¹³ This chapter explores how popular weekly magazines, especially *Sunday Seoul*, set the successful businessman as the ideal husband.

While popular weekly magazines were working to transform the masculine ideal and the nature of romantic courtship in the Park era, the feminine ideal remained paradoxically static within the pages of the same publications. In contrast to how the successful businessman became the ideal husband, the ideal wife, in addition to being physically attractive, remained the obedient housewife. Considered in its totality, the new narrative of romance and courtship promoted by popular weekly magazines demonstrated how traditional Korean patriarchy, the profit motive of the culture industry, and the nation-building project of the Park state intersected and reinforced one another in Korea's process of state-driven capitalist development.

¹² Im Chongsu and Pak Sehyŏn, “Women, Sexuality, and 1970s Korea in *Sunday Seoul*,” [Sŏndei sŏul e nat'an an yŏsŏng, seksyuŏllit'i kŭrigo 1970 nyŏndae], *Han'guk munhak yŏn-gu* 44 (2013): 93; Song Ŭnyŏng, 206.

¹³ Pak Sŏnga, 161. *Sunday Seoul* was published in Han'gŭl, unlike other publications, including the *Weekly Hankook*, which used Han'gŭl and Chinese characters, so it was easy for less-educated Koreans to read *Sunday Seoul*.

***Sunday Seoul* and Korean Popular Mass Culture**

The newly launched weekly magazine *Sunday Seoul* was at the forefront of presenting the ideal image of marriage in the new era of capitalist development. The decreasing sales in dailies in the early 1960s pushed the newspaper companies to venture into entertainment-focused weekly magazines.¹⁴ As examined in chapter two, the mid-1960s marked the era of weekly magazines, heralded by the *Weekly Hankook* published in 1964. Even though the *Weekly Hankook* was launched four years ahead of *Sunday Seoul*, many scholars consider *Sunday Seoul* as the beginning of popular mass culture.¹⁵ While the publishers of the *Weekly Hankook* remained cautious of having the readers consider their weekly a low-brow tabloid by filling the pages with “intellectual” content, the editors of *Sunday Seoul* embraced and publicized the idea that their magazine was entertainment focused and filled the pages with sensual content.

The straightforward use of “eye-catching” images and gossip-like stories quickly brought readers’ attention who started to consume weekly magazines as the main source of entertainment. The Seoul Shinmun company had been publishing a daily, the *Sŏul shinmun*, since 1945, but experienced a drop in the daily sales, so dove into the weekly magazine industry and launched *Sunday Seoul* in September 1968 in the hopes that it would make up for the declining revenues. The publishers put their highest priority on entertainment qualities, filling the pages with scandals, gossips, and sexual images. The 60,000 copies of the first issue of *Sunday Seoul* which came out on September 22, 1968, were sold out within two hours.¹⁶ The popularity of the magazine

¹⁴ Pak Sŏnga suggests that the Park government’s strict censorship on journalism caused a drop in daily sales. Pak Sŏnga, 162.

¹⁵ Ibid., 161.

¹⁶ Ibid. The peak circulation of the *Weekly Hankook* was 41,500 on June 2, 1968, which had set the record in the circulation of weekly magazines. Kim Sŏngu, 190.

continued until its last issue in December 1991, bringing a good source of income to the company.¹⁷

The magazine's overt emphasis on entertainment qualities encouraged scholars to focus mostly on the role of the sensual content, overlooking the possibility of the magazine disseminating other messages. For example, Kim Sŏnghwan suggests that the magazine's vulgar photographs were central to the discussion of *Sunday Seoul* and that the mass's sexual and monetary desires shaped the magazine's journalistic narratives.¹⁸ Mass communication studies scholars Im Chongsu and Pak Sehyŏn find it ironic that *Sunday Seoul*, which was full of "semi-nude pictures of women and sensual content that stimulated the male peripheral nerves" thrived under the Park Chung Hee regime's dictatorship because the government enforced strict censorship on popular media.¹⁹ However, when reading the messages behind the sensual images, it becomes clear why the Park government condoned and even encouraged the publishers to attract readers with such content. The messages that the magazine created – rich businessmen were socially respected and were ideal husbands – helped the Park government by covering up the public's criticism against the state with entertainment content while strengthening the developmental ideology.²⁰

As this chapter will show, the businessmen in "Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*" abided by and took advantage of the government policies in their enterprises, and their success contributed to the state's goal of export-led industrialization. The role of *Sunday Seoul* – spreading the morale of working hard (even if it was to spend money) and starting one's own businesses – is overlooked

¹⁷ Regarding the reason for the discontinuance, Seoul Shinmun Company said the magazine was "not keeping up with the current trend" and launched a new weekly, *People*, which would exclusively cover stories of various people. "Weekly Magazine *Sunday Seoul* to Cease," [Chuganji sŏndei sŏul p'yegan] *Han'gyŏrye*, December 28, 1991, 9.

¹⁸ Kim Sŏnghwan, 386.

¹⁹ Im Chongsu and Pak Sehyŏn, 93.

²⁰ Chŏn Sangki, 226.

by Im Chongsu and Pak Sehyŏn, who suggests *Sunday Seoul* must have been like an “axis of evil” that ate away Koreans’ working hours, promoted individualistic thoughts, and created divisions within the public.²¹ On the contrary, *Sunday Seoul* presented what constituted ideal citizenship in the new, capitalistic nation.

“Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” in *Sunday Seoul* (1968-71)

On November 24, 1968, just two months after the first issue of *Sunday Seoul* was published, the first installment of “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*: Autobiographical Stories of Self-made People in Their Thirties” (*Yebi chaebŏl: 30 tae ipchijŏn*, hereafter “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*”) was published. “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*”, which lasted for more than two years until April 18, 1971, was a series on 117 up-and-coming businesspeople in their late twenties and thirties. It was written in the form of an interview between the reporter and the businessperson. The narrative detailed the profiles of the enterprises, which ranged from a boiler manufacturing company to a zoo. The entrepreneurs talked about their challenges and failures they experienced in their journeys to success.

The profit-oriented goal was of course the main reason why *Sunday Seoul* decided to introduce emerging entrepreneurs. Publishers were aware that the coverage of successful businessmen would boost a good readership.²² *Sunday Seoul* editors had witnessed the success of *Weekly Hankook*’s “Self-made Men” series, which was discussed in chapter two, and they were receiving the letters from readers who demanded a similar series. On November 17, 1968, a reader from Seoul sent a letter to the editor stating, “It is a very interesting weekly magazine. It would be

²¹ Im Chongsu and Pak Sehyŏn, 94.

²² Kwŏn and Ch’ŏn, 254; Pak Kwangsŏng, “A Study of the Characteristics of Korean Weekly Magazines,” [Han’guk chuganji ūi sŏnggyŏk yŏn’gu] *Shinmun kwa pangsong* 40 (1972): 108. Pak Kwangsŏng argued that the three elements of Korean weekly magazines were sex, money, and health. According to Pak, the articles on money were mostly about becoming rich, which accounted for the second largest portion followed by the content on sex.

great if you could include interesting and easily approachable pieces on the economy, like stories about millionaires (*chaebŏl*) in and outside of Korea.”²³ Another reader commented, “although novels are fun to read, it would be great if you could also include autobiographical stories.”²⁴ In response to such reader requests, the editors did not hesitate to publicize that they took the readers’ opinions seriously. The following week, on November 24th, 1968, *Sunday Seoul* began their “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” series, and made a bold but confident decision to allocate three pages, which made it one of the longest regular sections in the weekly.²⁵

The popularity of the series overwhelmed not just the editors, but also the actual “soon-to-be” millionaires whose stories were covered in *Sunday Seoul* pages. On September 21, 1969, in celebration of the magazine’s first year anniversary, *Sunday Seoul* published a special section, “Special Roundtable: Secrets of Becoming Wealthy,” which invited the new business owners whose stories were covered in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*.” Among forty-two businesspeople who had appeared in the series, ten of them gathered to talk about their secrets to money-making. The “soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” guests talked about how much attention they received after they appeared in the magazine. They were all overwhelmed with the hundreds of fan letters they received. One of them received one hundred and twenty-seven letters and replied to each one of them.²⁶ Another continued to receive letters even months after his appearance in the series and ultimately hired twelve of the letter writers.²⁷ Although they were disappointed with most readers merely wanting

²³ “Letters to the Editor,” [Tokcha k'onŏ] *Sŏndei sŏul*, November 17, 1968, 73.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *Sunday Seoul* was eighty-pages long, but there were only a few sections that took up multiple pages. Other long sections included serialized novels. In the beginning until February 1969, it was mostly two pages long.

²⁶ *Sŏndei sŏul*, September 21, 1969, 34. The section listed the names and pictures of the ten businesspeople who attended the roundtable, but their quotations were anonymous.

²⁷ Ibid.

money and jobs from the “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” guests, they were in general pleasantly surprised with the sudden fame.

