TURUN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

Re-examining the Women's Movement in Cold War South Korea and Beyond

The History of the Korean National Council of Women

Katri Kauhanen

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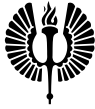

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To foremothers

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation illustrates women's political and social activism in South Korea's authoritarian era. In particular, I study the local and transnational activities of the Korean National Council of Women, a women's organization established in 1959 as a Korean branch of the International Council of Women. By connecting micro-level organizational operation to macro-level historical events, I analyze the transformation of feminism, women's organizing, and Korean society during a 30-year-long timeframe from the late 1950s until the turn of the 1990s. Moving between local and transnational spheres, this study examines Korean women's activism as part of the Cold War women's internationalism.

This study asks how the Cold War shaped feminist activities, the practices and the possibilities for organization, and what kind of framework the authoritarian, anti-communist rule in South Korea provided for women's organizing over time. This study challenges the previous scholarship's views on the international isolation and hindrance of the women's movement in authoritarian era South Korea. I argue that the Korean National Council of Women found ways to negotiate to advance women's issues and build international coalitions and connections, as the organization simultaneously cooperated with and resisted the state.

My dissertation contributes to the studies and scholarly discussions on Korean contemporary history, the state-society relationship, nation-building in authoritarian regimes, and women's transnational activism during the Cold War. By adopting a transnational approach, this study moves beyond the national framework to detail South Korea's authoritarian era. This study builds an analytical framework around the concepts of mass dictatorship, Cold War feminism, and post-corrective historiography, thus advancing three objectives.

First, this study diversifies the historical understanding of nation-building in South Korea's authoritarian era, especially from a gender perspective. The theory of mass dictatorship provides a framework to understand the shared vision of the future that Koreans engaged with and how they were motivated to operate towards common goals of economic development and national security. Second, this study participates in the ongoing discussion on Cold War feminisms and excavates the relationship between feminism and the Cold War. The major themes of the Korean National Council of Women's agenda (e.g. legal reform to equalize family life, the inclusion

of women in national security, the fight against communism, the scientific domesticity related to family planning, consumer protection, and home economics, and the introduction of the United Nations policies regarding women in South Korea) are examined in the context of the global Cold War. Third, in the framework of post-corrective historiography, this study examines the ways of writing history. Instead of replacing previous histories, I seek to make the almost forgotten narratives visible, thus advancing discussion on historical memory, especially related to Korean feminism and its historicity.

The dissertation is based on rich empirical material: correspondence between women's organizations, organizational bulletins, and other publications; reports on the actions of organizations and women's status, along with news briefs collected in archives and libraries in South Korea, Belgium, and online. By drawing on previously unused archival sources, this study offers the first account of South Korean women's involvement in the International Council of Women – one of the leading women's movement organizations since the late 19th century. Based on the empirical material, I reconstruct a historical narrative, highlighting the activities and agendas of the Korean National Council of Women through the authoritarian era until South Korea's democratization in the late 1980s.

The historical analysis illustrates the long continuum in Korean women's movements. Women's organizations and groups establish their arguments on women's role in society on top of the previous movements, forming a cyclical nature. The authoritarian era did not silence women's movements; this study shows how the Korean National Council of Women combined the central motives of the ruling regime and the Cold War framework to push forward its arguments on the importance of gender equality. My findings also suggest the Korean women's movement was not isolated from the international sphere but has been an active participant, bringing women together well before the emergence of transnational solidarity movements to support the "comfort women issue" and women's advocacy for peace on the Korean peninsula since the 1990s.

KEYWORDS: South Korea, women's movement, feminism, Cold War, Korean National Council of Women, International Council of Women, transnationalism, authoritarianism

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä väitöskirja käsittelee naisten poliittista ja yhteiskunnallista aktivismia autoritaarisen ajan Etelä-Koreassa. Tutkin erityisesti Korean naisjärjestöjen keskusliiton paikallisia ja ylikansallisia toimintoja. Kyseinen järjestö perustettiin vuonna 1959 ja siitä tuli kansainvälisen naisten kattojärjestö International Council of Womenin jäsen. Yhdistämällä järjestön toiminnan laajempiin historiallisiin tapahtumiin analysoin feminismin, naisten järjestäytymisen ja korealaisen yhteiskunnan muutoksia kolmenkymmenen vuoden ajanjaksolla 1950-luvun lopulta 1990-luvun vaihteeseen. Tutkimus liikkuu paikallisen ja ylikansallisen toiminnan välillä ja tarkastelee eteläkorealaisten naisten aktivismia osana kylmän sodan aikaista naisten kansainvälistä toimintaa.

Tutkimus esittää kysymyksen siitä, kuinka kylmä sota vaikutti feminismiin, feministisiin toimintatapoihin ja järjestäytymismahdollisuuksiin, sekä millaisen kehyksen autoritaarinen ja antikommunistinen hallinto Etelä-Koreassa tarjosi naisten järjestäytymiselle ja naisasialiikkeelle. Tutkimus haastaa aiemman tutkimuksen näkemykset korealaisen naisasialiikkeen kansainvälisestä eristäytymisestä ja sen rajoittamisesta autoritaarisen ajan Etelä-Koreassa. Esitän, että Korean naisjärjestöjen keskusliitto löysi tapoja neuvotella naisten asioiden edistämiseksi ja rakensi kansainvälisiä yhteyksiä, samalla kun se sekä teki yhteistyötä valtion kanssa että haastoi valtiota.

Väitöskirjallani osallistun tieteelliseen keskusteluun, joka käsittelee Etelä-Korean lähihistoriaa, valtion ja yhteiskunnan suhdetta, autoritaaristen hallintojen kansakunnan rakentamisen tapoja sekä kylmän sodan aikaista naisten ylikansallista aktivismia. Tutkimuksessa käytetään ylikansallista näkökulmaa kuvaamaan Etelä-Korean autoritaarista aikaa, perinteisen kansallisen viitekehyksen sijaan. Tutkimus rakentaa analyyttisen viitekehyksen massojen diktatuurin ja kylmän sodan feminismin käsitteiden ympärille ja analysoi myös muistamisen merkitystä historiografialle. Tutkimus edistää kolmea tavoitetta: Ensinnäkin, tutkimus monipuolistaa historiallista ymmärrystä autoritaarisen ajan kansakunnan rakentamisesta Etelä-Koreassa erityisesti sukupuolinäkökulmasta. Ajatus massojen diktatuurista tarjoaa viitekehyksen ymmärtää korealaisten jakamaa visiota tulevaisuudesta, ja miten heitä motivoitiin toimimaan yhteisten tavoitteiden puolesta erityisesti talouskehitykseen ja kansalliseen turvallisuuteen liittyen. Toiseksi, tutkimus osallistuu käynnissä

olevaan keskusteluun kylmän sodan feminismeistä ja tutkii feminismin ja kylmän sodan välistä suhdetta. Tarkastelen globaalin kylmän sodan kontekstissa Korean naisjärjestöjen keskusliiton ajamia keskeisiä teemoja, kuten perhelainsäädännön uudistamista, naisten osallistumista kansalliseen turvallisuuteen ja taisteluun kommunismia vastaan, perhesuunnittelua, sekä Yhdistyneiden kansakuntien naisia koskevien poliittisten toimenpiteiden tuomista Etelä-Koreaan. Kolmanneksi, tutkimus tarkastelee historiankirjoituksen tapoja. Sen sijaan, että pyrkisin korvaamaan aiempia historiantulkintoja, lähestymistapani on tehdä näkyväksi jo lähes unohdettuja historioita ja samalla edistää keskustelua historiallisesta muistista, erityisesti liittyen korealaisen feminismin historiallisuuteen.

Väitöskirja perustuu runsaaseen empiiriseen aineistoon, joka sisältää muun muassa naisjärjestöjen välistä kirjeenvaihtoa, naisjärjestöjen lehtiä ja julkaisuja, raportteja järjestöjen toiminnasta ja naisten asemasta, sekä sanomalehtiaineistoa. Aineisto on kerätty arkistoista ja kirjastoista Etelä-Koreassa ja Belgiassa, lisäksi on hyödynnetty verkossa saatavilla olevia arkistomateriaaleja. Hyödyntämällä aiemmin käyttämättömiä arkistolähteitä tämä tutkimus tarjoaa ensimmäisen kattavan kuvauksen eteläkorealaisten naisten osallistumisesta International Council of Womenin toimintaan. Empiirisen aineiston pohjalta rakennan historiallisen kertomuksen, joka valaisee Korean naisjärjestöjen keskusliiton toimintaa ja tavoitteita läpi autoritaarisen ajan aina 1980-luvun lopulle ja Etelä-Korean demokratisoitumiseen asti.

Historiallinen analyysi osoittaa pitkän jatkumon Korean naisasialiikkeiden historiassa. Naisjärjestöt rakentavat argumenttinsa naisten roolista yhteiskunnassa aiempien liikkeiden päälle, mistä muodostuu aktivismin syklinen luonne. Autoritaarinen aika ei vaientanut naisasialiikettä Etelä-Koreassa, sen sijaan tämä tutkimus osoittaa, kuinka Korean naisjärjestöjen keskusliitto yhdisti hallinnon ja kylmän sodan viitekehyksen keskeisiä motiiveja ajaakseen omia sukupuolten tasa-arvoa koskevia tavoitteitaan. Tutkimukseni osoittaa myös, että korealainen naisasialiike ei ollut eristyksissä kansainvälisestä kentästä, vaan päinvastoin toimi aktiivisesti sen osana ja toi naisia yhteen jo ennen kuin ylikansalliset solidaarisuusliikkeet alkoivat ajaa niin sanottujen lohtunaisien asiaa ja tukea rauhan tavoitteita Korean niemimaalla 1990-luvulta lähtien.

ASIASANAT: Etelä-Korea, naisasialiike, feminismi, kylmä sota, Korean naisjärjestöjen keskusliitto, International Council of Women, ylikansallisuus, autoritaarisuus

Acknowledgements

The opening scene of the Oscar-winning movie Parasite (*Gisaengchung*, 2019) makes me smile when the protagonist, Kim Ki-woo, hunts down a free WiFi connection in his family's basement home. It reminds me of myself in 2012, hanging from the upper bunk bed of our student dormitory in Hoegi-dong, eastern Seoul – as desperate as Ki-woo trying to find WiFi on my phone. When I was lucky, I could connect to *iptime* by holding my phone right beside the window.

The year 2012 and the beginning of my Korean journey seem far away yet very close. Since I first stepped onto Korean territory on a hot, humid day in August 2012, much has happened, and I have had the privilege of witnessing the transformations of Korean society. The lingering Cold War on the Korean peninsula has always formed a backdrop during my time in South Korea, as the relations between the two countries have fluctuated over time. Still, North Korean rocket tests or the exchange of fire in the border area were only occurrences I read in the news, with little effect on daily life in Seoul, located less than 60 kilometers from the North Korean border. I was studying at Kyunghee University, Seoul when Park Geun-hye won the presidential election in December 2012, becoming the first female candidate to do so. Her opponent, Moon Jae-in, was an alumnus of the same school, making the campus a hot spot for campaigning. Having been raised in a country led by a female president for 12 years, I caught myself assuming that Park's election would signal the advancement of gender equality in the country. The day after the elections, my geography teacher called the election winner "the daughter of the dictator," which fascinated me. Two years later, I was granted the right to pursue my doctoral studies with a research plan focusing on women's rights during the era of the same dictator, situated within the larger framework of the Cold War.

In late October 2016, I was on a plane en route to Seoul, glancing through a Korean newspaper, the front page filled with a picture of Park Geun-hye. She was accused of mishandling power. *Just another political scandal in Korea*, I thought. In the coming weeks in South Korea, people poured into the streets to demonstrate against her, preventing me from spending my Saturday nights hanging out in downtown Seoul. Next spring, she was impeached; thus, the first female presidency ended in failure. Analysts said the Park Chung-hee era had finally come to an end.

Strikingly, it was not long before the ghosts of the authoritarian era returned to South Korea with the declaration of martial law, although short-lived, in December of 2024. The events preceding and following the imposition of martial law for the first time in four decades have served as a stark reminder that the legacy of authoritarianism still lingers, and that the processes of nation-building and democratization in South Korea are anything but complete.

After being an observer of things Korean for over a decade, the time has come to eventually close that chapter in my life by finishing my PhD project. Completing this research took longer than I or anyone else could have anticipated. Ultimately, however, the discussion relevant to the research, whether about women's rights or authoritarian regimes, is now more timely than it would have been five years ago. I am glad it is now time to offer my sincere thanks to those who have been part of this journey and have contributed to this work in so many meaningful ways. Needless to say, any errors or shortcomings remain my own.

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participation were made possible by grants from the Turku University Foundation and the Faculty of Social Sciences. For additional funding, I thank the Kauko Haikarainen Foundation. I also thank my employers at the City of Laitila and Livia College for making it possible to take short breaks away from work to focus on writing.

Throughout this project, I have had the wonderful opportunity to attend several international workshops and conferences, which have been among the most rewarding aspects of this journey, offering meaningful conversations, fresh perspectives, and lasting connections.

I am thankful to the Korea Foundation for inviting me to South Korea and providing financial and emotional support as a new PhD candidate in the summer of 2015 as a participant in the Korean History Workshop for Overseas Doctoral Students in Seoul. That meeting provided many connections for the years to come. I am especially grateful to Professor Michael Kim for showing such a great interest in my topic at a very early stage of research. Professor Kim's wise advice and words of warning greatly helped me during the journey.

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The Social Science Research Council's Korean Studies Dissertation Workshop Fellowship in 2017 not only supported my research materially but also affirmed the value of this work. I thank all the mentors, Suzy Kim, Youngju Ryu, and Robert M. Oppenheim, as well as the fellow participants, for their valuable comments and feedback. Besides mentorship and sharing a similar research interest in Korean women's transnational histories, I thank Professor Suzy Kim for inviting me to join her panel on Cold War feminisms at the 2018 Association for Asian Studies Conference and welcoming me as a contributor to a special issue on Cold War feminisms. Developing a conference paper into an article was a truly educational process, and I am thankful for the comments that Professor Kim, as visiting editor, and the two anonymous reviewers made on my paper at its various stages. I also thank the fellow panelists and contributors, John Knight, Wendy Matsumura, and Tina Chen, for the discussions, and especially Tani Barlow for her encouraging and insightful comments on my conference paper. The Duke University Press granted me permission to republish parts of the text previously published in the article "From Seoul to Paris: Transnational Character in the Work of the Korean National Council

of Women in Authoritarian South Korea" (*positions. east asia critique* 28, no. 3, 2020) as part of my dissertation.

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Besides those who trained me in the field of East Asian and Korean Studies, I owe special thanks to those who educated me as a historian. The Department of European and World History at the University of Turku was the place that fulfilled my dreams of studying history in the first place. Thanks to the staff for the excellent training. Special thanks to my MA thesis supervisor, Docent Eero Kuparinen, for all the encouragement and for being the first person who suggested I should consider pursuing a PhD.

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stages of this work. I am also grateful to the staff at the Ewha Archives for seeing me for a consultation and sending some materials related to Ewha; to all those kind, young university students who passed me through the gates of Ewha Library; to a lovely lady who welcomed me to the Women's History Hall in Seoul; and to the helpful staff of the National Library of Korea and the National Assembly Library of Korea. I thank Atria, Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History in Amsterdam, and the Korea Democracy Foundation for providing access to their materials. Special thanks go to the Turku University Library for ordering all the dozens of books I dared to request.

This research would not have been possible without the dedicated Korean language instruction I received. Thanks to all my teachers at Helsinki Summer University, Turku Summer University, the Centre for East Asian Studies, the Institute of International Education at Kyunghee University, and the Language Center of Ewha Womans University. Special thanks to Gary Pence Jr. for taking the time to practice my Korean speaking skills, and Iina Hautala for a great adventure in South Korea back in 2016.

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My doctoral studies started amid the sorrow of losing my grandma. It was in her living room where I first encountered the fascinating stories of historic women, such as Catherine the Great and Marie Antoinette, among others, which inspired me to study history in the first place. Thus, this work is dedicated to her memory and the legacies of all foremothers.

Lieto, July 2025

Katri Kauhanen

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1 Introduction

Ideas related to the protection of women's rights have a long history on the Korean peninsula. A group of upper-class women drafted the first declaration of women's rights in 1898.[1] In the first half of the 20th century, Korean women formed various women's organizations to discuss issues like women's education and work, women's role in family and society, nationalism and national concerns, and violence against women, among others. For over a century, vibrant women's movements have come together and separated along with ideological, religious, and class-based reasons, finding empowerment from the endeavor to participate in making Korean society. Simultaneously, the Korean nation transformed from a Japanese colony (1910–1945) into two Korean states separated by an unresolved war.[2] This dissertation focuses on South Korea and exploring women's organizing for equal rights – from the late 1950s through the turbulent authoritarian era all the way to the churning end of the 1980s and the democratization of the country. As I shall demonstrate, in Cold War South Korea, gender equality was linked with issues such as modernization, national security, and the nation's global standing.

