

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

SEUNGSOOK MOON, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005, 254 p.

Moon's book, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*, is a historical and sociological examination of the ways in which a particular state's notion of gender and membership infuse and direct paths toward "modernity" and nation building. As all nations have devised and utilized their own strategies for getting their people to conform to, and abide by, processes of development and militarization, Moon cogently illuminates South Korea's unique path in creating "dutiful nationals" – those expected to forgo their own rights for the sake of the nation. South Korea's fierce and unrelenting drive toward industrialization and autonomy were influenced by a number of ingredients: the decolonization and independence from Japan in 1948, South Korea's strong anticommunist identity in opposition to North Korea, US military intervention in Korea, and the rise and lingering effects of the Cold War.

Upon independence, South Korea endorsed anticommunism as its state ideology, while in the process implementing disciplinary strategies for the sake of "national security." Always on high alert, particularly during and after the Korean War and Vietnam, various South Korean regimes tried to quell such anxiety throughout the next several decades via the suppression of dissent, all organized opposition and the "left-wing" press. Any opposition to state power and policy was seen as compromising national security and taken as a sign that communism had infiltrated society. Moon describes how South Korea, beginning in the early 1960s, adhered to what she refers to as "militarized modernity," which involved the strong hand of the state not only in terms of heightened surveillance but the endorsement of military service as the foundation for membership, identity and employment in the industrializing economy – this duty reserved only for male members of society. What transpired was a mixture of disciplinary power and indoctrination beginning in the early 1960s via mandatory resident registration, the use of anticommunist mottoes which encouraged individuals to spy on others and alert the state to suspicious and "impure" elements, state coordination of administered mass organizations which were in essence neighborhood residential associations (a legacy of Japanese colonial rule) that instructed residents in anticommunism and current government policy, and state intervention and control over industrial workers.

This normalization of disciplinary power in its quest for modernity and industrialization was coupled with a militarized economy, which included not only universal male conscription but military service as a precondition for employment. That is, paid employment was interlocked with military duty so that the overwhelming majority of jobs were reserved for men. In addition, the military service extra-points system gave those who served extra points on interviews and various tests, which were used to evaluate and select potential employees. Such favoritism for military members meant once again that women were excluded from much of the labor market, including most notably the heavy industries where pay and standards regarding worker protection were much higher. Thus the state became a pivotal player and a central force in the creation of a very gender segregated labor market.

An essential and unavoidable aspect of this masculinization of skilled labor was the indoctrination and socialization of female members of society to be dutiful wives and mothers. Women were exhorted to stay at home, and such messages were ubiquitous in school textbooks and in the media. Just as domestic science had pervaded other industrialized societies before, the state in South Korea encouraged the domestication of women during the 1970s via the “rational management of the household.” Women as wives and mothers were valued for their frugality, rationing, ability to plan ahead, and overseeing the household budget. This intrusion into the home included the state becoming quite active in pursuing population control, whose policies of birth control and sterilization campaigns were aimed primarily at women. The extent to which the state went in both marginalizing women in the economic sphere and instilling a domestic subjectivity is best exemplified in what came to be called the Factory New Village Movement. This movement, which began in the mid-1970s, involved training camps and workshops at state-sponsored centers where young, single women workers were taught how to be patriotic. Here, patriotism meant not only being docile and obedient workers, but learning appropriate etiquette when it came to dress, speech, conduct, and suitable hobbies for women to pursue. These state policies where women were inextricably linked with subservience and defined as future “mothers” and “wives” were all touted as a must for nation building and economic development. It was of course expected that women, upon marriage, stopped working. Not surprisingly, it was quite common for businesses to “lay off” women upon their getting married or becoming pregnant.

Despite these relentless efforts by the state to endorse a certain brand of masculinity and femininity, Moon does a good job of showing how individuals have agency. In other words, although subjectivities for men and women were (and continue to be) carved out by the state through propaganda and in the name of patriotism, individuals nonetheless have their own ideas of what they want and how to go about becoming genuine “citizens” of their nation. Using Foucault’s notion of disciplinary power and docile bodies as a backdrop, Moon illustrates well the dialectical antagonism between coercion and resistance that occurred in South Korean society. In essence, the ideological apparatus exalted by the state cannot forever hold its grasp. In the South Korean case, the aperture came with the

turn towards procedural democracy and civilian administration, with the moving away from militarization due to the easing of tensions with North Korea and the communist threat in general. In addition, a burgeoning array of various social movements were becoming increasingly vociferous. Labor rights, women's rights, discontent over compulsory military service, and the lack of social service programs (such as universal insurance, pension plans) were becoming part of public discourse – what Moon refers to as essential to the rise of a counterhegemonic ideology.

These various strains of discontent have meant in turn new definitions of both modernity and citizenship in South Korea. The notion of women as equal citizens of South Korean society has, for instance, entailed making sexual harassment legally recognized as a national and widespread problem facing female workers, and gaining greater access to the labor market. For instance, thanks largely to the women's movement the military service extra-points system was deemed unconstitutional in 1999. Increasing discontent over compulsory military duty, knowing it relies most heavily on lower-class male members of society, coupled with increasing demands for freedom and individual rights, has made such policy more difficult to justify. Lastly, both men and women are facing increasing economic insecurity – particularly women, given their already more vulnerable position, due to globalization and economic restructuring where lay-offs and downsizing are routine, thus opening up additional opportunities for organization and resistance by labor.

In sum, Moon skillfully depicts how state policy is instrumental in shaping society, with gender as the fulcrum for industrial development. Moon also shows that while the state is powerful in determining the course of industrialization and membership, women and men in South Korea nonetheless have also simultaneously become their own subjects – in turn, driving and influencing state policy as well. My only concern is that on several occasions historical events are brought into the story which are not thoroughly explained, leaving the reader unable to understand their significance to the overall story. In addition, although Moon does an excellent job in displaying human resistance and agency, even during oppressive and violent times, she fails to mention any examples of such agency during South Korea's militarized modernity. For instance, what happened to women who remained single and worked outside the home? What happened to those women and men who were homosexual or deemed to be homosexual? In sum, what was the policy for those deemed unpatriotic? Were there ever any resistance groups during the time before procedural democracy? If so, what did they look like? Such descriptions would have made Moon's overall thesis even more compelling. Those academics and students who are interested in the processes of gender and gender inequality, and how such gendered imagery is used vis-à-vis state policy and development will be particularly interested in this book.

Corie Hammers, Armstrong Atlantic State University.