While such popularity of the series was shared with the *Weekly Hankook*’s “Self-made Men” series which was published four years prior, what was significantly different in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” was that the businessmen were portrayed as abiding by the state ideology and making the full use of the Park government’s policies as if they were advertising the Park’s agenda. The most distinctive trend was the absence of the anti-Japanese sentiment in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” which was prevalent in “Self-made Men.” Of course, similar narratives, especially the “bare fists” phrases, were often used to highlight the businessmen’s masculinity.²⁸ But when it came to the portrayal of Japan, the kind of a rhetoric that saw Japan as a rival and the motivation to push oneself more to succeed in business was only used in the 1966 “Self-made Men” series in the *Weekly Hankook*.

Despite the general sentiment against the idea of normalizing the relationship with Japan, some “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” stories created a message that being too emotionally engaged with the colonial past and opposing the 1965 Normalization Treaty with Japan would do more harm than good to the self-made men’s businesses. As introduced in chapter two, the Park government’s efforts to normalize relations with Japan by allowing Japan to “settle” the colonial past through monetary compensations incited much resistance from the Koreans in the months leading up to the signing of the Treaty on June 22, 1965. The general public deemed Park’s decision hasty and solely

²⁸ For example, the coverage of Kim T'aesu who became successful in the film production and distribution industry mentioned that he started his business as a 23-year-old of “bare fists” without any of his own money. The story made his success deserve more attention because Mr. Kim T'aesu managed to make two hundred million won in just two years with his “bare fists.” “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” [*Yebi chaebŏl*], *Sŏndei sŏul*, January 19, 1969, 57. Two million Korean won in 1969 is approximately equivalent to approximately nine billion won in present-day South Korea.

money-oriented and believed the Koreans were not ready to settle the colonial history by any means.²⁹

But such anti-Japanese sentiment was not quite visible in the “soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” series. For example, Pak Oktu, who was introduced as the “soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” for his tailor business on January 19, 1969, recalled seeing many people on the street protesting the Korea-Japan normalization treaty. Instead of being upset with Park’s decision to move beyond the colonial past, which the businessmen in “Self-made Men” would have, Mr. Pak wondered how he could attract protestors to his business to sell more of his products.³⁰ The businessmen in the “Self-made Men” series would have found such nonchalance to Japan abhorrent.

The reason for the “nonchalant” depiction of Japan and sometimes positive comments about the Japanese normalization stemmed from the Park government’s clear wish to foster a better (economically beneficial) relationship with Japan as well as the U.S., and *Sunday Seoul* publishers’ tacit acceptance. As early as 1963, the U.S. made attempts to distribute the burden of economic responsibility for Korea’s growth with Japan and encouraged Park to normalize relations.³¹ Park, witnessing a huge drop in the U.S. aid to Korea in 1964, sought another source to support his economic plans.³² The Normalization Treaty brought urgently needed cash to Korea, which helped legitimize Park’s rule. Under these circumstances and in the context of the Park government’s media censorship, *Sunday Seoul* publishers were not likely to provoke any anti-Japanese sentiment in their publications.

²⁹ “All Citizens Should Be Able to Accept the Normalization Treaty,” [On kungmin-i naptŭk-hal su innŭn hanil hoedam t’agyŏl-iŏya handa] *Kyŏngnyang shinmun*, January 8, 1965, 3; “ROK-Japan Series No. 7: (3) Issues” [Hanil che 7 chang (3) munjejŏm] *Tonga ilbo*, February 16, 1965.

³⁰ “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*,” [Yebi chaebŏl] *Sŏndei sŏul*, January 19, 1969, 57.

³¹ Hyung-A Kim, 88; 97; 215.

³² *Ibid.*, 97.

The later publication date of the “soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” series also explains the absence of anti-Japanese narratives. Compared to 1966 when the signing of the normalization treaty was still fresh and shocking to a lot of Koreans, the year 1968 witnessed the economic benefits of the treaty for the Korean economy. Newspapers did not hesitate to report that many businesses thrived on Japanese direct investment as seen in An Sŏngdal and Shin Kyŏkho’s cases discussed in Chapter Two. The absence of anti-Japanese rhetoric suggests that the *Sunday Seoul* editors thought that anti-Japanese sentiment was not going to attract the readers in 1968 and onwards. *Sunday Seoul* instead provided detailed anecdotes on how the businessmen made money by taking the full advantage of new policies that the Park government implemented to help boost the economy, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Also, in contrast to the “Self-made Men” series which was more like the senior entrepreneurs’ life-long journeys, “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” narrated the more immediate pasts of younger up-and-coming businesspeople. The more established business owners in “Self-made Men” had already married and lived with their wives and children at the time of the series’ publication in *Weekly Hankook*. By contrast, most soon-to-be *chaebŏl* entrepreneurs were in their late twenties and thirties in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, so they either did not experience Japanese colonialism first-hand or had distant childhood memories. As the reporter of the 1970 *Tonga Ilbo* special series on “today’s youth” introduced in the beginning of this chapter remarked, these young entrepreneurs were the beneficiaries of the affluent 1960s.³³

Even with the differences from the old “Self-made Men” series, the one hundred and seventeen emerging entrepreneurs in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” series were collectively saying that

³³ Although Korean economy was better in the 1960s in comparison with the 1950s, but there was still a lot of poverty in Korea into the 1970s.

even if you had underprivileged background, you could make a lot of money if you worked hard. Their pursuit of money was not only justified but celebrated. The titles and sub-headlines straightforwardly used the words, “money” and “money-making,” in big bold fonts as if they were trying to get rid of the stigma that had been attached to the pursuit of individual money-making.

As opposed to what some scholars assumed, the bold message about individual accumulation of wealth in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” was not something that went against the state ideology.³⁴ Rather, the entrepreneurs were endorsing the possibility of making a fortune when working with the Park government’s economic policies. Many business owners in the series directly mentioned how they benefited from the new set of policies that created new opportunities to make money, including the plans to build more apartment complexes, the incentives for livestock industries, and the expanded loan system for small-to-medium size businesses. These messages were so explicit that sometimes they sounded like government propaganda.

For example, Sŏng Kigwang, who appeared on December 22, 1968, as the 5th “soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” for his six different businesses, positively described Park Chung Hee’s military coup of May 1961 and the Park government’s policies. Mr. Sŏng had purchased some land for a cheap price, which became expensive as “the May 16 Revolution occurred, and the area was included in the new government’s city planning.”³⁵ He called himself lucky. But his “luck” continued – in late 1961 he was selected as one of the recipients of the Park government’s “livestock industry encouragement program” and was granted access to angora rabbits which were imported from abroad; in 1963 the government granted him a land reclamation permit, so he developed the large rural area in Gangwon Province into an orchard estate; he also received a loan from the government

³⁴ See, among others, Im Chongsu and Pak Sehyŏn, “Women, Sexuality, and 1970s Korea in *Sunday Seoul*,” [Sŏndei sŏul e nat’anan yŏsŏng, seksyuŏllit’i kŭrigo 1970 nyŏndae] *Han’guk Munhak Yŏn-gu* 44 (2013): 91-136.

³⁵ ““Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*,” [Yebi *chaebŏl*] *Sŏndei sŏul*, December 22, 1968, 66.

in the form of mulberry trees to plan in the orchard.³⁶ His success narratives unfolded in close connection with new government policies step by step, creating a positive image of the authoritarian state. The phrases, including “5.16” (referring to the military coup by Park Chung Hee on May 16, 1961) and “revolution” (*hyŏngmyŏng*), accordingly provoked a positive image, unlike how they were tied to the grim picture of the future in other media platforms.

Throughout the series, government policies, initiatives, and awards were directly mentioned in relation to the entrepreneurs’ success, which helped portray the “soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” businesspeople as the crucial part of state-led industrialization. The businesses that exported products especially received much attention in light of the government’s focus on export-led growth. Chu Okkŭn, for example, was praised for exporting his embroidery company’s goods abroad and bringing cash to the country. His company earned 10 million won as export revenue in 1968 and was expected to export more in the following years.³⁷ In recognition of such success, his company received multiple awards from the government, ranging from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Mayor of Seoul.³⁸ The emphasis on the export revenues Mr. Chu’s company was making portrayed him as a nationalistic citizen who was doing his share to help push export-led industrialization of the nation. Such narratives were used in the *Self-made Men* discourse, but hardly made this direct connection with the Park government’s plan and recognition of the businesses. In addition to Chu’s story, other cases directly mentioned the economic policies, such as the Ministry of Science and Technology’s three-year plan to

³⁶ “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*,” [Yebi chaebŏl] *Sŏndei sŏul*, December 22, 1968, 67.

³⁷ Ibid., July 27, 1969, 26.

³⁸ Ibid.

modernize computer technology and the Korea Housing Corporation's plan to build more apartment complexes, in association with the businessmen's success.³⁹

There were cases where the businessmen worked around the government policy to make profit, but they were not condemned because they were making money and contributing to the national economy. A good example was the case of those who made money off speculation even after the Park government's crackdown in late 1967 on ill-gotten gains, including speculation. As highways and other infrastructure began to be built in the mid-1960s, Koreans started to jump into the speculation business in those newly developed areas. The government took action to regulate the speculation boom and announced in December 1967 that those who made ill-gotten profit by speculation would be heavily taxed.⁴⁰ The following year, the Anti-Speculation Act (*pudongsan t'ugi ökchebŏp*) was passed. Despite such opposition to real estate speculation, the "soon-to-be *chaebŏl*" series frequently mentioned that the featured businessmen made money from it as if the government policy did not matter to these businessmen.