The campaigns for women's rights have not been an absolute success story. Today, South Korea ranks among the lowest in the World Economic Forum's annual Global Gender Gap Report.[3] The report reveals that South Korean women generally live long, healthy lives with a high degree of education but fall behind women in other countries in terms of political and economic participation. Like Japan, these two countries are among the world's largest economies and advanced societies but have failed to provide gender equality to their citizens. This study aims to shed light on the historical circumstances behind the current situation.

[1] The declaration of women's rights was issued by *Chanyang-hoe* that is regarded as the first women's organization in Korea. See Park Kyung Ae, "Women and Revolution in North Korea," *Pacific Affairs* 65, no. 4 (Winter 1992–1993): 529.

[2] Officially known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (ROK, South Korea).

[3] See World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2023* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2023), https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2023/digest/ [accessed August 10, 2024].

During the past two decades, feminism in South Korea has gained new momentum but also faced serious backlash. Like New Women during the colonial era, female writers have been instrumental in making women's lives and hardships visible, also to audiences outside Korea. First in 2009, Shin Kyung-sook's *Please Look After Mom* (*Eommareul Putakhae*, Changbi 2008) broke the record of selling over a million copies with the story of an ordinary woman's life, which only became visible when she disappeared. Cho Nam-joo's *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* (*82nyeonsaeng Kim Ji-young*, Minumsa 2016) was the second novel to break the same record. According to the National Library of Korea, it was the most requested item in South Korean libraries in 2018 and 2019. The book's protagonist, Kim Ji-young, is a most ordinary woman who has faced gender discrimination her entire life. The novel is accompanied by statistical facts showing that Kim Ji-young's experiences are not merely subjective.[4] The story gained momentum right after its publication, coinciding with a hate crime against a young woman who was stabbed to death in a Seoul subway restroom in May 2016.[5] Eventually, the novel made its way as the symbol of the Korean #MeToo movement that sparked in early 2018. The #MeToo movement was an important reminder in South Korea that the battles for gender equality are ongoing; even media attention towards the PyeongChang Winter Olympics and the peace process between South and North Korea could not sideline its importance.

In general, the success of #MeToo in South Korea was considered a moment when a decades–if not centuries-long frustration over gender inequality, unfair power relations, and hidden sexual violence poured out. Several cases of sexual harassment and bad behavior by high-rank cultural, academic, and political figures came out publicly.[6] Besides the #MeToo movement, Korean women have been

4 See Lee Hyo-won, "Crossing the Gender Divide," *Koreana. Korean Culture and Arts* 34, no.1 (Spring 2020), https://koreana.or.kr/user/0017/nd38187.do?View&boardNo=00002882&zineInfoNo=0017&pubYear=2020&pubMonth=SPRING&pubLang=English [accessed May 23, 2020]; Andrea Plate, "Korea: New Wave Literature as Women's Liberation," *Asia Media International*, May 2, 2020, https://asiamedia.lmu.edu/2020/05/02/korea-new-wave-literature-as-womens-liberation/ [accessed May 23, 2020].

5 The stabber justified his action by saying that women had shown hatred toward him his entire life. The incident outraged many and brought up the issue of violence against women. See Park Su-ji, Park Soo-jin, and Lee Jae-uk, "Gangnam murderer says he killed 'because women have always ignored me,'" *Hankyoreh*, May 20, 2016 https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/744756.html [accessed June 19, 2024].

6 Famous cases included poet Ko Un; poet, dramatist, and producer Lee Yoon-taek; film director Kim Ki-duk; and politician and former governor of South Chungcheong Province, Ahn Hee-jung, whose participation in the democratization movement in the 1980s uplifted his career. The #MeToo movement in South Korea sparked again in the

rallying on the streets against the prevailing patriarchy, misogyny, violence against women, and nonconsensual filming with hidden cameras (*molka*) in the 2000s.[7] South Korea's democratization from the late 1980s onwards did not bring any rapid change to women's status. The head-of-household system – *hojuje* – which prevented women from obtaining full citizenship, was only abolished in South Korea in 2005, despite having been on the agenda of the women's movement since the Korean Liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945.[8] Indeed, women have not formed the key base for any significant political party in Korean history. Instead, improvements in gender equality have been achieved with active promotion and lobbying by different women's organizations and groups that have managed to side with either of the two main political camps – the conservatives and the liberals. Today, diversification according to different themes and forms of action and activism characterize the Korean women's movement. While large national women's organizations with local branches seek to influence the decision-makers, radical feminist online groups have especially gathered much media attention.[9]

summer of 2020 when longtime Seoul mayor Park Won-soon was reported missing and later found dead by suicide while accusations of sexual harassment against him became public. Park's involvement in a #MeToo case was even more striking because he had publicly defended the #MeToo movement in South Korea, and, in the 1990s, as a human rights lawyer earlier in his career, he had won the country's first sexual harassment case. See Kang Seung-hyun and Park Chang-kyu, "Park Won-soon sijang, siljongsingo 7sigan mane sumjin chae balgyeon," [Mayor Park Won-soon found dead 7 hours after being reported missing] *Dong-A Ilbo* July 9, 2020, https://www.donga.com/news/Society/article/all/20200710/101903941/1?ref=main [accessed July 9, 2020]. See also Hyun Mee Kim, "'Sexuality and Public Politics': Temporality of the #MeToo Movement in Contemporary South Korea," *Azalea: Journal of Korean Literature & Culture* 14 (2021): 243–260; Ki-young Shin, "Beyond #WithYou: The New Generation of Feminists and the #MeToo Movement in South Korea," *Politics & Gender* 17, no. 3 (September 2021): 507–513.

7 See, e.g. Kang Pu-reum, "Jiphweseo seongchuhaeng·oemopyumpyeong… yeoseongdeuregen pyeonghwasiwi anieotda" [Protest on sexual harassment and pressure over appearance… For women, it was not a peaceful demonstration] *Yeoseong Sinmun*, November 17, 2016, https://www.womennews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=99665; Jang Soo-kyung, Park Hyun-jung and Jung Hwan-bong, "Women gather to protest biased investigations into hidden-camera incidents," *Hankyoreh*, May 21, 2018, https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/845603.html; Han So-bum, "Seongpongnyeok kkeutjangnaeja – Jumal 2manyeo myeong chotbuljiphwicheoreom moyeotda" [Let us end sexual violence – Around 20,000 women gathered into candlelight vigil during the weekend] *Hankook Ilbo*, August 19, 2018, www.hankookilbo.com/News/Read/201808191607711243 [accessed August 27, 2024].

8 Chapter 5 discusses the *Hojuje* system in more detail.

9 See, e.g. Emily Singh, "Megalia: South Korean Feminism Marshals the Power of the Internet," *Korea Exposé* July 30, 2016, https://www.koreaexpose.com/megalia-south-koreanfeminism-marshals-the-power-of-the-internet/ [accessed August 12, 2024]; Kim

Feminism gone online also reflects South Korean society's overall digitalization. In today's digital powerhouse, Koreans have high-speed Internet and smartphone cameras in every pocket. Online platforms have become key arenas for gender conflict and hate speech, which spills into the offline world.[10] Meanwhile, attacks against women have increased. The 2016 stabbing is only one example of serious crimes committed against women; women also find obtaining justice difficult.[11] Strikingly, pronouncing that feminism became one of the election themes in South Korea's 2022 presidential election would be fair. The conservative party candidate Yoon Suk-yeol, who eventually won the election, attacked women and feminists during his campaign by claiming that feminism in South Korea had gained too much power and women had already achieved equality. Yoon even made abolishing the Ministry of Gender Equality one of his campaign themes, outraging many in South Korea and abroad.[12]

As topical as feminism in South Korea today is, understanding its history and meaning is still partial and fragmented. Despite growing scholarly interest in

Ri-na, "Megalliandeurui yeoseongbeomju gihoekgwa yeondae," [The Megalians' Project of the Category of Women and the Solidarities] *Hanguk Yeoseonghak* 33, no. 3 (2017): 109–140; Euisol Jeong and Jieun Lee, "We take the red pill, we confront the DickTrix: Online feminist activism and the augmentation of gendered realities in South Korea," *Feminist Media Studies* 18, no. 4 (2018): 705–717; Kim Bo-Myung, "Hyeomoui jeongdonggyeongje hakgwa peminiseuteu jeohang: Ilgan pesutu, Megallia, geurigo Womadureul jungsimeuro," [Late Modern Misogyny and Feminist Politics: The Case of Ilbe, Megalia, and Womad] *Hanguk Yeoseonghak* [Korean Women's Studies] 34, no. 1 (2018): 1–31; JiHae Koo, "South Korean cyberfeminism and trolling: the limitation of online feminist community Womad as counterpublic," *Feminist Media Studies* 20, no. 6 (2020): 831–846.

10 Koo, "South Korean cyberfeminism," 836–839; Jinsook Kim, "The Resurgence and Popularization of Feminism in South Korea: Key Issues and Challenges for Contemporary Feminist Activism," *Korea Journal* 61, no. 4 (Winter 2021): 81; Kyungja Jung, "'Gender war' and populist politics in South Korea," *Women's Studies International Forum* 104 (May–June 2024): 2–3.

11 Um Ji-won, "500 femicides: The epidemic of violence against women in Korea," *Hankyoreh*, December 20, 2021. https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/1024076.html; Son Ji-Hyoung, "Is South Korea dangerous for women?" *Asia News Network*, September 27, 2023, https://asianews.network/is-south-korea-dangerous-for-women/ [accessed August 27, 2024].

12 See Oh Se-jin and Lee Joo-bin, "'Yeogabu pyeji, uriga makneunda'… bunnohan ideuri georiro ssodajyeotda" ['We will stop the abolishment of the Ministry of Gender Equality'… The angry people took to the streets] *Hankyoreh*, October 15, 2022, https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/women/1062798.html; Sumin Lee and Valerie M. Hudson, "Rising Backlash Against Gender Equality in South Korea Undermines Stability," *The Diplomat*, October 28, 2022, https://thediplomat.com/2022/10/rising-backlash-against-gender-equality-in-south-korea-undermines-stability/ [accessed August 27, 2024].

women's and gender histories in Korean and English language academia, previous scholarship still contains thematic and chronological gaps. Histories of the women's movement commonly deal with the women in colonial Korea who were among the first to highlight social inequalities or fought for the country's independence, or the women who took to the streets as part of the labor and democratization movements.[13] Especially, the temporal gap from the late 1930s to the 1970s in the history of Korean women's movements lacks research. Moreover, according to Hur Song-woo, the paucity of research especially concerns conservative women's groups.[14] Thus, a formative period in Korean history that followed the liberation in 1945 and the division of the peninsula and lasted until the 1980s – the authoritarian era – has not been widely researched as a framework for women's organizing.[15]

The Constitution granted women in South Korea equal rights in 1948. Constitutional gender equality did not directly bring institutional change to women's rights and status, fueling socially conscious women to utilize the Constitution to propagate on behalf of women's rights in the newly established Republic of Korea. In the post-liberation period, Korean women and protecting their rights became a "symbol of democracy" and "repositories of national tradition."[16] Women's status emerged as a clashing point between post-colonialization and democratization – two processes that overlapped and remained unfinished. This dissertation takes that tension as a starting point and argues that it motivated the women's movement in the coming decades. Women were given the promise of legal gender equality but still faced the cold reality of not becoming citizens on their own terms but as mothers and wives subordinate to the men in their families, laying fruitful ground for the women's movement to organize around common themes in the coming years.

13 See Chapter 2 for a detailed literature review of the previous research on the histories of Korean women's movements.

14 Hur Song-woo, "Mapping South Korean Women's Movements During and after Democratization: Shifting Identities," in *East Asian Social Movements. Power, Protest, and Change in Dynamic Region*, ed. Jeffrey Broadbent and Vicky Brockman (New York: Springer, 2011), 181.

15 In this study, the authoritarian era refers to a period from the end of Korean War until late 1980s, covering the presidencies of Syngman Rhee (in power 1948–1960), Park Chung-hee (in power 1961–1979), and Chun Doo-hwan (in power 1979–1987).

16 Eunkyung Kim, "'Equal' Second-Class Citizens. Postcolonial Democracy and Women's Rights in Postliberation South Korea", in *Rights claiming in South Korea*, ed. Celeste Harrington and Patricia Goedde (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 77–78.

1.1 The Women's Movement Re-examined

This study focuses on one particular group of women – the Korean National Council of Women (*Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe*, hence the KNCW) – as representative of the Korean women's movement.[17] The KNCW was established on the campus of Ewha Womans University in December 1959 out of eight women's organizations that shared a vision to start a women's umbrella organization capable of coordinating women's activities and representing Korean women abroad. In 1960, the newly established KNCW, operating under the leadership of cosmopolitan Kim Hwallan (1899–1970), a Korean educator and principal of Ewha Womans University, joined the global women's organization International Council of Women (ICW).

During its first decades, the KNCW launched campaigns for legal reform to equalize family life, abolish prostitution, legalize abortion, introduce gender quotas in national decision-making, include women in national security, and improve the status of women and their overall quality of life. The KNCW was the leading coalition for women's activism under the rule of President Park Chung-hee (1917–1979).[18] While balancing between the state and civil society during the authoritarian era, the KNCW eventually joined the pro-democratic forces in the 1980s. By connecting micro-level organizational operation to macro-level historical events, this study analyzes feminism's transformation, women's organizing, and Korean society during a 30-year-long timeframe. As I excavate the KNCW history, I also attempt to reveal how the different layers of the organization's history and the history of South Korean women and women's movements have been formed and partially forgotten. With the long temporal time span, it is possible to make visible how the processes related to post-colonialization and democratization motivated, hindered, and pulled apart the actors of the women's movement.

The anti-communist, authoritarian state in South Korea was a formation of colonial legacies and the Cold War, framed by the dreaded threat from North Korea. Studying South Korea's authoritarian past and the history of Korean women is as much historical as political intervention. Korean historiography has been a battlefield, written from many ideological standpoints and geographical perspectives, remaining, as historian Adrian Buzo states, "contentious, tendentious and as confused and complex as the Korean response to modernity itself."[19] As the

[17] The organization should not be confused with the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, which was established in 1990 to address the "comfort women" issue and uses the Korean Council as an abbreviation.

[18] Park Chung-hee led South Korea as a military junta leader from 1961 to 1963, was elected president in 1963, and ruled until his assassination in 1979.

[19] Adrian Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea* (London: Routledge 2007), xiv.

next chapter shall discuss in more detail, the authoritarian era has only recently become a subject of historical study in South Korea. Because of its closeness to contemporary times and its lingering legacies – whether in the form of the Park Chung-hee syndrome that emerged in relation to the Asian economic crisis in the late 1990s or the selection of Park's daughter Park Geun-hye as the president of South Korea in 2012, her impeachment in 2016 and final removal from office in 2017 due to corruption and misuse of public power – the authoritarian era is an emotionally and morally charged topic.[20]

In the scholarship regarding the authoritarian era and women, much of the focus has been on women's roles as reproducers and household managers.[21] Previous research on the history of the Korean women's movement often criticizes the KNCW or does not mention it. When receiving scholarly attention, the focus has been on the KNCW's questionable cohabitation with the authoritarian state or its image as an organization for housewives. How the organization was promoting women's equal education and employment or resisting forms of sexual violence and the patriarchal order have been sidelined.[22] Thus, the KNCW has been claimed to be 'government-manufactured', 'government-circled', or 'conservative' – and therefore not an important or interesting actor in the history of women's movements.[23]

20 Namhee Lee, "The Theory of Mass Dictatorship: A Re-examination of the Park Chung Hee Period," *The Review of Korean Studies* 12, no. 3 (September 2009): 41–42; Seungsook Moon, "The Cultural Politics of Remembering Park Chung Hee*," The Asia-Pacific Journal* 7, issue 19, no. 5 (May 2009), https://apjjf.org/-Seungsook-Moon/3140/article.html; Guy Podoler, "'Who was Park Chung-hee?' The Memorial Landscape and National Identity Politics in South Korea," *East Asia. An International Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2016); Namhee Lee, *Memory Construction and the Politics of Time in Neoliberal South Korea* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022), esp. Introduction, 72–73, 77–79.

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

22 See, e.g. Suh Myung-sun, "Yushin Cheje-ha-ui Gukga-wa Yeoseong Danche – Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe-ui Hwaldong-eul Jungsim-euro" [The State and Women's Organizations during Yu-Shin Period – Activities of the Korean National Council of Women], *Yeoseonghak Nonjip* [Journal of Women's Studies] 6 (1989): 79–97; Kyounghee Kim, "Gender Politics in South Korea: the Contemporary Women's Movement and Gender Policies, 1980–1996" PhD diss. (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1998)¸ Nam Jeong-Lim, "Gender Politics in the Korean Transition to Democracy," *Korean Studies* 24 (2000): 94–112; Kyungja Jung, *Practicing Feminism in South Korea. The Women's Movement against Sexual Violence* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014).