For example, Chin Suhak, the "soon-to-be *chaebŏl*" on February 9, 1969, who had established a cab company, had accumulated capital through real estate speculation despite the government policy discouraging it. The reporter explained in detail how Mr. Chin actually made money thanks to the Anti-Speculation Act. Because the implementation of the act made people not want to buy any real estate, the price dropped. Taking advantage of the dropped price, Mr. Chin bought a large size of land in northern Seoul for a very cheap price in 1968. The price went up within a year, allowing Mr. Chin to make 100 million won. Mr. Chin's story explicitly described

³⁹ "Special Report: To Become a Well-paid Salaryman," *Sŏndei sŏul*, February 16, 1969, 8-10; "Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*," [Yebi *chaebŏl*] *Sŏndei sŏul*, February 23, 1969: 57. The special report on February 16, 1969, was not part of the "Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*" series but considering that the issue was missing the "Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*," the special series on making money with computer skills must have replaced the "Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*" coverage.

⁴⁰ "Real Estate Speculation Regulation: Heavy Taxes on Ill-gotten Gains," [Pudongsan *t'ugi ökche*: Pudang idŭk en kangnyŏk chingse] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, December 1, 1967, 3.

ways to work around the regulations to maximize profit, such as changing the name of the owner after purchasing the real estate.⁴¹ Such tips were written as if these stories were telling people to also delve into the real estate speculation business against the government regulation.

The messages that suggested one should make money by skillfully working around the government regulations were not what the government censored. After all, the businessmen contributed to the economic growth by either directly bringing export revenues or promoting the atmosphere of working hard. In 1968, Park made a speech which emphasized the need for creative businesses:

We must ... start the groundwork for the mass production system by improving the structure and constitution of national economy; purify the economic order by introducing freedom of enterprise and encouraging originality, initiative, and business ethics.⁴²

In light of this speech that highlighted capitalistic virtues, such as freedom of enterprise and original ideas for businesses, Mr. Chin's cab company that was established with the money he had earned from real estate speculation deserved to be praised for his creative idea of securing capital for his business.

The paradox here was the supposedly admirable businessmen benefiting from and being loyal to the Park government, but also at the same time cunningly playing the system. Some might find it difficult to imagine Park tolerating any kind of corruption because he had publicized his "anti-corruption" policies from the very beginning of his rule. For example, in his 1962 speech he said his immediate goal was to "materialize social justice by eradicating the corruption of the past" and he publicly despised "illicit profiteers" who had made profit from their corrupt relationship

⁴¹ "Soon-to-be *chaeböl*," [Yebi chaeböl] *Söndei söul*, February 9, 1969, 57.

⁴² Park Chung Hee, "Modernization of Man, Economization of Life, - New Year's Message for 1968," in Chung Hee Park and Bum Shik Shin, *Major Speeches by Korea's Park Chung Hee*, 1st ed., A New Horizon in Asia 3 (Seoul: Hollym Corp, 1970), 128.

with the government.⁴³ But the “illicit profiteers” whom Park targeted as the objective of eradicating corruption were leading businessowners (*chaebŏl*) who already had large enterprises, not small-to-medium size businessowners. Hyung-a Kim clearly points out that Park’s “guided capitalism” and the control of business activities were geared towards the very few “business tycoons,” including the owners of Samsung, Lucky-Goldstar (present day LG), and Hyundai.⁴⁴ Therefore, the measures that were known to have strictly regulated the business activities, such as the “Special Measure for the Control of Illicit Profiteering,” did not target the aspiring businesspeople who would appear in the “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” series. Because the state’s priority was to increase “national capital” (*minjok chabon*), and burgeoning small-to-medium businesses were generating cash, the Park administration could overlook a degree of corruption and what could be seen as “white-collar crime” in today’s standards. Therefore, *Sunday Seoul* could continue to write stories that seemed to suggest illicit ways of making money. In such portrayals, loyalty to the state and breaking certain rules did not contradict each other.

The promotion of the message that anyone with a great business idea could start a business worked in hand with the concept of taking a loan and the loan companies. At the same time *Sunday Seoul* published the “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” series, it also ran advertisements for trust banks. For example, the full-page advertisement seen in the October 18, 1970 issue was for Yŏngman Idea Trust Bank (*yŏngman aidiŏ shint'ak ūnhaeng*) (see figure 5.1). The headline read, “This Chance! You can also become the soon-to-be *chaebŏl*.”⁴⁵ The ad stated that the bank would provide people

⁴³ Park Chung Hee, *Our Nation's Path* [Uri minjok ūi nagalkil] (Seoul: Tonga ch'ulp'ansa, 1962), 229–30, cited in Hyung-A Kim, 75.

⁴⁴ Hyung-A Kim, 78-84. Kim actually mentions there were only thirteen “illicit profiteers” whom Park ordered the Promotional Committee for Economic Reconstruction (PCER) to put them under control and to direct them towards targeted industries.

⁴⁵ *Sŏndei sŏul*, October 18, 1970, 81.

with loans based on their business ideas. The combination of a hopeful message about running a successful business in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” and the loan advertisement for business ideas shows that *Sunday Seoul* was not just a disposable tabloid, but for some readers also a practical and inspirational guidebook on how to run enterprises.

Figure 5.1 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an advertisement page of *Sunday Seoul* (*Sŏndei sŏul*) with a heading, “This Chance! You can also become the soon-to-be *chaebŏl*.”

Original source: *Sunday Seoul* [*Sŏndei sŏul*], October 18, 1970, 81.

Accessed through the National Library of Korea (Kungnip chungang tosŏgwan).

Figure 5.1 *Sunday Seoul* [*Sŏndei sŏul*], October 18, 1970

Surely, the businessmen also endorsed the idea of capitalism of making money off of money. Kim Chaet'ak, the first protagonist of “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” pointed out that the 1960s was a different era:

The era when poverty was something to be proud of – the era when people praised someone who was poor but honest (*ch'ŏngbin*) – has already gone. In a world where capitalism is the working principle of all the economic activities, only the competition of the mind and technology exists.⁴⁶

In his words, the era when a man could be proudly poor had gone, and now the new world of capitalism emerged. Mr. Kim rightly set the tone for the rest of the series. The Park government wanted to adopt an American version of capitalism in Korea, and entrepreneurship was key. *Sunday Seoul* created and spread this message without sounding like another propagandistic speech.

⁴⁶ “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*,” [Yebi *chaebŏl*] *Sŏndei sŏul*, November 24, 1968, 14.

Eventually, all the messages about running a business and becoming a soon-to-be *chaebŏl* refined the image of an ideal husband. While many businessmen who appeared in the series were married, some were single, and they often had open calls for future wives. For example, the aforementioned cab company owner, Chin Suhak, told the reporter, “I did not even get married because it was something that would cost money, but please write that I am looking for a wife.”⁴⁷ That remark was also one of the sub-headlines that were printed in big bold fonts, making Mr. Chin’s coverage look like a public courtship announcement. Mr. Chin was only twenty-six when he was selected as the soon-to-be *chaebŏl*.⁴⁸

Similarly, a 37-year-old CEO of an oil company, Yi Yohan was advertised as an eligible bachelor. Under the headline, “A thirty-seven-year-old single CEO’s net worth is five hundred million won,” the story highlighted not only his wealth, but his other qualities, including his personality and religious beliefs. The three-page coverage ended with a sentence, “He is thinking that he would start looking for someone to marry starting this fall.”⁴⁹ Mr. Yi’s other good deeds, especially his philanthropic activities, were often covered in other print media platforms, making him all the more ideal candidate for marriage.

The businessmen in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” appeared to be more ideal husbands because they were running individual businesses, not working as salaried employees. The “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” men commonly disparaged their brief past of working as salarymen, arguing that they earned neither money nor reputation when working as salarymen. They implied that if they continued working as salaried employees, they would not have succeeded in courtship. Kim

⁴⁷ Ibid., February 9, 1969, 57.

⁴⁸ The magazine wrote he was twenty-seven years old but considering the Korean custom of granting one year old upon being born, it is likely that he was twenty-six or even twenty-five, depending on his birth date.

⁴⁹ “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*,” [Yebi chaebŏl] *Sŏndei sŏul*, March 16, 1969, 28.

Chaet'ak, the aforementioned businessman who proclaimed the beginning of the capitalistic world, recalled that his family-in-law did not approve of him as a son-in-law because he was a mere salaried employee (*wŏlgŭp changi*).⁵⁰ His family did not have money or social reputation. It was only because his wife liked him that their marriage was possible.⁵¹ Similarly, Yi Chaeok who founded a pharmaceutical company asserted that one of the secrets to success was “an escape from being a salaried employee.”⁵² Kim Chŏngho who had worked as a civil servant for seven years before establishing a roofing company thought the salary he was making as a civil servant was not even enough to be his pocket money.⁵³ Mr. Kim was a graduate of Seoul National University law school, as the headline advertised, which made his decision to quit working as a salaryman and to run a business more unique. Pak Ponggyu, who had worked as a salaryman for nine years before starting his own construction business, was also portrayed to have “easily succeeded in marriage” because of his businessman-like qualities.⁵⁴

The belittling of salarymen, and thus praise of businessmen as ideal husbands, was highlighted in another regular section of *Sunday Seoul* which was published concurrently with “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*.” Titled “Cheer up, salarymen!” (*Saellŏri maen iyŏ kiun ŭl naera*), the section invited experts in various fields, from psychology to fashion, to give advice to struggling salarymen. According to one of the “Cheer Up, Salarymen!” articles, the salarymen of the late 1960s, especially middle-aged salarymen, were under “a lot of mental stress because they had to deal with social obligations, take responsibility for family affairs, and survive in the cutthroat

⁵⁰ Ibid., November 24, 1968, 13.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., December 8, 1968, 32.

⁵³ Ibid., February 23, 1969, 56.

⁵⁴ Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*, [Yebi chaebŏl] *Sŏndei sŏul*, September 7, 1969, 32-33.

competition.”⁵⁵ The expert acknowledged that it was common that the wives accused their salarymen husbands of impotence when the salarymen could not sexually perform because of stress.⁵⁶ The experts’ advice ranged from moderate drinking, eating healthy, how to dress, and even how to look to succeed.⁵⁷ The general tone of the experts in this series was to pity the salaried employees, and to downgrade them as unattractive husbands.

The particular advice on the topic of “failures” on January 12, 1969, under the headline, “In Case of Failures” especially painted a negative picture of working as a salaryman. The expert, Mr. Pak, stated, “Let’s say you failed at something big you were in charge of. You will feel depressed. You will feel like all your colleagues are watching you and you will constantly try to read your boss’s mood.”⁵⁸ The expert diagnosed that the problem lay in the salarymen’s dependence and advised that they not solely rely on other people’s help.⁵⁹ This narrative, along with many others, portrayed the salarymen as impotent, dependent, and unenergetic. The readers also responded with more sympathy than admiration. One reader sent a letter to the editor stating, “There are many interesting features in *Sunday Seoul*. Among them, I think ‘Cheer Up, Salarymen!’ especially gives confidence and energy to young salarymen.”⁶⁰ While emerging businessmen in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” received respect and celebration, salaried men in “Cheer Up, Salarymen!” were met with pity from the experts and the readers. All these messages suggested that the salarymen were not ideal husbands.

⁵⁵ “Cheer Up, Salarymen!” [Saellŏri maen iyŏ kiun ūl naera] *Sŏndei sŏul*, September 22, 1968, 60.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ The “Cheer Up, Salarymen!” on September 7, 1969 was on how one’s face should look to succeed. The expert advised that salarymen “fix” their faces so that they bring monetary fortune.

⁵⁸ “Cheer Up, Salarymen!” [Saellŏri maen iyŏ kiun ūl naera] *Sŏndei sŏul*, January 12, 1969, 45. It is not certain whether the expert was a male, but the name is commonly used for men.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ “Postbox,” [Uch’et’ong] *Sŏndei sŏul*, July 27, 1969.

On top of the “Cheer Up, Salarymen!” series, *Sunday Seoul* published special self-help sections on salarymen, using phrases like, “empty pocket,” or “the time of the year when one should feel sorry for himself for being a salaryman.”⁶¹ Contrary to pictures in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” where the businessmen looked confident, sections on salarymen were accompanied with pity-provoking ones, such as the man taking a peek at his pay envelope (see figure 5.2). Such contrast contributed to the celebration of businessmen as appealing husbands.

Figure 5.2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a page of *Sunday Seoul* (*Sŏndei sŏul*) with a heading, “Which Companies Will Give More Bonus” [Ponŏsŭ mani chugin ŏdi ŏdi] with an image of a man taking a peek at his pay envelope.

Original source: *Sunday Seoul* [*Sŏndei sŏul*], December 14, 1969, 92.

Accessed through the National Library of Korea (Kungnip chungang tosŏgwan).

Figure 5.2 *Sunday Seoul* [*Sŏndei sŏul*], December 14, 1969

What *Sunday Seoul* created was “businessman masculinity” as opposed to “salaryman masculinity” that scholars of Japanese history have observed in Japan during the 1960s and the 1990s. According to Romit Dasgupta, the salaryman came to signify Japanese masculinity during this period. Dasgupta argues that with the burgeoning number of private companies in postwar Japan, the discourse of masculinity, especially in films, rendered the salaryman – the “full-time, white-collar, permanent employees of a corporation” – the masculine and culturally privileged ideal.⁶² Unlike postwar Japan where the “soldier” masculinity became “less socio-culturally relevant” and was accordingly replaced with the salaryman masculinity, Korea under the

⁶¹ “Which Companies Will Give More Bonus,” [Ponŏsŭ mani chugin ŏdi ŏdi], *Sŏndei sŏul*, December 14, 1969, 92.

⁶² Romit Dasgupta, “Romit Dasgupta, “Articulations of Salaryman Masculinity in Shōwa and Post-Shōwa Japan,” *Asia Pacific Perspectives* 15, no. 1: 36-54,” *Asia Pacific Perspectives* 15, no. 1 (2017): 36-54.

militarized Park government was publicly setting militarized masculinity as the hegemonic one by even calling heavy and chemical industry workers “industrial soldiers” and portraying businessmen as masculine as the soldiers.⁶³

For many ambitious Koreans, being a salaryman was a step towards establishing one’s own business, and such mindset manifested in new university graduates’ decision to work for a *chaebŏl* company than anywhere else. In September 1969 when graduating students were applying for jobs, *Maeil Business Newspaper* observed that the job seekers were more eager to apply for the positions in “new *chaebŏl* companies” (*shinhŭng chaebŏl*) in the private sector than financial institutions or state-run public corporations.⁶⁴ The article assessed that such trend came from the prediction that newly established private companies would guarantee a faster promotion, a higher salary, and the environment for fostering original ideas.⁶⁵ Even when one could not open their own businesses right away after graduation, it was preferable to work and learn as an employee of “soon-to-be” *chaebŏl* private companies than in the public sector.

Businesswomen in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*”

At the same time, the promotion of the “business masculinity” discourse necessitated an abnormalization of successful businesswomen. Praising successful women would undermine the businessman masculinity discourse. There were very few female cases in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” and just like the two female entrepreneurs’ cases in the “Self-made Men” series, they were portrayed as abnormal.⁶⁶ Most of them had been divorced, which was highlighted in their stories.

⁶³ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁴ “Still Narrow Door to Success,” [Yŏjŏnhi chobŭn sahoe immun] *Maeil kyŏngje*, Septebmer 2, 1969, 7.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ This could also be because there were relatively fewer successful businesswomen at that time.

Divorce was considered disgraceful to the family and was a subject of media gossip during this period. The “soon- to-be *chaebŏl*” on August 24, 1969, was a female entrepreneur, Chŏng Sincha, who had achieved success in founding and running a boiler company. Her divorce and the fact that she lived with her two children were highlighted from the onset, as in the headline “She is twenty-eight years old, a mother of two, ... a woman who has been divorced by mutual agreement. This kind of woman established a business.”⁶⁷ The caption of her portrait read, “CEO Chŏng Sincha, whose looks as a housewife did not yet disappear from her face.”⁶⁸ The three-page coverage of her journey to business success focused a lot on her past romantic relationship and the rift between her and her ex-husband.

Chŏng’s remark followed by the sub-headline, “Women’s happiness is household work, but I will succeed [in my business],” abnormalized herself:

I see that a woman’s happiness comes from spending the money her husband brings to her on household matters and cuddling with the kids. Although I am ruining my family’s reputation [by divorcing and running a business] and doing something that is embarrassing as a woman, I will work hard to reach the top [of this business world].⁶⁹

It seemed as if Chŏng was saying she was not proud of herself and felt different from other women because she was a divorcée running a business. But such response was the outcome of the editors’ calibrated efforts to portray her as an abnormal “soon- to-be *chaebŏl*” case. Unlike the descriptions of male entrepreneurs, Chŏng’s story contained speculative and melodramatic narratives that further othered her case. For example, the reporter speculated whether Chŏng had a typical woman’s *han* (deep sorrow or resentment which is often associated with women) in the corner of

⁶⁷ “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*,” [Yebi *chaebŏl*] *Sŏndei sŏul*, August 24, 1969, 18.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

her consciousness that made her feel the rivalry against her ex-husband.⁷⁰ And a melodramatic (and fictional) portrayal of Chŏng sadly whispering about her feeling of abandonment in front of her husband's picture followed.