23 Kim Young-sun, "1960~70nyeondae yeoseongundongui gukjehwawa Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoeui hwaldong" [Internationalization of Women's Movement and Korean National Council of Women (KNCW) in the 1960s and 1970s] *Hyeonsanggwainsik* [The Korean Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences] 36, no. 4 (2012): 190. In Korean, Kim uses the terms 'gwanje' (government-manufactured or

However, such labels diminish women's roles in the KNCW's activities. The top-down perspective leaves women's participation unrecognized and does not question how women could have been supportive and formative in such gender policy-making. This dissertation suggests that some of these previous assumptions should be reconsidered to rethink how the women's movement adapted to the surrounding society. Thus, I utilize the theory of mass dictatorship developed by Korean historian Jie-Hyun Lim and his colleagues to examine how society under an authoritarian regime is organized and how different kinds of dictatorships work not only from above but below.[24] This study shows how the KNCW had a dynamic relationship with the institutions of power and developed alliances but not uncritically. The KNCW was one agent among many to provide its own answers to modernizing Korean society during a fervent nation-building period. Living under the reality of "militarized modernity," as Seungsook Moon describes the sociopolitical and economic conditions from the 1960s to the 1980s in South Korea, the KNCW shared a broader ideological stance of anti-communism and modernization fever with the authoritarian regime but called for women's participation in the national economy and security.[25]

The major themes influencing or related to women's lives during the authoritarian era – the Family Law, family planning, the role of housewives as gatekeepers of households and the national economy, the discussion on prostitution and concubinage, increasing demands for women's equal salary, and eventually, the introduction of the UN policies regarding women in South Korea – are all keenly related to the work of the KNCW. South Korea's central position in Cold War politics "exposed the country to international efforts to improve the status of women worldwide."[26] South Korea belonged to the broader anti-communist camp led by the United States, even though economically, the country would have been a natural part of the rising Third World. The Park Chung-hee regime benefited from this position and successfully mobilized Koreans behind the nation-building. South Korea's rise

government-controlled), 'gwanbyeon' (government-circled, government-affiliated, quasi-governmental), and 'bosu' (conservative).

24 See the literature review in Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of the scholarship regarding mass dictatorship.

25 Moon, *Militarized Modernity*; Seungsook Moon, "Militarized Modernity and Gendered Mass Mobilization," in *Routledge Handbook of Korean Culture and Society*, ed. Youna Kim (London: Routledge, 2016), 48.

26 Seung-kyung Kim and Kyounghee Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State: Bargaining for Change* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 20.

from poverty was inspired by the global development paradigm into which women could locate their demands regarding gender equality.[27]

Indeed, feminist collaboration with dictatorship during the Cold War is not unique to South Korea. For instance, in Latin America, anti-communist feminists rallying for equal rights were "both tethered to and utilized the power of dictatorships in the name of equal rights."[28] As this study argues, the authoritarian era in South Korea also meant an opportunity for women's political activism. Women activists sought to exchange their cooperation with the state for legal changes in women's status. Furthermore, when the women's organizing is placed in the context of the global Cold War and active organizing around the globe for women's issues, it becomes clear that the KNCW's negotiation with the authoritarian regime on women's rights was a strategy to invite women's greater participation in society. By drawing from the notions made above, this study asks what was on the KNCW's agenda and how it correlated with the standing of Korean society, the resources of the transnational women's movement, and the policies of the Cold War; how the Cold War shaped feminist activities, practices, and women's possibilities for organization; and what kind of framework the authoritarian rule in South Korea provided for women's organizing and how it evolved.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

Broadly, this study engages in scholarly discussions on women's and social organizations' agency in nation-building in authoritarian regimes, gendered Cold War history, and East Asian feminisms in the transnational context. The interdisciplinary study combines historical research with gender studies, Cold War studies, and Korean studies. My dissertation aims to achieve three objectives. First, this study diversifies the historical understanding of South Korea's authoritarian era and nation-building processes, especially from the gender perspective. I use the theory of mass dictatorship as a framework to understand the relationship between women's organizations, like the Korean National Council of Women, and the authoritarian state. A group such as the KNCW offers a great vantage point to examine the negotiation between the state and the women's organizations, how and why women participated in the organization's work, what motivated them, and what they wanted to achieve. Rereading South Korea's authoritarian past does not mean

27 Chapters 4 and 5 discuss in detail how this was visible in the work of the KNCW. See also Lee Jin-kyung, *Service Economies: Militarism, Sex Work, and Migrant Labor in South Korea* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 18–24.

28 Cassia Roth and Ellen Dubois, "Feminism, Frogs and Fascism: The Transnational Activism of Brazil's Bertha Lutz," *Gender & History* 32, no.1 (March 2020): 209.

forgiving or forgetting the violence and oppression it caused many. Yet, as I argue throughout the dissertation, a more nuanced understanding of the work of organizations that operated near the state helps us view what kind of options and opportunities could have opened up and how people under the authoritarian system viewed their country's future. The existing studies agree that research on associational and organizational life can serve for a better understanding of historical processes in certain countries, especially regarding community and nation-building and the meaning of voluntary, philanthropic, and social services for those processes, as well as understanding networking between different elements of society.[29] Many of the hopes for women's equal status expressed in the KNCW's publications and reports never materialized and proved to be utopian under the conditions of the authoritarian regime, yet the hopes kept blossoming.

Second, this study participates in the ongoing discussion on Cold War feminisms that pose epistemological questions on the relationship between feminism and the Cold War. Boldly, Cold War feminism suggests the history of the Cold War has shaped our understanding of feminism, producing uneven histories on women's agency.[30] I contribute to a growing amount of research that has been done in the history field in recent decades, which focus on transnational women's activism, feminisms, and women's movements and acknowledge the Cold War connections based on ideology and gender. As historian Francisca de Haan argues, the knowledge production of the Cold War and the competition between liberal and socialist women and their organizations influence the historiography of women's movements.[31] Drawing from transnational history and Cold War studies, I focus on the relationship between the KNCW and the International Council of Women since the 1950s and seek to explain how people and ideas traveled and how globally shared issues were articulated in a particular place, such as in the authoritarian South Korea. I also believe many issues the KNCW advocated, e.g. the security of the home and the role of a mother, the scientific domesticity related to family planning, consumer protection, home economics, and the fight against communism, are better explained in the context of the global Cold War rather than considering them conservative

29 See, e.g. Jean H. Quataert, *Staging Philanthropy: Patriotic Women and the National Imagination in Dynastic Germany, 1813–1916* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); Carey Anthony Watt, *Serving the Nation: Cultures of Service, Association and Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Nicole van Os, "Feminism, Philanthropy and Patriotism: Female Associational Life in the Ottoman Empire," PhD diss. (University of Leiden, 2013).

30 Suzy Kim, "Cold War Feminisms in East Asia: Introduction," *positions* 28, no. 3 (August 2020): 502.

31 Francisca de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women's Organisations: the case of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)," *Women's History Review* 19, no. 4 (2010): 550–552.

behavior under the authoritarian rule. The KNCW found ways to negotiate to advance women's issues and build international coalitions and connections as they cooperated with and resisted the state. Shedding light on the transnational history of the KNCW makes the presence of South Koreans, especially women, visible in the international arenas as negotiators and active participants. I trace the life paths of several prominent women who found a way to express their dreams for gender equality in the rows of the KNCW.

Third, this study engages in the discussion on historical memory. Broadly, memory is related to all the central themes treated in this study; thus, I approach the memory and its formation from the perspective of South Korea's authoritarian era, women's presence in nation-building, and Cold War women's activism. I delve into the sphere between the binaries that have characterized the memory and history of not only the authoritarian era of South Korea but the Cold War in a broad sense. The Park Chung-hee era was an era of violence, suppressing human rights, emergency measures, and fervent economic development, yet it was an era of desire into which Park invited his fellow Koreans to join in building a modern nation free from poverty.[32] Historian Wang Zheng addresses that the ignorance of women's roles in the nation's formation and the overarching assumption of male dominance in all power structures leads to the erasure of women in the narratives of nation-building.[33] To overcome the erasure, I pay attention to the discursive practices that women shared with the authoritarian regime and utilized them for their own benefit – the discourses of modernization, egalitarianism, and the good life.[34] Throughout the study, I reflect on the idea of postcorrective historiography, derived from the works of Clare Hemmings and Kelly Coogan-Gehr, which captures my idea of history writing.[35] Writing history is not intended to replace the previous histories but provide another way to look at the past – to go beyond the need to correct history or argue there is a correct form of history and instead make "visible, what is importantly, *already there*. To fold what is almost-but-not-quite forgotten back in."[36] I

[32] See Lee, *Memory Construction*, 73–74. For the Park Chung-hee era as politics of desire, see also Hwang Byoung-joo, "'Politics of Desire': Ruling Discourse and Mass Mobilization of the Park Chung Hee Regime," in *Korean Memories and Psycho-Historical Fragmentation*, ed. Kim Mikyoung (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[33] Wang Zheng, *Finding Women in the State: A Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People's Republic of China, 1949–1964* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 7–8.

[34] Hwang, "'Politics of Desire,'" 210–211; Lee, *Memory Construction*, 74.

[35] See Kelly Coogan-Gehr, *The Geopolitics of the Cold War and Narratives of Inclusion: Excavating a Feminist Archive* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter. The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011).

[36] Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter*, 180–181.

particularly examine the collective memory of Korean feminism and present what kind of memory space was possible for the KNCW and how the organization has been forgotten from the histories of Korean women's movements.

The women discussed in this study form a diverse but by no means an all-inclusive group. The protagonists include women who participated in establishing the KNCW and in the organization's activities from the 1960s onwards. Those women had grown up in Japan-ruled colonial Korea. They had received a level of education that was still rare for most Korean women. Many had studied abroad, mainly in Japan or the United States, where they also encountered feminist ideas. They had adopted the culture of networking as a means of social organization and cherished cosmopolitanism.[37] The women had also lived through the Korean War and saw their nation splitting in two. The focus is primarily on the elite of Korean society, middle- and upper-class women whose families and husbands – if there were any – were involved in the military and politics in many cases. Among the women in focus are well-known Korean female figures and persons who have not been visible in the main narratives. Women following the female ideals as housewives are included; unmarried and divorced women who could devote their lives to women's issues are also part of the story.

Until the 2000s, the women's movements in South Korea largely focused on the homogenous category of women who were seen as representatives of the nation and the state, only considering class in the case of working women.[38] That said, working-class and rural women largely fall behind the scope of this study. They get mentioned when they were the target of the KNCW activities. I discuss working women mainly as part of the democratization movement in Chapter 7 and show that the KNCW also addressed their issues and, for instance, helped working-class women make their causes public in courts of law. Rural women played an essential role in the KNCW's work by participating in family planning campaigns and the New Village Movement, as Chapter 5 discusses. Thus, I highlight that the gender equality discussed in this study reflects the opinions of educated, professional women who dominated the South Korean women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s. They shared sufficient English-language skills, certain opportunities to travel, and a level of sophistication to infiltrate the international field of feminist activism. They possessed qualities that most South Korean women could not yet afford.

[37] Christina Klein, having studied Korean cosmopolitan feminism in the 1950s, argues that the decade was formative in introducing liberal values; urban women especially engaged in border-crossing ideas of feminism and could at least imagine new possibilities, even if they had not yet become a reality. See Christina Klein, *Cold War Cosmopolitanism. Period Style in 1950s Korean Cinema* (California: University of California Press, 2020), 34.

[38] Hur, "Mapping South Korean Women's Movements," 182.

1.3 Finding Korean Women in the Cold War

This study focuses on South Korean women's Cold War-era activism, which has only recently started to receive attention among gender historians. The common paradigm is that the modern women's movement and feminism in South Korea only developed along with democratization. Consider Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi's statement in *Dangerous Women* (1998): "The national partition and the terrors of the ideological war surrounding it created a long hiatus in the development of Korean feminism that lasted until the 1980s."[39] The argument that the "ideological war" – the Cold War – would have hindered feminism, however, is not particularly accurate. Feminist historian Leila J. Rupp's seminal book *Worlds of Women* (1997), in which Rupp views Cold War rivalries as beneficial for women's increased activities, has already challenged it.[40] Several recent works in the women's history field argue that the Cold War did not suppress feminist mobilization but stimulated it nationally and transnationally, bringing new countries under the influence of global debates on the future of women's status.[41]

Besides ignoring the KNCW's role in the history of feminism in South Korea, previous research on women's movements and organizations in South Korea has also often overlooked that the KNCW had significant international networks through which it interacted with the transnational feminist movement during the Cold War. The most important link was the International Council of Women – a transnational women's organization established in the United States by American and North European women in 1888. The ICW was created "to stimulate the sentiment of internationalism among women throughout the world."[42] This internationalism had chiefly covered only Europe and North and South America before the Second World

39 Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi, "Introduction," in *Dangerous Women. Gender and Korean Nationalism*, ed. Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi (New York and London: Routledge, 1998), 3.

40 Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 47.

41 See, e.g. Helen Laville, *Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women's Organisations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Mire Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy: Feminism and the Cold War in the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008); de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," Jocelyn Olcott, *International Women's Year: The Greatest Consciousness-Raising Event in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Kristen Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex: Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019). For South Korea in this discussion, see Kim, "Internationalization of Women's Movement," 171–196.

42 Anne Cova, "International Feminisms in Historical Comparative Perspective: France, Italy and Portugal, 1880s–1930s," *Women's History Review* 19, no. 4 (2010): 595.

War, but the organization expanded to the developing countries in Asia and Africa since the beginning of the Cold War while it worked closely with the UN. The ICW asked South Korean women to join the organization in the late 1950s – an initiative I shall detail in Chapter 3. Over the years, South Korean women became frequent visitors and speakers at the events of the ICW; eventually, when the ICW celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1988, South Korean Hong Sook-ja (born 1933) headed the global organization. However, the internal disputes among the KNCW leadership following the beginning of South Korea's democratization process the year before threatened the centennial celebrations, the topic of Chapter 7.

Recently, several scholars of women's history have shown interest towards another Cold War era women's organization – the leftist Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) and rival of the ICW.[43] This new research questions previous assumptions made on women's agency or lack of it in socialist and communist countries and rethinks how women in state-related women's organizations could have been acting "because of their own will, policies, commitments, and initiatives."[44] The research findings are also applicable in the KNCW's case. The scholarship emphasizes that during the period that has been regarded as the nadir between first- and second-wave feminism, transnational connections and networking among women and their organizations was intense and paved the way towards cooperation on future events.[45] Among these important events, which this study also covers from South Korea's perspective, are the UN-sponsored International Year of Women in 1975 and the following Decade for Women (1975–1985). Through the work of the KNCW, this study shows that the KNCW was pivotal in introducing these events and the broader UN agenda to South Korea. Here, I join historian Kim Young-sun, whose research has emphasized the significance of internationalization among the KNCW in paving the way for implementing the UN actions on women in South Korea, especially from the 1970s and the International Year of Women onwards. Kim argues that the KNCW's active participation in international activities despite the meager conditions in the 1960s

43 See the literature review in Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion on the growth of research addressing the WIDF.

44 Kristen Ghodsee, "Untangling the knot: A response to Nanette Funk," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22, no. 2 (2015): 249.

45 See Celia Donert, "Women's Rights in Cold War Europe: Disentangling Feminist Histories," *Past and Present* 218, suppl. 8 (2013): 179; Francisca de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s: From Copenhagen to Moscow and New York," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties. Between Protest and Nation-Building*, ed. Chen Jian et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 230.

and having internationalism as part of its central agenda should be viewed as a valuable memory and resource to reflect global feminism today.[46]

The transnational turn in history and gender studies has brought women outside Europe and North America to the arena of research following the work done in post-colonial studies.[47] Transnational feminist history has rapidly expanded in the last two decades with a focus on the work of women's organizations, important female leaders, networks, and the interplay between local and global spheres of action.[48] Still, the women of Asia have been given little attention; thus, there is plenty of room for research on the involvement of Asian women, especially Korean, in the international women's movement.[49] Research addressing Korean women as part of

46 Kim, "Internationalization of Women's Movement"; Kim Young-sun, "‹The Woman› tonghae bon 1960~70nyeondae hangugyeoseongdamnonui gukjejeok balsin" [The Making of International Discourse on Korean Women's Issues in the 1960~70s - Focusing on Korean National Council of Women (KNCW) and Its English Bulletin, *The Woman*] *Yeoksamunhwayeongu* [Historical and Cultural Studies] 45 (2013): 185.

47 See, e.g. Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London: Zed Books, 1986); Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30 (Autumn 1988): 61–88; *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003).

48 See, e.g. Peggy Antrobus, *The Global Women's Movement: Origins, Issues and Strategies* (London: Zed Books, 2004); Valentine M. Moghadam, *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), *Women and Transnational Activism in Historical Perspective*, ed. Kimberly Jensen and Erika A. Kuhlman (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2010); *Women's Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms*, ed. Amrita Basu (Boulder: Westview Press, 2010); *Women's Activism. Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present*, ed. Francisca de Haan et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2013); *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective. Networks, Biographies, Gender Orders*, ed. Oliver Janz and Daniel Schönpflug (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014); *Women in Transnational History. Connecting the Local and the Global*, ed. Clare Midgley et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2016); *Women's Activism and "Second Wave" Feminism: Transnational Histories*, ed. Barbara Molony and Jennifer Nelson (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017); Lucy Delap, *Feminisms: A Global History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2020).