Similarly, the “soon- to-be *chaebŏl*” on August 31, 1969, a week after Chŏng Sincha's story was published, was Kim Aeja, a businesswoman who ran a bar and she had been divorced as well. The headline highlighted that she went through marriage and divorce in her twenties. The description detailed how she had decided to divorce her husband because of a rift with her in-laws.⁷¹ The reporter speculated that the family-in-law must have frustrated Kim quite often. The reporter also asked a question that would sound rude or pejorative now, but not so much in the past, “how does it feel now that you have to feed yourself when your husband fed you before?” and asked whether she “sheds tears from time to time”⁷² Such conjecture rendered her to be an object of sympathy, not admiration. The evident editorial attempts of tying a female entrepreneur's success to her personal history of divorce and melodramatizing the story excluded women from the “soon- to-be *chaebŏl*” discourse and made clear that the ideal marriage required the husband to be the entrepreneur, not the wife.

Through these repeated narratives that normalized businessmen as masculine, competitive, nationalistic, and ideal husbands, the most popular weekly magazine of the late 1960s was doing its part in legitimizing the state's economic policies and promoting the ideas of making money through innovative and state-abiding businesses. This happened during the crucial years when Park was consolidating his power since his re-election as president in February 1967 and planning for

⁷⁰ Ibid., 20.

⁷¹ “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*,” [Yebi chaebŏl] *Sŏndei sŏul*, August 31, 1969, 28.

⁷² Ibid. The literal translation of the question was how *pap* (literally rice, but meaning meal) tasted, which was more pejorative than asking about her feelings.

a longer reign. The businesspeople in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” seemed to have been enjoying their successful lives because they internalized capitalistic virtues and maximized the use of the government projects. Their businesses were celebrated because they brought export revenues to the country. They appeared as ideal husbands because they had accumulated a great amount of wealth, something that even well-educated and hardworking salarymen could not have achieved. The young, masculine, and capable businessmen in “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” set the prototype for the most sought-after husband material.

“My Proud Daughter” (1970-81)

While “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” was creating the normative image of a businessman breadwinner, another concurrent series in *Sunday Seoul*, “Ttal charang” (hereafter “My Proud Daughter”) subsumed smart, talented, and wealthy young unmarried females under the category of ideal wife candidates. The advertisement of daughters as ideal wife candidates marketed them as having “traditional woman’s virtues” such as good household management skills and sophisticated and submissive personalities. These women’s goal to become homemakers strengthened the idea of an ideal marriage between a businessman husband and a homemaker wife. At the same time, by highlighting these young women’s fathers who were mostly businessmen, the “My Proud Daughter” series also strengthened the businessman masculinity.

The daughters’ famous fathers and also their mothers introduced and described in detail why they were so proud of their daughters. Mostly fathers did the boasting of their daughters, with a few exceptions in which mothers were the well-known figures. The section was written in the form of comments made by the daughters and parents in their interviews with the reporter. Each weekly segment was accompanied by a picture of the daughter and the parent (mostly father),

which took up the whole page and was printed in colour.⁷³ The table of contents of *Sunday Seoul* listed “My Proud Daughter” under “Pictorial” (*hwabo*), highlighting the graphic aspect of this series. The magazine only printed a few pages in colour (the “Soon- to-be *chaebŏl*” pages were never printed in colour), suggesting the clear editorial intent to advertise these “proud” daughters’ appearances and make profit off the images by objectifying these women to attract and sustain the male readership.

Yet, the series was considered wholesome because socially respectable figures, such as lawyers and businessmen, were voluntarily presenting their daughters to the world as the most admirable ones. The qualities attached to these daughters normalized the idea that model wives choose to stay home over their possible career outside the home, care about their looks, and be submissive to men in the family.

“My Proud Daughter” focused on virtues traditionally expected of women, such as good appearance and a submissive character. The daughters introduced were mostly in their twenties, suggesting that they were at the age where their parents expected them to get married. Headings like “no.1 wife candidate” and “aspiring to be a housewife” suggested that these daughters also were advertised as ideal candidates for marriage. One of the most frequently mentioned qualities was their pretty looks. As mentioned above, this section always had a full-page headshot of the daughters as if it was to promote them as celebrities. A picture taking up the whole page was not common in other sections in *Sunday Seoul* except for the cover pages and advertisements. Considering that *Sunday Seoul* lured the readership with provocative images of women, it is

⁷³ The full-page picture was mostly of the daughter and the father, with a few exceptions where the mothers accompanied.

possible to conclude that the large images of daughters were also utilized to attract more male readers.

The headings and descriptions also used phrases that provoked sensual images of women's bodies. For example, some headings read, "a body that could work properly as a model" or "voluptuous woman" (*kŭllaemō*). The descriptions of the "voluptuous" daughter, Sin Sŏnhwa, on January 25, 1970, gave detailed numeric information of her body size, describing her as having "above-average" body. She had been also voted as the "Homecoming Queen" at her university in May 1967, which was advertised in major newspapers like *Kyunghyang Sinmun* (see figure 5.3) and *Tonga ilbo*.⁷⁴ Her father, Sin Sunŏn, a lawyer, told the reporter that when his daughter had been voted as the "Queen", many film directors approached her.⁷⁵ The reporter thought it was reasonable that the film industry sought after her because she was a lady of "good looks."⁷⁶

Figure 5.3 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a section of a page of *Kyunghyang Sinmun* with a heading, "Deoksung University's Shin Sŏnhwa Chosen as May Queen" [Tŏksŏngyŏdae mei k'win shin sŏnhwa yang i ppop'yŏ], with a portrait of a woman.

Original source: *Kyunghyang Sinmun*, May 6, 1967, 5.

Accessed through the Naver Newspaper Archive (Neibŏ nyusŭ raibŭrŏri).

<https://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.naver?articleId=1967050600329205021&editNo=2&printCount=1&publishDate=1967-05-06&officeId=00032&pageNo=5&printNo=6634&publishType=00020>.

Figure 5.3 *Kyunghyang Sinmun*, May 6, 1967

⁷⁴ "Deoksung University's Shin Sŏnhwa Chosen as May Queen," [Tŏksŏngyŏdae mei k'win shin sŏnhwa yang i ppop'yŏ] *Kyunghyang Sinmun*, May 6, 1967, 5.

⁷⁵ "My Proud Daughter," [Ttal charang] *Sŏndei sŏul*, January 25, 1970, 59.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

One of the other shared qualities was their submissive characters. The daughters were often described as being obedient to their parents, especially fathers, which was portrayed as a “boast-worthy” character. For example, in the headings in bold, I Söngnan, the daughter of I Tonghwan, ambassador in Australia, was described as a nice daughter who “never went against her father’s wishes.”⁷⁷ I Söngnan, a twenty-year-old English Literature student at Ewha Womans University, had moved to Sydney, Australia when she was in the fifth grade. The description of her as a proud daughter centred on her obedience to her strict father. First, she was a “kind” daughter who decided to docilely (*yamjõnhi*) follow the strict curfew set by her father. Even when most parties ended much past midnight, she always had to come home before midnight. She thought it was her duty not to make him worried. She then told the reporter about the incident in which her father yelled and chased away a male classmate who came to see her, which effectively made it impossible for her to date anyone. Her father rather focused on the “benefits” of having daughters as a diplomat, which highlighted domestic and secondary roles in holding parties, including prepping food, baking cookies, and cleaning up afterwards.”⁷⁸ He also said daughters were much “gentler” than sons, suggesting that their appearance, especially when they wore *hanbok* (traditional Korean costume), helped elevate both his own and the national reputation. The overall narrative held the idea that I Söngnan deserved to be praised because she was obedient to her father who expected her to stay in the domestic sphere.

In addition, the daughters who were introduced in “My Proud Daughter” were wholesome because they aspired to be homemakers. Even when they were praised for their experiences and skills outside the home, such as piano skills or academic achievement, they were in the end proud

⁷⁷ “My Proud Daughter,” [Ttal charang] *Söndei söul*, August 9, 1970, 63.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

daughters because they planned to be housewives. For example, the “My Proud Daughter” section on February 8th, 1970, was entitled, “A Sweet Baby Who Dreamed of Being a Ballerina Nowadays Aspires to Be a Faithful Housewife” (*muyongga kkum kkudŏn chaerong tongi, yojŭm-ŭn ch'ungsirhan chubu chimang*).⁷⁹ Ch'a Yangsuk was the only daughter of Ch'a Chŏnggyu, CEO of Hyundai Textile Company, who was twenty-two years old and had just graduated from Hanyang University with a degree in dance. Although she spent her childhood and youth learning how to dance professionally, she now “must have grown mature because she dropped the idea that she would make it huge in that area,” said her father, Ch'a Chŏnggyu.⁸⁰ And the reporter added, “her parents are very pleased with such decision.”⁸¹ In response, the daughter, Ch'a Yangsuk, stated that she did dream of becoming a great ballerina, but her thinking changed as she grew older and was more influenced by her mother. Her mother was engaged in more “womanly” activities such as joining a singing club and arranging flowers, while fulfilling the duties as a housewife. The reporter described Ms. Ch'a's views as “ordinary and wise.”⁸² Such endorsement not only normalized but also encouraged the idea that a young woman who accomplished much in the public sphere should return to the home where she would be a dedicated housewife.