49 Transnationality among Asian women's movements, in particular, is treated in *Women's Movements in Asia: Feminisms and Transnational Activism,* ed. Mina Roces and Louise Edwards (New York: Routledge, 2010); *Gender in Modern East Asia. An Integrated History*, ed. Barbara Molony et al. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2016); *The Lives of Cold War Afro-Asianism*, ed. Carolien Stolte and Su Lin Lewis (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022). So far, research on Asian members of international women's organizations is rather scattered; however, studies such as those on the YWCA in China and Women's Christian Temperance Union in Japan exist, see Elizabeth A. Littell-Lamb, "Localizing the Global: The YWCA Movement in China,

the global women's movements has mainly focused on the "comfort women" issue and women's advocacy for peace on Korean peninsula since the 1990s.[50] This study demonstrates that these issues and movements have their background in Cold War era, making it a significant period to study. My study engages with the discussion on Korean women's networks during the Cold War and complements Suzy Kim's book *Among Women across the Worlds: North Korea in the Global Cold War* (2023), which discusses the issue from the North Korean side. Kim examines North Korean women's involvement in the socialist women's movement at the global level and reveals how the Korean Democratic Women's Union (KDWU) joined the Women's International Democratic Federation and was involved in many WIDF activities from the late 1940s to 1975. For North Korean women and the WIDF, important issues were family and domesticity, race, nationality, sex, and class; questions of peace and human rights also played a role. As Kim shows, North Korean women's organized participation had already started in the 1940s in the WIDF events such as the 1949 Asia Women's Conference in China and the 1953 World Congress of Women in Copenhagen. KWDU's global actions, however, faded following the purges in North Korea in the late 1960s; by 1975 and the International Women's Year, North Korean women had disappeared from many sources.[51]

1899 to 1939," in *Women and Transnational Activism*, 63–87; Elizabeth Dorn Lublin, "Mary Clement Leavitt, Japan, and the Transnationalization of the World WCTU, 1886–1912," in *Women and Transnational Activism*, 13–36.

50 See, e.g. Chunghee Sarah Soh, "The Korean "Comfort Women": Movement for Redress," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 12 (1996): 1226–1240; Chih Chieh Chou, "An emerging transnational movement in women's human rights: Campaign of nongovernmental organizations on 'Comfort women' issue in East Asia," *Journal of Economic and Social Research* 4, no. 2 (2003): 153–181; Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women. Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008); Thomas Kern and Sanghui Nam, "The Korean Comfort Women Movement and the Formation of a Public Sphere in East Asia," in *Korea Yearbook: Politics, Economy and Society, 2009*, ed. Rüdiger Frank et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 227–255; Suzy Kim, "Crossing Borders: A Feminist History of 'Women Cross DMZ,'" *The Asia-Pacific Journal | Japan Focus* 13, Issue 33, no. 1 (Aug 2015): 1–29; Akwi Seo, "Toward postcolonial feminist subjectivity: Korean women's redress movement for 'Comfort women,'" in *Rethinking Japanese feminisms*, ed. J. Bullock et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), Lin Li, "'Comfort Women' Memorials at the Crossroads of Ultranationalist, Feminist, and Decolonial Critiques: Triangulating Japan, South Korea, and the United States," *Frontiers* 43, no. 3 (2022): 89–116.

51 Suzy Kim, *Among Women across Worlds. North Korea in the Global Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023). For a broader discussion on North Korea's networks and influence-making in Third World countries during the Cold War, see Benjamin R. Young, *Guns, Guerillas, and the Great Leader. North Korea and the Third World* (California: Stanford University Press, 2021).

The ongoing scholarly discussion on women's activism and agency in different parts of the Cold War world where women sought ways to make their voices heard, is important because it challenges the assumption that nation-building cannot be women's own agenda, and questions why historical inquiry so often begins with women as objects rather than subjects. As historians Kim Eun-shil and Kim Hyun-young argue, assuming women as mere objects of nation-building does not reveal how the women's movement at the time experienced changing traditional gender relations or how they tried to do it.[52] Moreover, this study shows how the women's movement in the 1980s, which emerged along South Korea's democratization, was layered atop the previous arguments on women's movements' role in society, which the KNCW articulated to a great extent. Addressing this gap is crucial for understanding the continuum in the history of Korean women's movements. Significantly, this study contributes to the understanding of women's organizations' relationship to the authoritarian regime and the hitherto insufficient knowledge of South Korean presence in the Cold War networks.[53]

1.4 Chapter Overview

The historical analysis in this study is conducted by combining sources from different locations and in different languages. I weave this into a narrative that makes the history of women in Cold War South Korea visible. From Chapter 3 onwards, the study proceeds in loose chronological order to present the KNCW's organizational history while analyzing the organization's goals and achievements in linear and spatial contexts. Each chapter, based on empirical evidence, presents arguments regarding the three objectives of this study I introduced earlier. I demonstrate how a women's organization participated in nation-building during the authoritarian era from its own motivations and utilized the opportunities open for activism. I also show that activism was transnationally informed and related to the Cold War. The rich historical material sheds light on people and networks that have previously been ignored or forgotten. Next, I describe each chapter's purpose for this project.

52 Kim Eun-shil and Kim Hyun-young, "1950nyeondae 1gonghwagung Gukga Geonseolgi Gongjeok Yeongyeogui Hyeongseong-gwa Jendeo Jeongchi" [The Formation of Public Sphere and Gender Politics during the Nation-building Period of the First Republic of South Korea in the 1950s] *Yeoseonghak Nonjip* 29, no. 1 (2012): 115.

53 For a broader discussion on Cold War knowledge projects in which Korean agency has been forgotten (e.g. the case of the Vietnam War), see Robert Oppenheim, "Forgetting Korean Agency in the Transnational Cold War," in *Korean Memories*.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical and methodological framework for this dissertation. I discuss the main scholarly debates that have guided me through this study and to which I aim to contribute, specifically Korean women's and women's movement's history, the history of the authoritarian era, and the global Cold War. I define the theoretical frameworks I utilized in reading and arranging the empirical material: the theory of mass dictatorship, Cold War feminism, and post-corrective historiography. Lastly, I describe the methodology this study used, how selecting and collecting sources occurred, and discuss the choices made during the research process. Empirically, this study is based on correspondence between women's organizations, bulletins of women's organizations, reports on the actions of organizations and women's status, and news briefs. To answer my research questions and truly address the transnational level of the KNCW's work, I expanded my inquiry of sources from South Korea to Europe and the United States. Besides utilizing the KNCW's Korean language bulletin *Yeoseong* and its English language equivalent *The Woman*, I collected archival material in a women's history archive in Brussels, Belgium, which houses the archives of the International Council of Women. Unable to access the KNCW's archives in Seoul, the collections in Brussels opened up all new opportunities for my research. I also collected a variety of documents from international online archives, mainly under Alexander Street's collection, "Women and Social Movements International – 1840 to Present," as well as media sources from various newspapers.

Chapter 3 locates the Korean peninsula on the map of the transnational women's movement in the early Cold War and examines how and why the Korean National Council of Women was established in 1959. By explaining the Cold War's influence on the major international women's organizations – the International Council of Women and the Women's International Democratic Federation – I analyze what Korea came to mean for the transnational women's movement and its political division in the 1950s. Along the way, I trace the connections between Korean women and the International Council of Women. These developments highlight the battle over women's hearts in the Cold War and how it came to matter in the UN.

Chapter 4 begins with the military coup led by General Park Chung-hee in 1961. The turmoil in South Korea and the military regime's closure of all social organizations posed a threat to Korean women's participation in the transnational community of women. After a quiet beginning, however, the Korean National Council of Women managed to organize its activities in the domestic and international arena in the 1960s. This chapter analyzes the mobilization of women and the KNCW for Park Chung-hee's regime and its nation-building project within the framework of the mass dictatorship paradigm. I discuss the realities of what being a pro-governmental organization meant, which included certain privileges but also difficulties.

Chapter 5 discusses the Korean National Council of Women's main activities by introducing several key themes the organization absorbed into its agenda, including the legal reform of women's rights and attempts to revise the Family Law; participation in family planning campaigns; imperatives to increase women's political activity; the fight against male politicians' corruption, immorality, and patriarchal practices; and the implementation of the ideology of scientific domesticity. In the framework of Cold War feminism, I analyze these themes as women's own agenda and show how the KNCW utilized the state discourses on development to advocate for gender equality.

Chapter 6 sheds light on the cooperation between the Korean National Council of Women and the International Council of Women to promote women's issues in South Korea. After joining the ICW, the KNCW was active in sending delegates to different international and regional meetings, including the World Conference of the International Women's Year in 1975. In 1982, the KNCW hosted the ICW Triennial Conference in Seoul. I argue that this transnational activity and growing network paved the way for Korean women's involvement in the work of the UN towards gender equality and women's rights.

Chapter 7 analyzes the role of the Korean National Council of Women in the democratization of South Korea in the late 1980s. By discussing the politics of democratization, I demonstrate how the KNCW was transformed along with South Korean society. I also tell the story of Hong Sook-ja, leader of the KNCW and the International Council of Women in the 1980s, whose career combined diplomacy, activism, and organizational and political work but who has largely remained outside the canon of Korean women's movements and democratization. By analyzing correspondence between the KNCW and the ICW, I pay special attention to Hong's presidency as the leader of both organizations and how her involvement in democratization eventually destroyed her career. Lastly, I examine how the KNCW framed its future after the democratization.

The conclusion reflects the three objectives set for this study and sums up the contributions made to the different fields of research. I discuss the memory of South Korea's authoritarian era and the cyclic nature of feminism to connect this study back to the present day. I also suggest some possible directions for future research.

1.5 Note on Romanization and Translation

For the Romanization of Korean words, I generally adhere to the Revised Romanization of Korean, the Romanization system released by the South Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2000. An exception to this is names or terms that already have familiar or conventional spelling in English, such as Park Chung-hee. Korean names are given in the customary way in East Asia: the surname first and the

given name after without a comma between them unless there is another conventional spelling, such as in the case of Syngman Rhee. In romanizing the names of Koreans, I inserted a hyphen between the two personal names, the second of which is lowercase. For the scholars who publish in English, I adhere to how their names appear in the publication.

All translations of citations from Korean sources are mine unless specified otherwise. Publications in Korean are first given with Romanized titles and their English translation in brackets, with shortened English titles in repeated citations. English titles provided in the publications have been used when available. When finalizing the dissertation manuscript, I utilized ChatGPT to check the romanization of various Korean words used in the text, be it a name of an institution or titles in bibliography. I prompted ChatGPT to operate as a professional translator familiar with the Revised Romanization of Korean and different publication types – nevertheless, I also checked the romanizations myself and sometimes found it necessary to ask for more accurate romanizations.

2 Theoretical and Methodological Framework

> Feminist analysis has always recognized the centrality of rewriting and remembering history. This is a process which is significant not merely as a corrective to the gaps, erasures, and misunderstandings of hegemonic masculinist history, but because the very practice of remembering and rewriting leads to the formation of politicized consciousness and self-identity.[1]

> Questioning what is oftentimes assumed about history is all the more crucial when considering the historic realities of women, who more often than not have been relegated to secondary status in historic examinations. Such a dismissive stance toward women and their place in historical times has consistently been proven incorrect as scholars cast off preconceived notions about what women might have been capable of achieving.[2]

This study engages with the framework of transnational Korean studies, history, gender studies, and Cold War studies. It presents a feminist analysis and narrative informed by carefully contextualizing the historical period it portrays. As the above two vignettes suggest, a crucial part of historical inquiries on women and their lives is observing different ways of writing history and how things are remembered. Feminist theoretician Cynthia Enloe elaborates that the starting point of feminism and feminist research is to take women seriously. According to Enloe, *seriously* means "listening carefully, digging deep, developing a long attention span, being

[1] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Cartographies of Struggle. Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism," in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 34.

[2] Michael J. Pettid and Youngmin Kim, "Introduction," in *Women and Confucianism in Choson Korea: New Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 2.

ready to be surprised."[3] Taking women seriously does not mean praising them; yet, by taking women seriously, we can find actors who have influenced the *events* we know from history books. These women are not yet found in those history books because the authors have not been curious enough about them to take them seriously. South Korea's authoritarian era has been considered a period of militarism, anti-communism, conservatism, and all-encompassing patriarchy. In Enloe's words, patriarchies must also address women, too: "Patriarchal systems have been so enduring, so adaptable, precisely because they make many women overlook their own marginal positions and feel instead secure, protected, valued. Patriarchies […] may privilege masculinity, but they need the complex idea of femininity and enough women's acceptance or complicity to operate."[4] Thus, it is important to look at women in authoritarian South Korea and, following Enloe's advice, to be ready to be surprised and find new explanations over the already existing, comfortable ones.[5]

The histories of feminism and the diversity of women's movements can make us uncomfortable today when the actions of previous activists do not align with the values or expectations of our times.[6] Historian Kenneth Wells notes this methodological issue regarding the knowledge production of Korean women's movements. According to Wells, historical teleology bothers the research on women's movements as there is a tendency to interpret the past to create the present. Because there are attempts to place the Korean women's movement on a certain, pre-handedly decided route of development, analyzing their meaning in that biased context blurs the historical reality.[7] In this study, by analyzing a women's organization such as the Korean National Council of Women and its involvement in making the Korean women's movement I aim to avoid the teleology and advance the knowledge and awareness of the past movements and explain the motives and possibilities for women's organizing under an authoritarian regime.

This chapter constructs the analytical framework to examine women's history in South Korea's authoritarian era during the Cold War and consider the transnational sphere. Thus, I also introduce the central debates and discussions to which my study contributes. This chapter is divided into a literature review, a theoretical framework, and a methodological framework, including the introduction to empirical material. In the first part, the literature review explores previous research on three main topics:

3 Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in A New Age of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 3.

4 Enloe, *Curious Feminist*, 5–6.

5 Enloe, 16–17.

6 For more discussion on the contemporary moral judgements towards the history of feminism, see Delap, *Feminisms*, 23, passim.

7 Kenneth Wells, "The failings of success. The problem of religious meaning in modern Korean historiography," *Korean Histories* 1, no. 1 (2009): 67–68.

the history of Korean women and women's movements, the recently blooming scholarship on the Cold War era women's transnational organizing, and the studies on authoritarian-era South Korea. I shall also explain how my study addresses the gaps in the existing literature. During the past decade or two, a significant body of research has placed the global Cold War as one of the central paradigms formulating women's history and knowledge production related to that history. By contributing to the Cold War scholarship from the Korean perspective, I seek to open doors for more radical intervention into Korean women's history and the legacy of the authoritarian era from a transnational perspective. The second part introduces three sets of theoretical and methodological discussions to build up the framework for my historical analysis: the theory of mass dictatorship, Cold War feminism, and post-corrective historiography. Through these analytical tools, I connect my work to broader scholarly debates beyond the Korean case and examine the possibilities and limitations of history writing, following the suggestion from feminist theoretician Chandra Talpade Mohanty, cited above. The last part discusses the research methodology and introduces the primary sources this study used and how collecting sources occurred.

2.1 Literature Review: Women, Nation, and the Cold War

> Korean history has been interspersed with the experiences of colonialism, economic backwardness, division of nation, and authoritarianism. Such historical circumstances have led women in Korea to participate in the movement of national liberation, modernization, re-unification, and democratization of Korean society. Such socio-political reform and the abolition of women's subordination has been the foremost task of the women's movement in Korea.[8]

The first part of the literature review focuses on the scholarship on Korean women's history and the history of women's movements. As Cho Soon-kyung above suggests, the historical circumstances forming the key points in Korean modern history's timeline – colonialism, national division, the authoritarian era, and democratization – also shape the histories of Korean women and women's movements and have been the most interesting periods for scholarly attention except

8 Cho Soon-kyung, "The Limits and Possibilities of the Women's Movement in Korea" in *Gender Division of Labor (in) Korea*, ed. Cho Hyoung and Chang Pil-wha (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1994), 275.

for the authoritarian period. I return to the problematic nature of the authoritarian era as a target of historical examination later in this chapter. To begin with, however, I will highlight two factors that frame the work of a historian regarding the topic at hand.

First, the histories of Korean women are divided between historical eras; the gap between histories dealing with colonial (1910–1945) and post-colonial or post-liberation (1945 onwards) periods is especially significant. The gaps largely exist because historians tend to focus on only one era. However, understanding the colonial period is crucial when working on the post-liberation period. We must follow the same actors and their life trajectories to understand their motives and actions. Strikingly, given the wide interest towards the New Women, for example, female elite intellectuals and artists who challenged and shook off the previous traditional gender roles via their appearance (hair and dress cut short) and attitude, little research has been conducted on their lives after the colonial period. Overall, little understanding has thus far been shown for continuing women's activism in Korea through life stories. Persons who have been considered part of New Women, such as Kim Hwallan (Helen Kim) and Yim Yong-sin (Louise Yim), also ran the KNCW and women's groups under it in the 1960s. Through the work of the KNCW, I shall intertwine these figures, along with several others, with the political history of Korean women.

Korean historiography contains epistemological breaks (democratization, the end of the Cold War elsewhere, gender mainstreaming in the latter half of the 1990s), changing how women's participation in society is remembered. Times of change for the state but not necessarily a time of change for women are still the dominant way of framing the past. In South Korea, the state-society relationship underwent a transformation in relation to the democratization. In the 1990s, the paradigm change was clear, especially in women's affairs: previously, collaboration with the state was considered bad and suspicious, but after the democratization, it became the way to ensure women were at the center of the action.[9] This tension is intriguing as it reveals how expectations on women's agency and use of power differ on time and space.

The second point I have needed to consider while conducting my research is that the women's studies field in South Korea and elsewhere has matured along the timeline I follow in this study.[10] Thus, what I can perceive as previous research on

[9] For gender mainstreaming, see Nicola Anne Jones, "Mainstreaming gender: South Korean women's civic alliances and institutional strategies, 1987–2002," PhD diss. (University of North Carolina, 2003); Seung-kyung Kim and Kyounghee Kim, "Gender mainstreaming and the institutionalization of the women's movement in South Korea," *Women's Studies International Forum* 34 (2011): 390–400.

[10] For more on the beginning of Women's Studies in Korea, see, e.g. Huh Ra-keum, "The Nature of Women's Studies as Experienced in Feminist Research in Korea," in

the history of Korean women and the women's movement published for the most part from the 1980s onwards also reflects the contemporary conversations and debates on the status of women. It is challenging and fascinating that along with the maturing scholarship on women, the KNCW was one producer of such knowledge through its close links to women's universities, especially Ewha Womans University, and the further academic community. Several prominent KNCW women also worked at Ewha and thus had firsthand experience in developing women's studies there. For instance, lawyer, Family Law advocate, and the KNCW's convener of the Standing Committee of Laws and Suffrage, Lee Tai-young, was a member of the Committee on the Compilation of the History of Korean Women in 1967. The group produced a three-volume *Hanguk Yeoseongsa* [*History of Korean Women*], published in 1972. The work was translated to English in 1976, serving as a basic introduction to the history of Korean women for a long time.[11] On the contrary, when examining knowledge produced in the KNCW, there is a notable tendency to make interpretations based on present-day values, which is visible on Suh Myung-Sun's article on the KNCW: "The State and Women's Organizations during Yu-Shin Period" (1989).[12] Suh, a researcher at the time in the Korean Women's Development Institute, is highly critical towards the authoritarian state and the KNCW's relation to it. Suh blames the KNCW for not considering the women workers' issue (although acknowledging that the KNCW provided resolutions on the workers' issue at their annual conventions), for participating in family planning campaigns that controlled women's sexuality, and for sharing the state's ideology of all-out national security, meaning supporting the state's anti-communist campaigns and military efforts. Suh's work was published at the height of democratization and has been a source of information to many other scholars, to the extent that most of the references on the KNCW can be traced back to her work.[13]

Women's Experiences and Feminist Practices in South Korea, ed. Chang Pil-wha and Kim Eun-shil (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 2005), 15–16; Cho Joo-hyun, "The Politics of Gender Identity: the Women's Movement in Korea in the 1980s and 1990s," in *Women's Experiences*, 230.

11 The original Korean version covers the time span from prehistory to the world wars, covering themes like women's lives, religions, social systems, court women, legal status, costume, and literature. See *Women of Korea. A History from Ancient Times to 1945*, ed. and trans. Kim Yung-chung (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1976).

12 Suh, "State and Women's Organizations."

13 See, e.g. Marian Lief Palley, "Feminism in Confucian Society: The Women's Movement in Korea," in *Women of Japan and Korea. Continuity and Change*, ed. Joyce Gelb and Marian Lief Palley (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 274–294; Kim, "Gender Politics in South Korea"; Nam, "Gender Politics in the Korean Transition," 96; Jung, *Practicing Feminism in South Korea*.

However, from the historiographical perspective, Suh's work regarding the KNCW's role is not based on any sources from the 1960s or 1970s but on literature and research reports from the 1980s. The scholarship contains similar problems elsewhere. At times, the previous literature has suffered from a lack of cohesive analysis based on primary sources that would cover the time span these works aim to discuss. Also, when many feminist scholars have been involved in the contemporary women's movement, the closer the analysis comes to the present day, the more politicized and self-reflected the discussion gets. A good example is the work of Lee Hyo-jae, the president of the Korean Women's Association United (KWAU) at the turn of the 1990s. The KWAU was established in the 1980s as a rival to the KNCW, as Chapter 7 will discuss. Lee's *Hangugui Yeoseong Undong: Eojewa Oneul* [*Korean Women's Movement: Yesterday and Today*], which first came out in 1989 and was revised twice in 1994 and 1996 for new editions, covers the history of the Korean women's movement from the late Joseon Dynasty until the present day and presents well-researched historical documentation on the early phases of the women's movement. However, moving closer to present times, the book starts lacking source-based examination. Regarding the KNCW, both Suh and Lee reached a similar conclusion: The KNCW supported the authoritarian state rather than women's interests. However, they are unsure as to what extent the KNCW's activities were voluntary or due to mobilization.[14]

As Suh's and Lee's works show, after South Korea's democratization, the KNCW's existence has often been filtered and interpreted through the moral judgment of the authoritarian era. The KNCW has been labeled *gwanbyeon yeoseong danche* (government-circled women's organization). Conceptually, *gwanbyeon* falls in opposition to the legitimacy of the anti-dictatorship democracy movement-oriented women's movement, of which the women's organization KWAU is a good example.[15] Having acknowledged these factors presented above, it is critical to remember that the existing scholarship on Korean women and women's movements carries the connotations of South Korea's political history.

14 Lee Hyo-jae, *Hangugui Yeoseong Undong: Eojewa oneul* [Korean Women's Movement: Yesterday and Today] (Seoul: Chongusa, 1996), 254, 271. See also Seungsook Moon, "Women and Civil Society in South Korea," in *Korean Society: Civil Society, Democracy, and the State*, ed. Charles K. Armstrong (London: Routledge, 2002), 137.

15 Kim, "Internationalization of Women's Movement," 163n3.

2.1.1 Towards More Nuanced Readings of Korean Women's Histories

With my research, I join the branch of research on Korean women's history that has, phase after phase, expanded its inquiry of different sources and taken women from various walks of life at the center. Still, in the 1980s, women were placed among the most oppressed population in the framework of prevailing minjung theory.[16] Over time, the minjung narrative of oppressed people has moved towards more nuanced tones. Recently, scholars have started questioning how constantly labeling women as oppressed can advance the field; thus, the overarching assumption on women's oppression has been challenged.[17] Among the first, interest in the histories of Korean labor women started growing from the 1980s onwards. Several factors explain this. Women in factories were among the first to get vocal about their poor working conditions; their experiences were documented in diaries, by novelists, and in the press, so the issue has provided materials to study. A certain amount of the existing research stems from personal experiences regarding women's labor or the democratization movement in general. The focus on the labor women has provided women agency and a victimhood role. However, these works conclude with the notion that the question was not about gender struggle but class struggle and agree that the labor women's movement failed to bring gender-specific issues to the table.[18] Via South Korea's democratization and the professionalization of women's

16 *Minjung* in Korean refers to "the masses" and (oppressed) "common people." For scholarship on minjung, see, e.g. Kenneth M. Wells, *South Korea's Minjung Movement: The Culture and Politics of Dissidence* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1995); Namhee Lee, *The Making of the Minjung. Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007); *Revisiting Minjung: New Perspectives on Cultural History of 1980s South Korea*, ed. Sunyoung Park (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019). For minjung feminism, see Miriam Ching Yoon Louie, "Minjung Feminism. Korean Women's Movement for Gender and Class Liberation," *Women's Studies International Forum* 18, no. 4 (1995): 117–130.

17 For methodological discussion on the advancement of women's history, see Chung Hyunback, "Yeoseongsa Yeongu-ui Hyeonhwang-gwa Gwaje – 'Jari Jabgi'-wa 'Saepan Jjagi' Sai-eseo" [Current Status and Challenges of Women's History Research – Between 'Establishing a Position' and 'Reframing the Paradigm'], *Yeoseong-gwa Yeoksa* [Women and History] 17 (2012): 71–72, 75–77. For another review of recent historical studies on the colonial era, demanding more conflicting opinions and controversial discussion, see Hong Yang-hee, "Hanguk Geundae Yeoseongsa Yeongu-ui Hyeonhwang-gwa Jeonmang, 2007–2013" [Present and Future of Historiography of Modern Women/Gender History, 2007–2013], *Yeoseong-gwa Yeoksa* [Women and History] 19 (2013): 67–103.

18 On the histories of labor women, see, e.g. *Gender Division of Labor (in) Korea*; Seung-kyung Kim, *Class Struggle or Family Struggle? The Lives of Women Factory Workers in South Korea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Hagen Koo, *Korean*

studies as a field in the 1990s, the research on Korean women's history in South Korea and abroad has significantly expanded. Research on female consciousness and the colonial era, especially colonial labor and the New Women (*sinyeoseong*), has gained prominence.[19] As women's history has received more visibility in academia, it has addressed politically significant topics such as the "comfort women" issue and camptown prostitution.[20] Scholars have also uncovered histories of socialist women who were previously deemed a taboo. The previous amnesia on socialist women in Korea relates to the influence of the Cold War on knowledge production in different parts of the world, which I shall address later in this chapter regarding the literature

Workers. The Culture and Politics of Class Formation (New York: Cornell University Press, 2001); *Gender and Labour in Korea and Japan. Sexing Class*, ed. Ruth Barraclough and Elyssa Faison (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009); Hwasook Nam, *Women in the Sky. Gender and Labor in the Making of Modern Korea* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2021). For instance, a powerful account, *They are not machines,* was written by labor activist and scholar Chun Soonok, sister of Chun Tae-il, who died in 1970 in self-immolation to protest against the poor working conditions of women. See Chun Soonok, *They Are Not Machines. Korean Women Workers and Their Fight for Democratic Trade Unionism in the* 1970s (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003).

19 See, e.g. Insook Kwon, "'The New Women's Movement' in 1920s Korea: Rethinking the Relationship Between Imperialism and Women," *Gender & History* 10, no. 3 (November 1998): 381–405; Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2009); Janice Kim, *To Live to Work: Factory Women in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Haeseong Park, "Korean New Women: Korean New Women's Fluctuation in International and Korean Contexts," *History Research* 2, no. 4 (April 2012): 265–276; Haeseong Park, "The Korean New Women: Yim Youngsin in Feminist and Nationalist Contexts," *Journal of the Southwest Conference on Asian Studies* 8 (2015): 53–64; Lim Sungyun, *Rules of the House: Family Law and Domestic Disputes in Colonial Korea* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).

20 On the "comfort women" issue, see, e.g. Hyunah Yang, "Remembering the Korean Military Comfort Women: Nationality, Sexuality, and Silencing," in *Dangerous Women*, 123–139; Soh, *The Comfort Women*; Varga Aniko, "National Bodies: The 'Comfort Women' Discourse and its Controversies in South Korea," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 9, no. 2 (2009): 287–303; Vicki Sung-yeon Kwon, "The Sonyŏsang Phenomenon: Nationalism and Feminism Surrounding the 'Comfort Women' Statue," *Korean Studies* 43, no. 1 (2019): 6–39. On camptown prostitution, see, e.g. Moon, Katherine. *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Lee Na-young, "The Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution in South Korea: Trans/formation and Resistance," PhD diss. (University of Maryland, College Park, 2006); *Over There. Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present*, ed. Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010); Jeong-mi Park, "Liberation or purification? Prostitution, women's movement and nation building in South Korea under US military occupation, 1945–1948," *Sexualities* 22, no. 7–8 (2019): 1053–1070.

that deals with the women's movements during the Cold War. Recent research has recognized the importance of Korean socialist women who combined class consciousness with their feminism and highlighted how economic conditions were linked to women's oppression and opportunities for emancipation.[21]

To move to discuss the history of Korean women's movements, the previous scholarship generally acknowledges two starting points for women's movements. The first is traced to the late 19th century and the beginning of the colonial era in the 1910s when the first schools for girls were opened, several women's groups were established, and the intellectual discourse on developing the modern nation acknowledged the importance of women's status for social reform.[22] In Korea, the term women's movement (*yeoseong undong*) has been in use at least since the 1920s – also the golden decade of the New Women. The scholarship on the colonial origins of the women's movement has contributed to the historical understanding of Korean women's status and the development of gender consciousness, the formation of feminine ideals, and the meaning of Christian missionaries for Korean women. For this study's purposes, I acknowledge Hyaeweol Choi's work in making visible the significant transnational connections that women in colonial Korea had. [23]

[21] See, e.g. Kenneth Wells, "The Price of Legitimacy: Women and the Kŭnuhoe Movement, 1927–1931," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, ed. Shin Gi-wook and Michael Robinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 191–220; Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Ruth Barraclough, "Red Love and Betrayal in the Making of North Korea: Comrade Hŏ Jŏng-suk." *History Workshop Journal* 77 (2014): 86–102; Ruth Barraclough, "Red Love in Korea: Rethinking Communism, Feminism, Sexuality," in *Red Love Across the Pacific: Political and Sexual Revolutions of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Paula Rabinowitz et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Sunyoung Park, *The Proletarian Wave: Literature and Leftist Culture in Colonial Korea 1910–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015); Kim, *Among Women across Worlds*.

[22] For early accounts of the history of the women's movement, see Chung Yo-sup, *Hanguk Yeoseong Undongsa* [History of Korean Women's Movement] (Seoul: Iljo-gak, 1971); Park Young-ock, *Hanguk Geundae Yeoseong Undongsa* [The modern history of Korean women's movements] (Seoul: Chungsin Munwha Yeonguwon, 1984).

[23] Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters*; *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014); Hyaeweol Choi, "Transpacific Aspiration toward Modern Domesticity in Japanese Colonial-Era Korea," *Journal of Women's History* 30, no. 4 (Winter 2018): 60–83. For colonial origins of the Korean women's movement, see also Wells, "Price of Legitimacy," 191–220; Kenneth Wells, "Expanding their realm. Women and public agency in colonial Korea," in *Women's Suffrage in Asia: Gender, Nationalism and Democracy*, ed. Louise Edwards and Mina Roces (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 152–169; Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea*; Wells, "The Failings of Success"; These works and their findings help contextualize the KNCW women who

The second beginning of the women's movement in South Korea is commonly situated in the 1980s, in connection with the democratization movement, which was supported by the middle class, academics, students, and women – both professional and laboring women, as well as housewives. Research on women's movements from the 1980s onwards often utilizes or is influenced by social movement theories. These studies show little interest in women's organizing in the authoritarian era. Instead, these studies turn the gaze towards policy changes that occurred following South Korea's democratization and highlight spontaneous movements over state-sanctioned or institutional groups.[24]

Another major theme that frames much of the discussion on Korean women's history concerns the relationship between feminism and nationalism.[25] The women's movements have often been considered subordinate to the national movement: first to the independence struggle and then to the democratization struggle. Some scholars emphasize the connection between nationalism and feminism as productive. In her *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (1986), Kumari Jayawardena frames the nature of feminist movements as part of nationalist movements as more constitutive than separate. In a similar vein, she argues that feminism was not born only in the West but was indigenous to Asia. Jayawardena says that historical circumstances "produce important material and ideological changes that affected women, even though the impact of imperialism and Western thought was admittedly among the significant elements in these historical circumstances."[26] In contrast, other scholars aim to separate feminism and nationalism. For instance, in the early 1990s,

came of age and educated themselves in colonial Korea (and abroad). These studies have provided important background information on the personal lives of some of the women I treat in my study, such as Kim Hwallan and Park Maria. Beyond the Korean case, for instance, works by Marie Sandell and Garrett Washington cover the important links between women and their organizing, Christianity, and women's education. See Marie Sandell, "Learning in and from the West: international students and international women's organisations in the interwar period," *History of Education*, 44, no. 1 (2015): 5–24; *Christianity and the Modern Woman in East Asia*, ed. Garrett Washington (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

24 See Kim, "Gender Politics in South Korea"; Seung-kyung Kim, "Consolidating Women's Rights in South Korea: The Role of Women's Movements in the Democratization," *Korea Observer* 35, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 463–483; Chang Mi-kyoung, *Hanguk Yeoseongundonggwa Jendeo Jeongchi* [Korean Women's Movement and Gender Politics] (Gwangju: Chonnam National University Press, 2006); Nicola Anna Jones, *Gender and the Political Opportunities of Democratization in South Korea* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Kim and Kim, "Gender mainstreaming,"; Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*; Jung, *Practicing Feminism in South Korea*; Shin Youngtae, *Protest Politics and the Democratization of South Korea Strategies and Roles of Women* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015).