The common qualities that dominated the portrayal of proud daughters – appearances, submissiveness, and aspiration to be housewives – confined these young women to the domestic sphere, and at the same time put men as the normative breadwinners. Most of these young women went to university, which was not common to the majority of women at this time, and they had prospective careers. However, they were usually described as having found more meaning in

⁷⁹ “My Proud Daughter,” [Ttal charang] *Sŏndei sŏul*, February 8, 1970, 59.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

becoming housewives and playing secondary roles of assisting their fathers. And such decision was portrayed as what made them worthy of praise. The message to the female readership was that even if you were from a wealthy family and educated, you were encouraged to stay in the domestic sphere and to aspire to become a good housewife, even in the era of expanding opportunities to work in the public sphere.

Such messaging was often uttered through the words of the daughters themselves. For example, T'ae Ŭnsim of the “My Proud Daughter” section on February 14th, 1971, said she agreed with parents’ view that “women do not need to work at a company when they will anyways have to do housework and raise kids after getting married... Having work experience could be a hindrance to establishing a harmonious household.”⁸³ This was all despite the fact that she was, in the reporter’s words, a “talented woman” (*chaewŏn*) who studied English Literature at a prestigious university.⁸⁴ T'ae said her parents were absolutely right even though some of her friends thought her parents’ way of thinking was old-fashioned. Upon her parents’ adamant opposition to the idea of her working at a company, she had been staying home for three years since she graduated from university in 1967. Her father, who was a lawyer, spoke fondly of the fact that his daughter was taking “bridal classes” at home, learning how to sew, cook, garden, and do other household chores, instead of socializing outside.⁸⁵

These young women’s wedding announcements in major newspapers soon after their appearances in “My Proud Daughter” confirmed that they were indeed ideal candidates for marriage. According to the wedding announcement in *Chosŏn ilbo*, T'ae Ŭnsim was getting married in December the same year she was introduced as “My Proud Daughter”, fulfilling the

⁸³“My Proud Daughter,” [Ttal charang] *Sŏndei sŏul*, February 14, 1971, 7.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

dream of hers and her parents.⁸⁶ Similarly, Yi Chuyŏng of “My Proud Daughter” on February 21, 1971, who had entered Ewha Womans University at the top of her class was later also announced to be getting married according to the wedding announcement section in *Maeil kyŏngje* on July 2, 1975.⁸⁷

The wedding announcements of these young women often indicated that their husbands were equally educated and wealthy. The aforementioned proud daughter, Yi Chuyŏng, was to marry a son of a CEO of an electric company as a daughter of a CEO of a chemical company herself.⁸⁸ Only the wealthiest, politically well-known figures, and celebrities made the wedding announcements in newspapers. Seeing the protagonists of “My Proud Daughter” actually getting married to renowned men was a confirmation that these young women who were pretty, submissive, and domestic indeed “married well” into wealthy families in the eyes of the public.

The weekly coverage of well-educated women from wealthy families as ideal candidates for marriage who supposedly held values of traditional women created a message that even if a woman had a possible career in the public sphere, she should aspire to become a housewife. In contrast, the message to the male readership was that men had to take the primary role of financially supporting the household even when the wives had capacity to earn money.

The fathers echoed the same sentiments. Although the title “My Proud Daughter” suggests that this two-page section was about the admirable daughters, it was as much about the fathers who were doing the *charang* (boasting) of their daughters. In contrast to the *Weekly Woman*’s “Husband Material,” which will be discussed later in this chapter, where the mothers of the bachelors advertised their sons as the most ideal future husbands, *Sunday Seoul*’s “My Proud Daughters”

⁸⁶ “Weddings,” [Kyŏrhon] *Chosŏn ilbo*, December 12, 1971, 6.

⁸⁷ “Weddings,” [Kyŏrhon] *Maeil kyŏngje*, July 2, 1975, 7.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

were written from the perspective of the fathers and the full-page pictures were almost always two-shot photos of daughters and their fathers. Such image suggested that the fathers were also to be respected. The headlines always specified the parent (mostly father)'s occupation. Most of the fathers were wealthy businessmen. If the "Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*" was about promising businessmen in their late twenties and thirties, "My Proud Daughter" was about the more established ones in their late forties and fifties. *Sunday Seoul* fed on the coverage of the wealthy and even the section on "praise-worthy" daughters had to support the image of respectful, happy, and rich businessmen.

The pictures suggested the wealthy lifestyles of the daughter and father with objects like a piano, a taxidermized bird, a teacup, and a watch. In the new era when weekly magazines started to be published in colour, the large images of rich families with expensive commodities did more than attesting to the daughters' qualities. The clothes they were wearing and the items that they possessed were the manifestation of their accumulated wealth, which set the clear boundary between them and the "ordinary" readers. For example, the aforementioned "My Proud Daughter" section on February 8th, 1970, was on the daughter of the CEO of Hyundai Textile Company, a large conglomerate. Alongside a big picture of the CEO (see figure 5.4), Ch'a Chŏnggyu, and his daughter, Ch'a Yangsuk, the description read,

The greatest joy of the CEO of Hyundai Textile Company is to be attended to by his only daughter, Yangsuk, who becomes especially kind and warm when the father returns from a long business trip to Pusan.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ "My Proud Daughter," [Ttal charang] *Sŏndei sŏul*, February 8, 1970, 59.

Figure 5.4 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a page of *Sunday Seoul* (*Sŏndei sŏul*) with a heading, “My Proud Daughter,” [Ttal charang], with a full-page picture of Ch'a Chŏnggyu, and his daughter, Ch'a Yangsuk, holding a bird taxidermy.

Original source: *Sunday Seoul* [*Sŏndei sŏul*], February 8, 1970, 59.

Accessed through the National Library of Korea (Kungnip chungang tosŏgwan).

Figure 5.4 *Sunday Seoul* [*Sŏndei sŏul*], December 14, 1969

The daughter, Yangsuk, stated in the interview, “My father spends more than ten days a month in Pusan and I of course wait on him as his daughter.”⁹⁰ Their interview created a happy image where a businessman father was happy with his wife and daughter who attend to him heartwarminglly because he was out in the world, making money for the family. He deserved such dedicated treatment from the family because he was perfectly fulfilling his duty as a breadwinner. The fathers’ occupations included dentists, lawyers, artists, and professors, but mostly businesses owners. There were no “proud daughters” who came from so-called “ordinary families,” as if “proud daughters” could only come from the family of well-respected fathers. Just like what “Soon-to-be *chaebŏl*” was doing in the same issue of *Sunday Seoul* every week, “My Proud Daughter” was instilling the message that primarily wealthy men were to be respected in society and deserved to have a happy family.

Through the repeated image of wealthy fathers and their “proud” daughters, the “My Proud Daughter” series again normalized a gendered notion of money-making – the man as the breadwinner and the woman as the docile, and sexually objectified, housewife. In the pages of *Sunday Seoul*, women were being told what men supposedly wanted in a partner, and more

⁹⁰ Ibid.

importantly, what wealthy men wanted. Men were being told that these ideal women were what wealth brought to them, and by contrast, they could not have them if they were not financially successful. Even in the new era of expanding opportunities for supposedly both women and men in the 1960s, the traditional patriarchal order was sustained in popular mass media and shaped the nature of the capitalist development in Korea.

“Husband Material” (1969 -)

It was not just *Sunday Seoul* that was creating the ideal image of a marriage between a businessman husband and a domestic wife. *Weekly Woman*, one of the first women’s weekly magazines, carried a similar section where mothers of promising bachelors advertised their sons as good husband material. Aptly titled, “Sillanggam” (hereafter “Husband Material”), the series debuted in the first issue of the magazine on January 1, 1969. The allotted section was not as big as “My Proud Daughter” or “Soon- to-be *chaeböl*,” but the message was clear: The bachelors who were introduced were ideal husband material because they had lucrative jobs, and they deserved to look for partners who would be happy as stay-home wives. Contrary to what the title suggested, after a rather short introduction of the sons, the mothers listed in detail what they looked for in future daughters-in-law.

Most of the “husband material” bachelors were already businessmen or sons of large conglomerates, again celebrating the businessman masculinity. Titled, “Successor of Ssangnyong Company (*ssangnyong chaeböl*), Mr. Kim Sögwön,” the first “husband material” was the eldest son of congressman Kim Sönggon who was described as “one of the wealthiest businesspeople (owners of *chaeböl*) in South Korea.”⁹¹ Kim Sögwön, was twenty-three years old and studying

⁹¹ “Husband Material,” [Shillanggam] *Chugan yösöng*, January 1, 1969, 72.

abroad in the U.S. He was described as the “certain successor of the conglomerate” with his Economics major from Brandeis College in Boston.⁹² His mother, Kim Mijin, was the one looking for a future wife for her son who was not in Seoul at the time of publication. She listed a seven-point wish list on behalf of her son, stating that if the future wife meets these criteria, her son would also be surely happy:

1. The future wife must pass the marital compatibility test predicted by a fortune-teller.
2. It is ideal if she is a Buddhist, but an atheist is okay as well.
3. She must have a university degree, preferably in home economics or fine arts.
4. It is preferred that her parents are government officials or educators.
5. She has no need to have money.
6. Cheerful personalities are preferred.
7. An average height is preferred. She should not be overweight or too pretty. An elegant look is preferred.⁹³

Among the required qualities, the fifth one directly suggests that the ideal husband Kim Sŏgwŏn would have enough money to contribute to the household, so the future wife would not have to be wealthy. Such descriptions that tied Kim to wealth, including his Economics major and the expected succession of the large conglomerate, as well as the picture of him wearing a nice suit and holding a wine glass, made him the most eligible bachelor because he was rich.