25 See *Dangerous Women.*

26 Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism*, 2.

Kim Un-sil and Yun Taeng-min criticized nationalism as a metanarrative that has silenced women's voices from history.[27] Chung Hyunback argues that nationalism and feminism should not be separated since women's awareness of the nation has helped them create strategies to enlarge the women's space. She suggests that women use nationalism to their advantage and participate in remaking the nation. [28] Here, I join Chung's view; in examining the feminism the KNCW practiced, I consider how the women's organization utilized the nationalist discourses the authoritarian regime cultivated.[29]

Based on the notions above, it is evident that the lack of research on the decades between the colonial era and the new women's movement arising in the 1980s forms a notable gap in the previous literature on the history of the Korean women's movement. Lately, however, the research gap has been narrowing, especially in Korean language scholarship, with works that have focused on the immediate post-liberation period, the US occupation of Korea (1945–1948), the turn of the 1960s, and the April Revolution.[30] To understand the background and circumstances of how

27 See Kim Un-sil, "Minjokjuui Tamnon-gwa Yeoseong: Munhwa, Gwollyeok, Juche-e Gwanhan Pipanjok Ilkki-reul Wihayeo" [Women and the Discourse of Nationalism: Toward a Critical Reading of Culture, Power, and Subjectivity], *Hanguk Yeoseonghak* 10 [Korean Women's Studies] (1994): 18–52; Yun Taeng-nim, "Minjokjuui Tamnon-gwa Yeoseong: Yeoseongjuui Yeoksahak-e Daehan Siron" [Women and the Discourse of Nationalism: A Thought on Feminist Historiography], *Hanguk Yeoseonghak* [Korean Women's Studies] 10 (1994): 86–119.

28 Chung Hyunback, "Jendeo, Minjok, Gukga: Minjokjuui-wa Peminijeum" [Gender, Nation, and the State: Nationalism and Feminism], *Peminijeum Yeongu* 1 (2001): 9–52; Chung Hyunback, *Minjokgwa Peminijeum* [The Nation and Feminism] (Seoul: Dangde, 2003).

29 Chung herself is critical towards the KNCW, stating that the organization did not try to challenge the dictatorship and only advanced a small group of women to enter political arenas. See Hyunback Chung, "South Korean Women's Movement. Between Modernization and Globalization," in *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Gender Studies*, ed. Jieyu Liu and Junko Yamashita (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group, 2019), 62.

30 See, e.g. Park Young-ock, *Hanguk Yeoseong Geundaehwa-ui Yeoksajeok Maengnak* [Historical context of Korean women's modernization] (Seoul: Jisik Sanup, 2001), esp. part 5, 513–528; Lee Hye-sook, "Migunjeonggi Yeoseongundong-gwa Yeoseongjeongchaek" [Women's movements and policies during the U.S. Military Government period] in *Hanguk Hyeondae Yeoseongsa* [The current history of Korean women], ed. Chung Jin-sung and Ahn Jin (Paju: Hanul Academy, 2004), 15–40; Yoo Sookran, "A Study on Restructuring of Gender Inequality during the U.S. Occupation Period in Korea and Japan," *Asian Women* 22, no. 2 (2006): 47–72; Yang Dong-sook, "Haebang-hu-uik Yeoseongdanche-ui Jojikgwa Hwaldong Yeongu (1945~50)" [A study on the activities of the rightist women's organizations after Korea's independence (1945–50), PhD diss. (Hanyang University, 2010); Lee Im-ha, *Haebang Gonggan, Ilsang-eul Bakkun Yeoseongdeul-ui Yeoksa: Jedowa Gyujeong, Eogape Gyunyeo-reul Naen Yeoseongdeul-ui Banran* [Liberation space, the history of women who changed

women's organizations and the women's movement became connected with the Korean state in the post-liberation period is crucial. In the scholarship, however, opinions shift on how much impact Korean women had on formulating the gender policies at the time and, for instance, what the importance of the Women's Bureau – an institution the American military government established to look over the women's issue – was.[31] Yang Don-sook and Chung Hyon-ju conclude that especially the Christian women who had careers during the colonial era were involved in anti-communist campaigns of the First Republic (1948–1960), and, step by step, started cooperating with the state institutions and administrative and semi-state organizations. Thus, women could build an arena for their activities.[32] Unlike Yang and Chung, Kim Eun-shil and Kim Hyun-young challenge the gradual development and argue that in the early phase of the First Republic, women leaders successfully placed themselves in the nation-building, and Syngman Rhee gave them important positions. However, according to Kim and Kim, in the latter part of the 1950s, women leaders ended in conflicts with the regime; the public sphere became more masculinized, and women had less space to operate.[33]

Christina Klein's book *Cold War Cosmopolitanism* (2020) argues that feminist ideas were widely circulating in post-liberation Korean society. Among Klein's central arguments is that, due to the presence of feminist figures such as Kim Hwallan and Lee Tai-young in the public realm of 1950s South Korea, it was possible for such a revolutionary film as director Han Hyeong-mo's *Madame Freedom* (1956) to become a box office hit.[34] In Klein's view, the lives of Kim and

their daily lives: Institutions and regulations, women's uprising against the suppression] (Seoul: ChulsoowaYounghee, 2015).

31 See, e.g. Hwang Jong-mi, "Haebang-hu Chogi Gukga Gigu-ui Hyeongseong-gwa Yeoseong (1946~1960) – Bunyeoguk-eul Jungsim-euro" [The construction of the government and women after the liberation (1946–1960): Focusing on the Women's Bureau], *Hangukhakbo* [Journal of Korean Studies] 109 (2002): 162–192; Yoon Jung-ran, "Haebang-hu Gukga Geonseol Gwajeong-eseo uik Jinyeong Yeoseongdeul-ui Uihoe Jinchul Undong" [Women's movement for the entry to the National Assembly after the liberation] *Yeoksamunhwayeongu* [Historical and Cultural Studies] 24 (2006), 211–248; Lim Mi-jin, "Haebanggi Minjujuui Seonjeon-gwa Yeoseong Haebang – Gajeong Japji Saesallim-eul Jungsim-euro –" [Democracy propaganda and women's liberation in the Liberation period – Focused on home magazine New lifestyle –], *Hangukhakyeongu* [Korean Studies Research] 47 (2017): 355–379.

32 Chung Hyon-ju, *Daehanminguk Je 1 Gonghwaguk-ui Yeoseongjeongchaek* [Women's policies in the First Republic] (Paju: Hangukhaksuljeongbo, 2009); Yang, "Study on the Activities of the Rightist Women's Organizations."

33 Kim and Kim, "Formation of Public Sphere and Gender Politics." Also, Ruth Barraclough claims that women's social roles shrunk in the 1950s. See Barraclough, "Red Love in Korea," 34.

34 Klein's book focuses on analyzing director Han Hyeong-mo's films from the 1950s. Klein, *Cold War Cosmopolitanism*, 88.

Lee articulate how, by achieving “personal and professional autonomy they had fought for as youth,” they could put forward ideals of women’s liberation into the mainstream. In the process, they could find support from Cold War institutions, such as American and anti-communist networks.[35] As Klein argues, Kim Hwallan, a believer in “Women’s World,” nurtured organizations “that put her emancipatory ideas into practice and gave them solid foundation in society.”[36] This attitude is visible in the work of the KNCW, as this study will argue. By continuing to follow the life trajectories of Kim Hwallan and Lee Tai-young after the 1950s, it is easy to conclude that women’s cosmopolitanism and the internationalization of the Korean women’s movement were unstoppable. This study considers how mobilizing women’s organizations contributed to advancing women’s politics in the 1960s and 1970s and how women were subjects instead of mere objects of mobilization. Like Klein, the opportunities and imaginations and what women were willing to do to achieve them, also interest me.

Currently, the Korean women’s history field lacks accounts of women and their organizing during the authoritarian era, especially under Park Chung-hee’s rule. Seungsook Moon, in her *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (2005), which is among the key works on gender in the authoritarian era, analyzes from a feminist perspective the premises and politics of citizenship from the 1960s to 2000s. However, Moon’s book pays little attention to women’s organizations.[37] Reading about the authoritarian era is inevitably filtered by moral judgements, and there are political reasons for the lack of research. Previous scholarship gives the impression that overlooking the authoritarian era is justified with a reluctance to even consider it a meaningful period for women’s policies or the development of women’s organizations. Moon and Charles R. Kim conclude that during the authoritarian era, a patriarchal vision of nation-dominated gender relations. Kim’s book, *Youth for Nation* (2018), discusses the public and intellectuals’ views and expectations, especially of young women during the period following the Korean War until the election of Park Chung-hee as president in 1963, shedding light on this understudied moment in contemporary Korean history.

35 Klein, 41.

36 Klein, 43–44. For Kim’s account of what Woman’s World meant, see Helen Kim [Kim Hwallan], *Grace Sufficient; the Story of Helen Kim* (Nashville: Upper Room, 1964), 171–172.

37 Actually, Moon uses a different translation for the KNCW – the Korean Women’s Association Council (KWAC) – which is a more direct translation from the Korean language. However, the Korean National Council of Women is the organization’s official translation and is used in all their publications. Moon refers to this organization only once when speaking about President Kim Dae-jung’s relationship with the demands from women’s organizations. See Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 162–163.

Analyzing, for instance, a women's magazine, *Yeowon,* Kim gives special attention to how language was used to articulate the Korean modernization. Men were given the role of "the vanguard of the nation," as Kim puts it, while women received only supporting roles.[38]

Nevertheless, not proceeding beyond the interpretation that the authoritarian era was conservative leaves little space to examine women's agency and their experiences in their roles – an initiative this dissertation seeks to focus on. Yet, if we turn the gaze to women's own motivations, we notice that participation in modernization and national security was a women's issue (*yeoseong munje*). In its work, the KNCW argued that those realms were on the women's movement's agenda and considered them part of women's rights. This kind of framework is needed to understand women's activities, the role of women's organizations, and the choices they made under authoritarian rule, which this study will demonstrate.

Finally, an exception to the scholarly inattention towards the KNCW is the research Kim Young-sun conducted, which opens on the transnational character of the KNCW. In two articles on the internationalization and international discourse of the KNCW, Kim stresses the importance of the networks the KNCW had built and remarks that its activities need to be investigated in the framework of the Cold War.[39] Kim's analysis is limited to the publications of the KNCW and engages very little with the scholarship on the transnational women's movement; however, her work is an important precedent for my study. I can complement Kim's arguments by bringing empirical evidence to the discussion and analyzing the interplay between the KNCW, its global head organization, the International Council of Women, and Cold War feminisms.

2.1.2 Gendering Cold War Histories

Having reviewed the key literature related to the histories of the Korean women's movement, to continue delving into the sphere of the Korean women's movement's transnational connections and connect my study with the aforementioned Kim Young-sun's work, it is time to move to discuss the previous scholarship and ongoing discussions on the Cold War and the global women's movement and

38 Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 68–94; Charles R. Kim, *Youth for Nation. Culture and Protest in Cold War South Korea.* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2018), 4.

39 Kim, "Internationalization of Women's Movement"; "Making of International Discourse." For another work that acknowledges the KNCW's role in the women's movement, see Suh S. Chan et al., "The institutionalization of the women's movement and gender legislation," in *South Korean Social Movements. From Democracy to Civil Society*, ed. Gi-wook Shin and Paul Y. Chang (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 153.

elaborate on my contribution to the field. This discussion also serves as a background to the term Cold War feminism, which I shall return to later in this chapter.

For a long time, the Cold War historiography focused solely on the great power rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both sides blamed each other, sparking revisionist writings. Most of the research focused on diplomatic relations and military conflicts. As part of the latter category, the situation on the Korean peninsula has been considered one of the "hot wars" of the Cold War, while the mainstream view of the Cold War was that of the "long peace" as John Lewis Gaddis formulated.[40] In the 1990s, following communism's collapse, several new archival materials from the Eastern bloc became available, diversifying research on the Cold War. Although gender has not yet become a mainstream trend in Cold War studies, the scholarship has recently advanced significantly.[41] Ultimately, recognizing the Cold War as a meaningful period for developing women's movements globally and their negotiation of gender politics also challenges the previously widely held assumption on the waves of feminism. The wave metaphor has been used to describe the differences between women's movements; while the first wave from the late 19th century until the First World War was "bourgeois" led by the educated elite women, the second wave in the 1960s and 1970s was "radical" and informed by the leftist ideas. Also, while the first wave was largely attached to the suffragist movement and legal equality between the sexes, the second wave fought to break the boundaries between public and private, reveal power structures based on gender hierarchy, and raise consciousness among women. It was assumed that second-wave feminism had abandoned the previous large women's organizations and instead operated in smaller, decentralized groups.[42]

What is common for the recent scholarship on the Cold War and women, or "Cold War women," is their attempt to freshly contextualize women's history, cherish the transnational, and recognize the evolving relationship between the state

40 See John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries Into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

41 Women in relation to the Cold War were discussed already in the 1980s and 1990s; see, e.g. Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Cynthia Enloe, *The Morning After - Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945–1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

42 Kristina Schulz, "The Women's Movement," in *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977*, ed. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 281, 286. On how the wave paradigm has also been challenged, see, e.g. *Breaking the Wave. Women, Their Organizations, and Feminism, 1945–1985*, ed. Kathleen A. Laughlin and Jacqueline L. Castledine (New York: Routledge, 2011).

and society. They also share mostly a chronological, narrative form, intertwining different types of sources – mainly archival or other textual material. Many of these studies have inspired my own, and I have found sufficient methodological tools from the history of transnational feminism. For instance, in her account of Italian Christian and socialist women's organizations' involvement in the Cold War, Wendy Pojmann argues that the Cold War shaped the agendas for women's rights in national and international arenas and opened up opportunities for women to participate, as this study will also demonstrate.[43] Similarly, Chiara Bonfiglioli's dissertation on the networks of Italian and Yugoslavian women with the international women's movement provides a useful framework for understanding the interplay between local and global Cold War policies on women.[44] Furthermore, Mire Koikari's work on Japanese women's groups and their relations to American women during the US Occupation in Okinawa has guided me on the cultural aspects of the Cold War and helped me understand how they informed people's actions, such as in a militarized environment. Koikari's work has also informed me about studying the domesticity and other cultural productions of the Cold War.[45] Besides domesticity, maternal feminism has a strong presence in the previous literature on Cold War and women, also in the works concerning Korea. Scholars such as Wendy Pojmann, Celia Donert, and Suzy Kim address how the Korean War sparked expressions of maternal feminism among women's advocates in multiple locations.[46]

Francisca de Haan argues that much of what we know – and, more importantly, do not know – about the international women's movement and the major international women's organizations of the 20th century is related to the Cold War and its historiography. In other words, we cannot understand the development of the

43 Wendy A. Pojmann, *Italian Women and International Cold War Politics, 1944–1968* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

44 Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Revolutionary Networks. Women's Political and Social Activism in Cold War Italy and Yugoslavia (1945–1957)," PhD diss. (University of Utrecht, 2012).

45 Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy;* Mire Koikari, *Cold War Encounters in US-Occupied Okinawa: Women, Militarized Domesticity and Transnationalism in East Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Mire Koikari, "Cultivating Feminine Affinity: Women, Domesticity, and Cold War Transnationality in the US Military Occupation of Okinawa," *Journal of Women's History* 27, no. 4 (2015): 112–136.

46 Wendy Pojmann, "For Mothers, Peace and Family: International (Non)-Cooperation among Italian Catholic and Communist Women's Organisations during the Early Cold War," *Gender & History* 23, no. 2 (2011): esp. 423–424; Celia Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights: Gender, Violence and International Law in the Women's International Democratic Federation Mission to North Korea, 1951," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016): esp. 323–324; Suzy Kim, "The Origins of Cold War Feminism During the Korean War," *Gender & History* 31, no. 2 (July 2019): 460–479.

international women's movement and women's rights after the Second World War without placing it in the context of the Cold War. As de Haan argues, "National and international women's organizations did not exist in a vacuum, and to explore how they were both shaped by, and contributed to, the dominant political frame of that period, that is, the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union during the global Cold War" is essential for understanding women's activism.[47] Helen Laville's book *Cold War Women* (2002) examines the activities of American women's organizations in the early Cold War period and shows how American women started promoting Americanism and anti-communism in their agenda, thus following the policy line of the US government. Although women had symbolic value for the government's politics, Laville argues that women were also active participants in international relations.[48] Along with Laville, several studies explore the various forms of women's international activism and political agency and show how women's organizations helped make everyday Cold War politics on the communist and anti-communist sides.[49]

In addition to studies on American women in the Cold War, several scholars with their background and research interest in the former Soviet bloc have shed new light on the processes of gender-related issues in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The recent Cold War historiography on women's organizations has significantly focused on the Women's International Democratic Federation and its member organizations in Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia.[50] I shall discuss the establishment

[47] de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 550, passim.

[48] Laville, *Cold War women*.

[49] See, e.g. Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminine Mystique: the American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Mary C. Brennan, *Wives, Mothers, and the Red Menace: Conservative Women and the Crusade against Communism* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2008); Shana Penn and Jill Massino, *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Kristen Ghodsee, "Revisiting the United Nations Decade for Women: Brief reflections on feminism, capitalism and Cold War politics in the early years of the international women's movement," *Women's Studies International Forum* 33 (January–February 2010): 3–12; Jacqueline Castledine, *Cold War Progressives. Women's Interracial Organizing for Peace and Freedom* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Margaret Power, "Who but a Woman? The Transnational Diffusion of Anti-Communism among Conservative Women in Brazil, Chile and the United States during the Cold War," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47 (2015): 93–119.

[50] See Melanie Ilic, "Soviet women, cultural exchange and the Women's International Democratic Federation," in *Reassessing Cold War Europe*, ed. Sari Autio-Sarasmo and Katalin Miklóssy, 157–174 (London and New York: Routledge, 2011); Kristen Ghodsee, "Rethinking State Socialist Mass Women's Organizations," *Journal of Women's History* 24, no. 4 (2012): 49–73; Katharine McGregor, "Indonesian Women,

of the WIDF and its relationship with the ICW in detail in the next chapter; here, I focus on elaborating how the scholarship on the WIDF has advanced historiographical debates that are also relevant for my study. Francisca de Haan's leading scholarship on the WIDF's history, members, archival records, and, most importantly, the organization's significance in the Cold War women's activism has guided much of the recent discussion on leftist feminism. She has also contributed to defining the methodology for studies on the transnational women's movement during the Cold War by demonstrating how the ideological division lines of the Cold War have affected the boundaries of knowing, resulting in the so-called Cold War paradigm of "not-knowing." With this, de Haan refers to processes that create assumptions that women behind the Iron Curtain were deeply politicized, whereas women in the West were free from political agenda and thus neutral. Furthermore, an assumption that there was no interaction over the Iron Curtain or other imagined borders between the capitalist and communist world has contributed to the historical absence of important female figures who shaped gender politics not only in their own countries but in the UN and other international arenas.[51]

The interest towards WIDF history has also inspired new research on the Korean War, especially from the viewpoint of women as peace activists.[52] According to Suzy Kim, taking Korean women into the arena together with international currents

the Women's International Democratic Federation and the Struggle for 'Women's Rights', 1946–1965," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 40, no. 117 (2012): 193–208; Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney, "Fighting fascism and forging new political activism: The Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in the Cold War," in *De-Centering Cold War History: Local and Global Change*, ed. Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza (London and New York: Routledge, 2013); Elizabeth Armstrong, "Before Bandung: The Anti-Imperialist Women's Movement in Asia and the Women's International Democratic Federation," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41, no. 2 (2016): 305–331; Mercedes Yusta, "The Strained Courtship Between Antifascism and Feminism: From the Women's World Committee (1934) to the Women's International Democratic Federation (1945)," in *Rethinking Antifascism: History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present*, ed. Hugo García et al. (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016); Yulia Gradskova, "Women's International Democratic Federation, the 'Third World' and the Global Cold War from the late-1950s to the mid-1960s," *Women's History Review* 29, no. 2 (2020): 270–288.

51 de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 548, 551.

52 As Chapter 3 shall discuss, following an invitation from North Korean women, the WIDF sent a mission to Korea during the Korean War to investigate the war atrocities. This mission has, in recent years, raised attention among scholars; see Celia Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights"; Kim Taewoo, "Frustrated Peace: Investigatory Activities by the Commission of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in North Korea during the Korean War," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 20, no.1. (April 2020): 83–112; Kim, *Among Women across Worlds.*

"reveal the dynamic possibilities opened up *by* the Cold War, offering an alternative transnational history of the Korean War that includes women as peacemakers."[53] As the studies on the WIDF expand, the field requires more nuanced accounts of the multiple women's movements in the Cold War and the contacts (or lack of them) between different women's groups and organizations globally, regionally, and nationally. So far, there are few critical studies on the ICW during the Cold War, as much of the research on the organization's history focuses on the times before the Second World War.[54] Although de Haan has emphasized that "the histories and

[53] Emphasis in original. Kim, *Among Women across Worlds*, 30.

[54] Central themes for research have been the ICW leadership, the development of the organization's agenda, the expansion of its membership, and how the organization remained relatively West-centered. See Susan Zimmermann, "The Habsburg Monarchy and the Development of Feminist Inter/National Politics," *Journal of Women's History* 17, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 87–117; Karen Offen, "National or International? How and Why the Napoleonic Code Drove Married Women's Legal Rights onto the Agenda of the International Council of Women and the League of Nations: An Overview," in *Family Law in Early Women's Rights Debates*, ed. Christoph-Eric Mecke and Stephan Meder (Köln and Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2013), 42–59; Anja Schüler, "'Unjust and Unequal' or 'Natural' and 'Just': The International Council of Women and Women's Legal Position, 1888–1920, in *Family Law*, 65–83; Karen Offen, "Understanding International Feminisms as 'Transnational' – an Anachronism? May Wright Sewall and the Creation of the International Council of Women, 1889–1904," in *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective*; Susan Zimmermann, "The Politics of Exclusionary Inclusion. Peace Activism and the Struggle on International and Domestic Political Order in the International Council of Women, 1899–1914," in *Paradoxes of Peace in Nineteenth Century Europe*, ed. Thomas Hippler and Miloš Vec (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Less attention has been paid to the national councils, although, e.g. research on national councils in Australia, France, Italy, Portugal, and Turkey exists. See Cova, "International Feminisms," 595–612; Anne Cova, "Feminisms and Associativism: the national councils of women in France and Portugal, a comparative historical approach, 1888–1939," *Women's History Review*, 22, no. 1 (2013): 19–30; Judith Smart and Marian Quartly, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women of Australia 1896–2006* (Melbourne: Monash University Press, 2015); Umut Azak and Henk de Smaele, "National and Transnational Dynamics of Women's Activism in Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s: The Story of the ICW Branch in Ankara," *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 41–65; Nicole A.N.M. van Os, "'They can breathe freely now': The International Council of Women and Ottoman Muslim Women (1893–1920s)" *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 17–40.

The ICW's in-house history, written by a group of Belgian historians, is based on the materials preserved in the Archive and Research Centre for Women's History (AVG-Garhif) in Brussels that I also utilized for my research. However, the book fails to problematize the Cold War world the ICW was producing. See *Women Changing the World: A History of the International Council of Women 1888–1998*, ed. Eliane Gubin and Leen Van Molle (Brussels: Éditions Racine, 2005). In contrast, a biography on the ICW President Mary Carig Schuller-McGeachy, who led the organization from 1963 to 1973, manages to reveal conflicts within the ICW and how the organization

identities" of the WIDF, ICW, and International Alliance of Women (IAW) "were deeply intertwined and cannot be understood in isolation from each other," the scholarship on the WIDF only rarely mentions the two other organizations.[55] I aim to contribute to the discussion from the ICW's perspective, acknowledging its complex relationship with the WIDF and providing analysis of the KNCW as one national branch of the ICW. Chapter 3 shows that the relations between different organizations and female activists were sometimes defined through other contacts. The American CIA-sponsored women's organization Committee of Correspondence is a good example. Helen Laville's and Christina Klein's research on the topic helped me uncover South Korean women's involvement in the organization.[56]

The ongoing scholarly interest in the WIDF's agenda and activities has also contributed to the history writing of the four UN World Conferences on Women: Mexico City 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, and Beijing 1995.[57] These events, which included government-level meetings on women's issues and NGO meetings for civil society representatives, provide an opportunity to explore transnational organizing, decision-making, and the work of women's organizations. Although UN conferences or declarations are not a substitute for women's movements, they provided public space for feminists to operate, exchange strategies, find common ground with governments, and learn how to make politics.[58] Jocelyn Olcott provides an impressive overall representation of the International Women's Year in 1975 that culminated in the Mexico City conference in her book *International Women's Year: The Greatest Consciousness-Raising Event in History*

competed with the WIDF, not least due to its president's personal views. See Mary Kinnear, *Woman of the World. Mary McGeachy and International Cooperation* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2004).

An early ICW history was published by the organization itself already in 1966; see International Council of Women, *Women in a Changing World. The Dynamic Story of the International Council of Women since 1888* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

55 de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 564.

56 Helen Laville, "The Committee of Correspondence: CIA Funding of Women's Groups, 1952–1967," *Intelligence and National Security* 12, no. 1 (1997): 104–121; Laville, *Cold War Women*, esp. chapter on the Committee of Correspondence; Klein, *Cold War Cosmopolitanism*, 39–40, 44–45, 48–49.

57 For a review of how the conferences influenced Korean women, see Bae Geum-joo, "Reviewing United Nations World Conferences on Women for Korean Women's Empowerment," master's thesis (University of Maryland, College Park, 2004). Due to the study's limited scope, Bae does not recognize that the KNCW would have played a role in the conferences, as this study argues.

58 Charlotte Bunch, "Opening Doors for Feminism: UN World Conferences on Women," *Journal of Women's History* 24, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 213.

(2017) and argues that the whole year was a product of the Cold War.[59] Kristen Ghodsee's *The Second World, the Second Sex: Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War* (2019) is an important enquiry to leftist feminism during the Cold War also beyond the work of the WIDF. Ghodsee's work revisits the International Women's Year in 1975 and the Decade for Women, especially Eastern European and African women's role in creating the sphere of events.[60]

This study seeks to consider the limitations in the Cold War historiography described by de Haan and others and utilize the tensions between different political camps to push the narrative on South Korean women's organizing beyond the conventional. Instead of seizing on problematizing the anti-communism among the KNCW women, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, in a negative light, I seek to understand their anti-communism and how that framework provided global connections to discuss women's liberation. Feminism is not a neutral category and was never intended to be; thus, examining its different historical angles is important.

2.1.3 Authoritarian Era South Korea as History

In addition to the literature on the history of the Korean women's movements and women in the Cold War, I contribute to the understanding of the authoritarian era in South Korea. The Cold War framework has also notably gained weight within Korean studies, especially considering how the Cold War shaped culture and people's lives outside the frontlines. To some extent, the concept of the Cold War in South Korea has replaced terms such as "authoritarian era South Korea" or "Park Chung-hee era South Korea." This highlights South Korea's connection to the wider Cold War context and the interest in placing the South Korean case in the broader transnational context.[61]

59 Olcott, *International Women's Year*.

60 Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*.

61 See, e.g. Katarzyna Cwiertka, *Cuisine, Colonialism and Cold War: Food in Twentieth-Century Korea* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012); Theodore Hughes, *Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea: Freedom's Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Arissa Oh, *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2015); *Dongasia naengjeon-ui munhwa* [Cold War Culture in East Asia], ed. Heo Eun and Ota Osamu (Seoul: Somyung, 2017); Kim, *Youth for Nation*; Monica Kim, *The Interregation Rooms of the Korean War: The Untold History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019); Heonik Kwon, *After the Korean War: An Intimate History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Samuel F. Wells, *Fearing the Worst: How Korea Transformed the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

Scholarship in South Korea's authoritarian era has mainly centered around two major viewpoints related to the Park Chung-hee era: the suppression of democracy and the economic miracle. Consequently, political and economic aspects have dominated the research, while less is known about the social and cultural spheres. Lee Byeong-cheon characterizes the research on Park Chung-hee and his rule as two opposite ends: One proposes "fundamentalist ultra-criticism" and denies all of Park's achievements, while the other idealizes Park and represents "unreflecting triumphalism."[62] Namhee Lee identifies three possible reasons behind this. First, scholars in different disciplines have researched economic development and democratic actions. Second, the Park Chung-hee era is a morally challenging topic. The strong position of the minjung movement and minjung theory in Korean and international scholarship is one reason that discussing the Park era was avoided for so long after its demise. The reluctance to criticize the democratic movement or point out connections between the people and Park's regime was evident. Third, in the traditional academic view of Korean history, the most recent development does not really belong to the discipline of history, not even contemporary history. For a long time, the Park Chung-hee era and Chun Doo-hwan era that followed along with the democracy movement were too recent, and their legacies too close to the present time to become a history written by historians.[63] The last point is especially important. As historian Carter J. Eckert emphasizes, the way to overcome the judgmental position towards Park Chung-hee is to view him historically and "as a product of his times."[64] This study applies Eckert's notion to all historical characters discussed.

Since the early 2000s, however, more historical analysis and contextualization of Park Chung-hee and the authoritarian era in a broader sense has started to appear. Initially, the emphasis was on political history, and thus politics, economics, industrialization, modernization, and the Yushin Constitution took the central role in the scholarship.[65] Lately, however, a sort of cultural turn has occurred to also

[62] Lee Byeong-cheon, "Preface for Korean Edition," in *Developmental Dictatorship and The Park Chung-Hee Era: The Shaping of Modernity in the Republic of Korea*, ed. Lee Byeong-cheon (Paramus: Homa & Sekey Books, 2006), x–xi.

[63] Lee Namhee, "'Coming to Terms with the Past': Re-remembering the Era of Park Chung Hee," *The Review of Korean Studies* 12, no. 3 (September 2009): 6.

[64] Carter J. Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea. The Roots of Militarism, 1866–1945* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2016), 7.

[65] See, e.g. Kim Hyung-a, *Korea's Development under Park Chung Hee: Rapid Industrialization, 1961–1979* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004); *Reassessing the Park Chung Hee Era, 1961–1979. Development, Political Thought, Democracy, and Cultural Influence*, ed. Kim Hyung-a and Clark W. Sorensen (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011); *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformations of South Korea*, ed. Kim Byung-kook and Ezra Vogel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,

introduce themes such as various forms of culture, everyday life, and gender as part of the analysis. Recent additions to the scholarship include *Cultures of Yusin: South Korea in the 1970s* (2018), which examines Yushin era cultural production (e.g. in film, literature, performance, and music), which argues that Yushin ideology was "hierarchical and gendered."[66] Moving to the next decade, *Revisiting Minjung: New Perspectives on the Cultural History of 1980s South Korea* (2019) analyzes the cultural productions of the 1980s by introducing some new theoretical frameworks such as intersectional feminism, and analyzing themes still current to South Korean culture.[67] Among others, Kwon Bodurae emphasizes the meaning of the Park Chung-hee era for South Korean culture. Her work examines how the origins of current Korean culture lie in the 1960s and how Korean modernity was born. Consequently, Kwon argues that when examining Korean modernization, the focus should be on the people and cultural products instead of the state.[68]

Shifting the gaze from the state is important since, in state-society relationships, the role of the state is easily overemphasized.[69] If the focus is only on the state and its power, the outcomes of nation-building in important arenas, such as family and social relations, do not become visible.[70] Feminist scholarship has taken crucial steps

2011); Jung In Kang, *Contemporary Korean Political Thought and Park Chung-hee* (Lanham et.al: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017).

66 Youngju Ryu, "Introduction," in *Cultures of Yusin: South Korea in the 1970s*, ed. Youngju Ryu (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 14. For a more detailed account of literature on the Park Chung-hee era and its use as a form of protest, see Youngju Ryu, *Writers of the Winter Republic: Literature and Resistance in Park Chung-hee's Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015).

67 *Revisiting Minjung*.

68 Kwon Bodurae and Chun Jung-hwan, *1960-nyeon-eul Mutda: Bak Jeonghui Sidae-ui Munhwa Jeongchi-wa Jiseong* [Asking about the 1960s: Cultural Politics and Intellectuals of the Park Chung-hee Era] (Seoul: Cheonnyeon-ui sangsang, 2012); Kwon Bodurae, *1970 Bak Jeonghui Modeonijeum: Yusinhaeseo Seondei Seoulkkaji* [1970 Park Chung-hee Modernism: From Yushin to Sunday Seoul] (Seoul: Cheonnyeon-ui sangsang, 2015).

69 Andre Schmid argues that the state appears as a powerful apparatus, especially on its own documents; thus, its power is exaggerated and propaganda reproduced. See Andre Schmid, "Historicizing North Korea: State Socialism, Population Mobility, and Cold War Historiography," *The American Historical Review* 123, no. 2 (2018): 439–440.