Similarly, the “Husband Material” on January 8th, 1969, also highlighted the future husband’s wealth as the most important quality. The title, “Korean Typewriter Company CEO,” from the beginning suggested that Mr. Kong Yŏnggil was well-off. Mr. Kong’s father, Kong Pyŏngu, was widely known for his invention of the Korean typewriter.⁹⁴ The son, Kong Yŏnggil, 35 years old, had studied abroad in the U.S. and succeeded and expanded his father’s business. Described as “already successful husband material,” he owned a “promising” company that

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 73.

⁹⁴ “Husband Material,” [Shillanggam] *Chugan yŏsŏng*, January 8, 1969, 70.

domestically produced around two hundred typewriters per month and received American aid from the International Cooperation Administration (ICA).⁹⁵

Just like Kim Sŏgwŏn's advertisement, it was Kong Yŏnggil's mother who announced the call for a future wife for her son, and the list of what was requested of the future wife specifically ruled out financial status. Among the five qualities that Kong's mother listed, the fifth one stated, "the family [of the future wife] does not have to be wealthy or of a distinguished family, but a family of educators is preferred, considering [the importance of] home education."⁹⁶

What is worth noticing in this particular "Husband Material" advertisement is that Kong's financial status worked to compensate, in his mother's words, "flaws."⁹⁷ First, he was 35 years old, which was rather old to be considered as an eligible bachelor. The disparaging word, "*noch'onggak*" (old bachelor), was used to describe him. His mother attempted to justify her son's old age by stating that it was her to blame because she was too picky and calculating when it came to choosing her first daughter-in-law.⁹⁸ Mr. Kong was also described as having "somewhat difficult personalities" to the extent that some people called him arrogant, and he had only a few friends.⁹⁹ But these less attractive qualities were offset by his lucrative position as a CEO of a large company.

The repeated emphasis on one's wealth as the most important quality of a prospective husband reinforced the message that accumulated wealth and a lucrative job were more important attributes than other values, such as personalities, hobbies, or religious views. These values were justified because it was the parents who seemed to have been enforcing them although it was the

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 71.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 70.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 70-71.

editors and publishers who chose businessmen as guests and guided them throughout the interviews and made final editorial decisions. The deliberate choice to highlight the parents behind the most eligible bachelors and bachelorettes reflected the trend of the young generation of listening to parents' advice when making the final decision about whom to marry. The 1970 *Tonga ilbo* special report which was discussed in the beginning of this chapter also found that young women and men would more freely date other people without committing to marry, and eventually turn to their parents when deciding spouses.¹⁰⁰ The reporter found it quite calculating that the young people would enjoy themselves and conveniently ask their parents who had experiences in marriage.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the "spouse material" advertisements written from the perspective of parents gave more justification to the message they created.

Conclusion

The two most popular weekly magazines in the late 1960s and the early 1970s created a new masculine ideal in the form of the successful businessman. This new masculine ideal was wealthy, ambitious, inventive, but also loyal to the Park state and its nation-building project. The circulation of the idea that admirable and marriable businessmen were taking an active part in the Park government's new economic policies was crucial to legitimizing Park's rule. But there were only a few successful businessmen in the real world, and the Park government favoured a highly selected number of businessowners as allies. Yet, the fantasy of the happy marriage between successful, patriotic businessman and the beautiful, docile housewife set the standard for the

¹⁰⁰ "A Quarter Century Since Liberation: Young People Today Series No. 3 – Perspectives on Courtship and Marriage," [Haebangsa pan segi: onül üi chölmünidül 3 yōnae kyōrhon'gwan] *Tonga ilbo*, August 12, 1970.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

readers who regularly consumed the magazines, pressuring men to become wealthy by running their own businesses and women to look for businessman husbands.

The impact of this content is manifested in the words of “ordinary” Koreans quoted in interviews and surveys on marriage. On December 27, 1970, the *Sunday Seoul* special series, “Chölmŭm” (Youth), covered the topic of marriage. Six single women in their late twenties who were members of the “Misses Club” were invited to speak about their perspectives on marriage. When asked about what constituted an ideal husband type, most mentioned capability to make money as an important quality. Ms. Pak who worked as a hairdresser said, “[I don’t wish a lot.] I would be fine with someone who owns a small business.”¹⁰² Ms. Kim who was a theatrical performer responded, “What woman would not like someone who has a private company?”¹⁰³ The words of the guests evince that there was no shame or discomfort in publicly desiring a businessman husband because the media got rid of stigma attached to money-making by celebrating businessmen. The readers responded positively, and some would send letters to the publishers demanding more of such “wholesome” content.¹⁰⁴ The audience, as much as the publishers, was participating in the reproduction and circulation of the normative image of a marriage between businessman husband and a housewife.

As producers and disseminators of knowledge about capitalistic virtues, weekly magazines mediated new perceptions of money and courtship. The new medium celebrated competent businessmen as ideal husbands despite the reality in which the number of businessmen was far smaller than the number of salaried employees and wage workers. Weekly magazines made it a

¹⁰² “Youth,” [Chölmŭm] *Söndei söul*, December 27, 1970, 37.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ “Postbox,” [Uch’et’ong] *Söndei söul*, September 14, 1969, 93. A reader asked *Sunday Seoul* to keep publishing wholesome content through via letters to the editor.

norm that a “good” marriage was between a rich businessman and a soon-to-be full-time housewife. Unlike the past when other qualities made men look appealing as husband material, poor men in the late 1960s onwards quickly lost ground to stand as ideal candidates for courtship. And this was what the male reader mentioned in the beginning of this chapter found so deplorable – young women prioritizing money over personality when choosing husbands.

Conclusion

This dissertation has examined how popular mass media, from radio to weekly magazines and films, served to disseminate and reinforce distinctly gendered narratives of work and success in Korea in the 1960s and early 1970s in the context of Park Chung Hee's project of state-driven capitalist development. The popular narratives valorized a masculine ideal of the successful male businessman: hard-working, loyal to the government, drawing female affection, and enjoying the benefits of Korea's emerging consumer society. By contrast, women were confined to the domestic sphere as loyal wives and mothers in the stories that abnormalized and degraded the growing population of female wage workers in light industries and the service sector, and linked female well-being to the patronage of the father or husband. On a broader level, these forms of popular media presented Koreans with the dream of a modern, American-style middle-class existence in Seoul promised by capitalism and characterized by apartment living and conspicuous consumption.

The popularity and repeated circulation of the gendered narratives and images about wealth in the 1960s and the early 1970s encourage us to consider their broader meaning. The American goal of containing communist influence from the north by incorporating South Korea into the US-led capitalist economy affected how popular mass media depicted an ideal economic system. The US-produced newsreels which Koreans consumed as a source of not only news but also of entertainment portrayed advanced capitalist countries as the model to follow and the path to prosperity. Such images were another example of what Han Sang Kim describes as "the (un)intended cultural consequences of the U.S. military and nonmilitary presence in Korea, especially based on the influences of film propaganda activities."¹ Under American guidance and Park's

¹ Han Sang Kim, "My Car Modernity: What the U.S. Army Brought to South Korean Cinematic Imagination about Modern Mobility," *Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 1 (2016): 64.

censorship, media companies profited by selling the very ideas that underpinned capitalism: Since the 1961 publication in Korea of the translated autobiography of American industrialist Andrew Carnegie, the print media worked to instill American style self-help strategies and entrepreneurship. The influx of American culture into Korea also influenced many authors of serialized novels in weekly magazines and directors of commercial films to emulate American lifestyles of consuming modern commodities of sunglasses, cars, and high-rise apartments.

Consequently, US-influenced ideas affected how the Park government and Koreans conceptualized the middle class. The Park government envisioned the urban middle class to be “disciplined, responsible citizens” who “practiced frugal living and worked hard ... symbolized comfortable lifestyles and mass consumption...embodying economic success and upward social mobility.”² Myungji Yang argues that the mass media and the Park regime propagated this vision and portrayed the middle class as the “social mainstream” despite its embryonic stage during this period.³ According to Yang, the ideas about the middle class as a “good and desirable citizenry” served the authoritarian state’s goal of making a modern nation by encouraging the middle class to “endure sacrifice and hardship for the sake of national gain without challenging the authoritarian order.”⁴ Yet, her focus on print media as a primary mass medium does not fully engage a wide range of *popular* mass media platforms where many Koreans shaped the collective understanding of the middle-class ideas and values.

² Myungji Yang, 33.

³ Ibid., 60. Yang argues that the media and “carrier of modernity and civility that would strengthen national identity and the political legitimacy of the state.”

⁴ Ibid., 41.

This dissertation has explored mass media sources for which there was evidence of popularity in order to move away from the common assumption of passive audience reception to the messages by the media or the state. Audience sources, including letters to the editors and moviegoer surveys, show that there was specific media content to which Korean audiences were more susceptible. For example, even though the Park government actively used multiple media platforms to propagate the anti-communist, capitalistic state ideology, audience surveys showed that Koreans often rejected propagandistic messages, but remembered what they found entertaining. Yang's focus on women and the image of frugal and wise middle-class wives to explain the production of middle-class social values misses masculine notions of money-making which were at the heart of what attracted both Korean men and women into desiring the middle-class lifestyle of material affluence and the consumer culture.

Ien Ang argues that although it is very challenging, “desperately seeking” the audience and seeing the audience as an active agent of media's meaning-making allows us to better understand the ways certain cultural ideas and practices were formed.⁵ As this dissertation has shown, Korean audience's consumption of mass media portrayals of ideal businessmen helped perpetuate the vision of upward mobility, industrialization, urbanization, and courtship. While there are more studies on identifying the salaried employees or skilled employees in heavy and chemical industries as the emerging middle class,⁶ this project has shown that weekly magazines attached a tone of sympathy to salaried men and portrayed them as those who felt emasculated from low income. Popular mass media hardly covered stories of industrial workers mainly because those narratives did not draw a big audience. Instead, up-and-coming self-made businessmen were

⁵ Ien Ang, *Desperately Seeking the Audience* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991).

⁶ Myungji Yang argues that the actual category of the middle class emerged with the Park government's heavy and chemical industrialization drive and the expansion of salaried employees in those industries. Myungji Yang, 46-47.

celebrated as ideal heads of middle-class households and model candidates for courtship. By taking *popularity* seriously and navigating Korea's multi-media environment, not just one medium, this dissertation has attempted to bring the audience to the fore. In the process, we can see how intimate gendered ideas were intricately woven into what scholars have subsumed as a state project or the "(un)intended consequence" of the American presence in Korea.

In this sense, this dissertation speaks more broadly to the scholarship of media and capitalism beyond Korea. Media histories that examine only one medium leave unexplored important dynamics of the multi-media environment that impacted audiences' everyday experiences. Studies of capitalism which do not engage media or assume political and economic elites' top-down use of media tend to ignore the role of "ordinary" individuals who shaped capitalistic culture. This study's focus on the intersections of media and capitalism contributes to a better understanding of histories of both media and capitalism, for example through the mediating factor of gender.

This project has also suggested that the glorified portrayals of successful businessmen enjoying an American lifestyle of living in apartments in Seoul and driving cars were far from the reality of 1960s and 1970s Korea. Starting one's own business was not easy; industrial workers suffered from low wages; apartments and cars were hardly available or affordable to the majority of Koreans. Yet, the image of masculinity formed in the media in the 1960s and the pressure on men to be the sole breadwinners of households continued to circulate throughout the 1970s as suggested in a 1978 *Kyŏnghyang shinmun* article titled, "Fathers Losing Authority." The article

wrote about a public lecture entitled “Roles of Fathers in Contemporary Households,” delivered by sociology professor Han Wansang (1936 -).⁷

In the lecture, Han diagnosed that Korean fathers lost their “traditionally held economic, political, educational, and religious authority” because they were always outside the home making money.⁸ Notwithstanding his ideal worldview of Korea prior to the Park era as a society where Korean fathers had enjoyed absolute authority, the reasons Han provided as to why fathers lost their positions in their families suggest the impact of the process in which the ideas of money-making and wealth were gendered across mediascape, a history that this project has attempted to write. According to Han, many Korean fathers could not establish a firm set of values because Confucian, Buddhist, Western, and Eastern values all coexisted in the midst of the fast-changing social transformation; the roles of fathers and mothers in the household were reversed as fathers were making money outside the home and mothers became solely in charge of budgeting household finances and raising children; lastly, televisions took over the family time and replaced the roles of fathers as educators.⁹

As this project has shown, and as Han analyzed, the popular mass media bombarded Koreans with constantly changing sets of values. The changing values about money-making were most clearly manifest in the media description of anti-Japanese sentiment. For example, when anti-Japanese sentiment was prevalent in the early 1960s, publishers portrayed admirable self-made businessmen as those who embraced strong anti-Japanese nationalistic feelings. But after the Normalization Treaty was signed with Japan in 1965, successful businessmen were the ones who

⁷ Dr. Han had taught sociology at Seoul National University since 1970 but been imprisoned and lost his job in 1976 for criticizing the Park government.

⁸ “Fathers Losing Their Authority,” [Kwŏnwi irŏganŭn abŏji] *Kyŏnghyang shinmun*, May 29, 1978, 5. Dr. Han served as Deputy Prime Minister in the Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung administrations (1993-2003).

⁹ Ibid.

moved past “irrational” emotions related to Korea’s colonial past and made full use of the normalized relations with Japan. Similarly, traditional values of living with extended family were gradually replaced in the media with aspiring visions of the individualistic American lifestyle, especially in serialized novels and films set in Seoul.

While there were changing sets of values that shaped men’s identities as fathers, what was constant was the pressure on men to be the sole breadwinners. What Han said about the “reversed” role between father and mother was his lament coming from the repeated media portrayal of money-making as an inherently masculine quality which pressured men to be the sole breadwinners of households and to accumulate more wealth to be considered as ideal husbands. The cultural burden on men to be solely in charge of financially taking care of the households made fathers “always outside the home making money.”¹⁰ By contrast, non-normative images of female work kept pulling women back to the home sphere even when they had opportunities to work in the public sphere.

Although Han mentioned television, which only became widely accessible in the mid-to-late 1970s, radio, weekly magazines, and films already had been showering Koreans with new morals and gendered ideas about wealth. What was produced, transmitted, and reproduced in popular mass media provided a guide for men to establish themselves as masculine nationalistic citizens, romantic husbands, and proud fathers.

Han’s lament over fathers’ lost authority in the households and the “shift in interest” from politics to business that the introduction to this dissertation noted suggest sweeping transformations in the 1960s and the early 1970s, but these changes had already sprouted in the early 20th century. The slow pivot away from Confucian culture that viewed the pursuit of wealth

¹⁰ Ibid.

as immoral took a long time to fade away. Even the grandfather of Kim Yŏnsu and Kim Sŏngsu who are known as Korea's most successful businessmen and the first bourgeoisie capitalists "considered commercial activities a violation of Confucian principles," and would have been "loath to establish a formal company or call himself a businessman."¹¹ The shift from the traditional disdain for entrepreneurs to celebration of such people as objects of admiration and praise was a process that had started prior to the Park era and occurred over a longer period of modern Korean history, but accelerated with the development of popular mass media.

Unlike more conventional portrayals of the emergence of Korean capitalism as a top-down, state-led development, the focus of this dissertation on popular mass media has shown the ways many Koreans participated in this transformative process through their consumption of popular mass media, helping to create new cultural norms where success was primarily defined in individual and material terms, and happiness seen as the result of money and the consumer lifestyle. These Koreans helped create the new gendered consumer culture by absorbing its standards of normative behaviour and longing for the material rewards showcased in both the fictional tales and "real-life" stories disseminated through popular media. This is not to suggest that those Koreans could not be skeptical or critical of such media. However, the popularity of popular mass media, whether they were radio programs which sexualized and scandalized the lives of young, destitute women, weekly magazines celebrating the idealized male businessman, or films that romanticized life in modern, middle-class apartment buildings, demonstrates that there was a demand for these capitalist fantasies. And to the extent that Koreans internalized the logic of these

¹¹ Carter J. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 33.

narratives, the popular mass media served as an ideologically and culturally buttress for Korea's process of state-led capitalist industrialization.

In this light, Korean capitalism had a media-manufactured cultural scaffolding, one which naturally served capitalism's primary logic of capital accumulation. The gendered narratives of popular media examined in this dissertation encouraged citizens to be loyal to the Park Chung Hee state by putting aside grievances over working conditions, cost of living, or the lack of civil liberties, and instead hold faith in the capitalist promise of material prosperity through individual initiative. The popular mass media portrayals pushed male entrepreneurs to spearhead economic growth in the private sector and promoted the kind of conspicuous consumption required for the growth of domestic markets. The false and fantasized images of industrialization worked against the demands of workers for better wages and working conditions by degrading and abnormalizing female wagedworkers in light industries while concealing the harsh working environments in the portrayals of much celebrated heavy and chemical industries. In short, the popular mass media worked to promote a de-politicized and patriarchal consumer culture conducive to the twin hegemony of the state and capital.

The manner in which popular mass media aided the goals of Korea's state-led capitalist development represented a confluence of interests: the nation-building project of the Park Chung Hee government, the private sector's need for a cheap and docile labour force, and the culture industry's desire to amass an ever-broader audience of listeners, viewers, and readers. This was neither a conscious conspiracy nor a formal arrangement, however. The interests of the state, capital, and the culture industry aligned quite organically. South Korea in the first half of the Park Chung Hee era presents an important case study of the relationship between capitalism, gender, and media.

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