70 The interest towards the authoritarian era as a historical period has also contributed to a wider understanding of Korea's 20th century. While I have addressed the gap in the history of women's movements and the lack of scholarship that would try to bridge the colonial and authoritarian eras, in other fields of history, attempts have been made to connect the colonial period, the immediate post-1945 developments, and the authoritarian era. For example, Clark W. Sorensen has discussed the roots of rural development, and Park Kyoung-hee has discussed the history of food programs and the relationship between the state and nutrition. See Clark W. Sorensen, "Rural Modernization under the Park Regime in the 1960s," in *Reassessing the Park Chung*

towards a better understanding of daily life in the Park Chung-hee era. However, the scholarship has been rather unanimous that during the Park era, women were given a secondary role, and the definition of gender was family-oriented.[71] As Chung-kang Kim points out, this scholarship has not only enforced the gender binary and its heteronormative assumptions; it has also relied on the state as the central actor and producer of all-vanquishing power.[72] While my research also operates on the gender binary, I still seek to question the role of the state and place the women as actors instead. Following Kim Young-sun, I emphasize the subjectivity of the KNCW and its relative autonomy from the state.[73]

Somewhat simultaneously with the abovementioned scholarly interest towards Park Chung-hee, the mass dictatorship (*daejung dokjae*) paradigm emerged as an attempt to understand the general support and nostalgia towards the Park Chung-hee era. When the Asian economic crisis hit South Korea hard in the late 1990s, Koreans started expressing longing for the times of past President Park after the failure of democratic presidents to bring more prosperity to the country. For some, this was a disturbing notion: How could people miss their oppressor? South Korean historian of transnational and European history Jie-Hyun Lim was one of those perplexed by the nostalgia towards Park Chung-hee; he started rethinking his own and South Koreans' relationship with the authoritarian era. Lim poses important questions regarding the history, politics, and collective memory towards the national past. How was it possible that at the time of economic hardship, South Koreans turned back in history and expressed longing for the times of dictatorship under Park's presidency? How do parallel feelings exist in other post-authoritarian or totalitarian countries?

Hee Era, 145–165; Kyoung-hee Park, "State and Food in South Korea: Moulding the National Diet in Wartime and Beyond" PhD diss. (University of Leiden, 2013). Among works that trace Park Chung-hee's central role in South Korea's development is Carter J. Eckert's *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea* (2016), in which Eckert analyzes the meaning of colonial roots for South Korea's militarism and Park Chung-hee's personality. Carter argues that Park's actions and thoughts during his rule in the 1960s and 1970s need to be understood by mirroring them against the previous decades and experiences. These works highlight that the authoritarian era was not a breakage but a continuum of much of the previous development.

71 See Chung-kang Kim, "Nation, Subculture, and Queer Representation: The Film Male Kisaeng and the Politics of Gender and Sexuality in 1960s South Korea," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24, no. 3 (September 2015): 456–457. A good example of a work balancing between the scholarly interest in everyday life and the state's role in it would be *Gukga-wa Ilsang. Bak Jeonghui Sidae* [The State and Everyday Life in the Park Chung-hee Era], ed. Gong Je-uk (Seoul: Hanul Academy, 2013).

72 Kim, "Nation, Subculture, and Queer," 457.

73 Kim, "Internationalization of Women's Movement," 17.

What mechanisms made such regimes successful?[74] Nostalgia towards the Park Chung-hee era seemed unexpected in democratized South Korea; however, the phenomenon has not been unique to South Korea but occurs in other post-dictatorship societies.

The public reconstruction of the memory of Park Chung-hee as a nationalist hero instead of a dictator – "the Park Chung-hee syndrome" – started an important discussion inside and outside academia on Park's legacy. The existence of Park Chung-hee syndrome suggests that an unexplored reality of the Park Chung-hee era exists behind the previous scholarly understanding of Park's illegitimate and oppressive regime.[75] Thus, the theory of mass dictatorship has been developed to explain the complexity and multifaceted nature of the dictatorship of Park and other dictatorships of the 20th century, suggesting that modern dictatorships share certain similarities.[76] I shall delve deeper in how I utilize the theory of mass dictatorship for this study later in this chapter.

74 Personal communication with Professor Lim and Lim's presentation "Mapping mass dictatorship in the global history" at the University of Tampere on October 13, 2015. See also Jie-Hyun Lim, "Series Introduction: Mapping Mass Dictatorship: Towards a Transnational History of Twentieth-Century Dictatorship," in *Gender Politics and Mass Dictatorship*, 1–2.

75 Chin Jung-kwon, "The Dead Dictator's Society: An Analysis of the 'Park Chung-hee Syndrome," in *Developmental Dictatorship*, 294–311; Lee Sang-rok, "Bak Jeonghui cheje-ui 'sahoejeonghwa' damrongwa cheongnyeonmunhwa" [The 'Social Purification' Discourse and Youth Culture under the Park Chung-hee Regime] in *Geundae-ui Gyeonggye-eseo Dokje-reul Ikda* [Dictatorship at the Margin of Modernity], ed. Jang Mun-sook and Lee Sang-rok (Seoul: Geurinbi, 2006), 337; Lee, "Theory of Mass Dictatorship," 41–42.

76 The scholarship has been tested and developed in a series of conferences, special issues, and edited volumes. See a special issue in *Yeoksawa munhwa* [History and Culture] 9 (2004); Jie-Hyun Lim, "Historiographical Perspectives on 'Mass Dictatorship,'" *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 6, no. 3 (December 2005): 325–331; *Daejung Dokje 1: Gangje-wa Dongui Sai-eseo* [Mass Dictatorship 1: Between Coercion and Consent], ed. Jie-Hyun Lim and Kim Yeong-u (Seoul: Chaeksesang, 2004); *Daejung Dokje 2: Jeongchi Jonggyo-wa Hegemoni* [Mass Dictatorship 2: Political Religion and Hegemony], ed. Jie-Hyun Lim and Kim Yeong-u (Seoul: Chaeksesang, 2005); *Daejung Dokje 3: Ilsang-ui Yokmanggwa Miming* [Mass Dictatorship 3: Desire and Illusion of Everyday] ed. Jie-Hyun Lim and Kim Yeong-u (Seoul: Chaeksesang, 2007); *Dictatorship at the Margin of Modernity*; *Daejung Dokje-wa Yeoseong* [Mass dictatorship and women], ed. Jie-Hyun Lim and Yeom Woon-ok (Seoul: Humanist, 2010). In English, Palgrave has published a multi-volume series on the topic focusing on modern dictatorships such as National Socialist Germany and Austria, Soviet Union, Fascist Italy, Maoist China, Colonial Japan and Korea, and Cold War South and North Korea, see *Gender Politics and Mass Dictatorship: Global Perspectives*, ed. Jie-Hyun Lim and Karen Petrone (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); *Imagining Mass Dictatorships*, ed. Michael Schoenhals and Karin Sarsenov (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); *Mass Dictatorship and Modernity*, ed.

The mass dictatorship paradigm has brought a new stimulus for examining state-society relationships in South Korea. Previously, the dominant narrative was that the Korean state and society were in conflict: The strong state oppressed the weak society. Among others, sociologist Jang-jip Choi and historian Hagen Koo view state versus society discourse as a central motif in Korean political history. Their relationship's combative nature has erupted on several occasions into an open conflict like what happened in the 1960 student demonstrations, the 1980 Gwangju uprising, and the 1987 democratization movement.[77] However, recent openings in the contemporary history field have questioned the assumption of the state's coercive power and its possibilities to grow without at least some degree of public consent. Scholars such as Sungik Yang and Peter Banseok Kwon suggest that Koreans' identification with Park Chung-hee's vision for security, economic development, and anti-communist nationalism helped create the consent.[78] Furthermore, Shinyoung Kwon emphasizes that Koreans have been historically accustomed to moral authoritarianism as a system to organize the relationship between the local level and central governments.[79] My study reviews these discourses of the authoritarian regime, which women's organizations such as the KNCW shared and utilized.

Another central theme in recent scholarship regarding the authoritarian era in South Korea I contribute to is postwar nation-building. The research on nation-building and the modernization of South Korea has especially benefited from the bottom-up perspective. What Isabelle Cheng calls "everyday authoritarianism," which takes the scope of examination beyond the political system and focuses more on the lived reality under authoritarian regimes, interests me most. This means seeking answers to questions such as how the authoritarian system permeated into

Michael Kim et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); *Mass Dictatorship and Memory as Ever Present Past*, ed. by Jie-Hyun Lim, Barbara Walker and Peter Lambert (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); *Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship*, ed. Alf Lüdtke (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); *The Palgrave Handbook of Mass Dictatorship*, ed. Paul Corner and Jie-Hyun Lim (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

77 Jang-jip Choi, "Political Cleavages in South Korea" in *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*, ed. by Hagen Koo, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Hagen Koo, "Strong State and Contentious Society," in *State and Society in Contemporary Korea*.

78 Sungik Yang, "Korea's Fascist Moment: Liberation, War, and the Ideology of South Korean Authoritarianism, 1945–1979," PhD diss. (Harvard University, 2023); Peter Banseok Kwon. *Cornerstone of the Nation. The Defense Industry and the Building of Modern Korea under Park Chung Hee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2024).

79 Shinyoung Kwon, *Moral Authoritarianism: Neighborhood Associations in the Three Koreas, 1931–1972* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2024).

people's daily lives and how people responded to it.[80] Among others, Gregg Brazinsky, Hwasook Nam, and John P. Dimoia have shaped my understanding of the concept of everyday authoritarianism in relation to South Korea and its nation-building process by accounting, for instance, the interplay between transnational influence and Korean agency.[81] Nam states that approaching postwar South Korean history from the bottom up illustrates that alternative routes for nation-building existed.[82] The KNCW case gives perspective to view how female leaders painted their imagination of the future of Korean nation and modernity.

In recent scholarship, the authoritarian era, especially the 1970s – once the "dark age of democracy" – has been considered the breeding ground for democracy. Numerous works from scholars such as Namhee Lee, Hagen Koo, Paul Y. Chang, Charles R. Kim, and Ingu Hwang have analyzed how the 1960 student movement and the social movements of the 1970s continued to play a role and showcased continuity in the 1980s democracy struggles.[83] In addition to the viewpoint of democracy from below, arguments on behalf of democracy from above have been presented. For example, Erik Mobrand argues that social movements did not manage to remove the authoritarian structures; consequently, South Korea adopted a post-authoritarian political system.[84] Joan E. Cho's book *Seeds of Mobilization* (2024) analyzes the reasons behind the durability of authoritarian rule and proposes that the same elements lifted and sank Korean dictatorships. According to Cho, the economic growth helped the authoritarian rule to stabilize itself, but during the process, the

80 Isabelle Cheng, "No Distant Memory: Rethinking the State, Its Citizens, and Authoritarianism in Everyday Life," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 2 (2018): 6–7.

81 See Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Hwasook Nam, *Building Ships, Building a Nation: Korea's Democratic Unionism Under Park Chung Hee* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); John P. Dimoia, *Reconstructing Bodies: Biomedicine, Health, and Nation-Building in South Korea since 1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013). A recent addition to the scholarship addressing the issue of nation-building, which also combines feminist perspectives to the analysis of the authoritarian era, is Park Jeong-mi, *The State's Sexuality. Prostitution and Postcolonial Nation Building in South Korea* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2024).

82 Nam, *Building Ships,* 8.

83 See Koo, *Korean Workers*; Lee, *Making of Minjung*; Paul Y. Chang, *Protest Dialectics. State Repression and South Korea's Democracy Movement, 1970–1979* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015); Joan E. Cho and Paul Y. Chang, "Socioeconomic Foundations of South Korea's Democracy Movement" in *Routledge Handbook of Korean Culture and Society: A Global Approach*, ed. Youna Kim (London: Routledge, 2016), 63–75; Kim, *Youth for Nation*; Ingu Hwang, *Human Rights and Transnational Democracy in South Korea* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022).

84 Erik Mobrand, *Top-Down Democracy in South Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019).

industrial and educational policies the regime implemented helped social forces to organize, eventually leading to the democratization movement.[85]

Cho argues that the "national organization of social forces" is the core element behind the eventual democratization caused by economic development in the long run. With social forces, Cho refers to economic class structures such as middle class and labor and non-class structures such as students, religious organs, human rights activists, and their organizations. However, at the initial stage, economic growth can maintain the regime support and thus dominates over social forces before the peak; in this case, the democracy movement in 1987 is reached.[86] Cho connects the Koreans' capacity to mobilize to the structures of regime support and pro-democratic initiatives. While Cho focuses on industrial complexes and education institutions as sites for nationwide mobilization, I look at the development of the women's movement and observe the different angles from which women joined the democratization. Referring to Cho's findings, my study observes how the KNCW as an organization developed from regime support towards pro-democratic desires and what role the organization's leadership played.

My dissertation addresses the above-reviewed central debates on the nature of women's movements, women's activism during the Cold War, and the lived reality of South Korea's authoritarian era. The transnational approach binds the Korean case, the networks of female activists, and the shared experiences of authoritarianism and women's desires to express agency under such systems. In the following, I propose mass dictatorship theory and Cold War feminism as a means to analyze women's participation and reflect on the meaning of memory for history writing.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Having discussed the scholarly field this study contributes to, I now move to build up an analytical framework for this study. I will employ three main theoretical approaches to answer my research questions and examine the agenda of the Korean National Council Women and how its activities related to the authoritarian environment, the transnational women's movement, and the policies of the Cold War. First, I utilize the mass dictatorship theory to analyze the authoritarian era and women's organizations' possibilities to participate in nation-building. Second, I adopt the concept of Cold War feminism to reflect and describe Korean women's participation in the transnational women's movement during the Cold War. Third, I lean on postcorrective historiography as a tool to write history and explore how

85 Joan E. Cho, *Seeds of Mobilization. The Authoritarian Roots of South Korea's Democracy* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2024), 2.

86 Cho, *Seeds of Mobilization*, 11.

things get remembered. Through these analytical tools, I connect my work to the broader scholarly debates beyond the Korean case.

The theoretical framework will also help explore the complex interplay between the state and women in post-colonial Korea. In the Cold War, women's new role as individual citizens loosened the relations of patriarchal authority with respect to their husbands while making them agents of the state. Opposite views exist on whether feminists were co-opted to serve the state or if a more mutualistic relationship between them existed.[87] The scholarship of the WIDF, reviewed above, was useful in this project since it helped address the question of the subjectivity and autonomy of women's mass organizations. Such organizations in socialist countries have been closely connected to the state and the respective communist parties, and the recent scholarship has succeeded in problematizing the reductive top-down analysis, giving women little to no role in architecting the gender policies. Scholars of state socialism and state feminism have been arguing that the women very well acknowledged the state's role in bringing change to women's lives and, for that reason, actively worked with the state to influence it.[88]

Here, I shall discuss women's and women's organizations' agency from the perspective of another political camp and explore what kind of motives anti-communism brought for women's participation and mobilization. Gender studies scholar Selin Çağatay proposes that "[a] careful analysis of the feminism-state relationship that pays attention to historically specific contexts and the multiplicity of public spheres as well as of the actors of gender politics shall neither condemn feminists' collaboration with, nor celebrate their independence from, the state."[89] Following Çağatay, this study aims to look the history of the KNCW from multiple perspectives and examine the various ways feminists can engage with the state.

[87] See, e.g. Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Alexandra M. Stern, "Responsible mothers and normal children: Eugenics, nationalism, and welfare in post-revolutionary Mexico," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 12, no. 4 (1999): 369–397; Amy Borovoya and Kristen Ghodsee, "Decentering agency in feminist theory: Recuperating the family as a social project," *Women's Studies International Forum* 35, no. 3 (May–June 2012): 157.

[88] See especially Kristen Ghodsee and Julia Mead, "What has socialism ever done for women?" *Catalyst* 2, no. 2 (2018): 131–133.

[89] Selin Çağatay. "In, against (and beyond?) the state. Women's rights, global gender equality regime, and feminist counterpublics in 21st-century Turkey," in *Dreaming Global Change, Doing Local Feminisms*, ed. Lena Martinsson and Diana Mulinari (London: Routledge, 2018), 62–63.

2.2.1 Theory of Mass Dictatorship and the Grey Zone between Coercion and Consent

The Park Chung-hee era has been described as a 'developmental dictatorship' (*gaebal dokjae*) combining the two aspects of his rule – economic development and dictatorial politics – and as a 'military dictatorship' highlighting the position of the military in society and militarization of people's lives. Seungsook Moon's term "militarized modernity" carries the same implications as the latter and highlights the historical context of national division and the prolonged clash between the Koreas in which South Korea's quest for modernity occurred. According to Moon, the pursuit of modernity as part of the process of nation-building necessitated the mass mobilization of men and women whose national identity was based on anti-communism and national security.[90] Lee Jin-kyung has sought to demystify the so-called economic miracle and treats South Korea as a "subempire" in the context of US military engagement in Southeast Asia.[91]

By drawing from these definitions, this study approaches South Korea's authoritarian era as a mass dictatorship (*daejung dokjae*). According to Jie-Hyun Lim, the term mass dictatorship describes "the mobilization of the masses by the dictatorship and their often voluntary participation in and support for dictatorial regimes, be they fascist, authoritarian or communist."[92] Lim sees the opposites that normally frame the analysis of dictatorial regimes as part of the same process and calls for historians to deconstruct what consent and coercion, adaptation and resistance, mobilization and self-mobilization mean and what falls in between

90 See Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 7–8; *Developmental Dictatorship*; Moon, "Militarized Modernity and Gendered Mass Mobilization," 48. For a broader discussion on the usage of mass organizations in mobilizing citizens, see Gregory Kasza, *The Conscription Society: Administered Mass Organizations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Kasza, however, notes that, according to his understanding, administered mass organizations were not used in South Korea. See Kasza, 69n69.

91 Lee, *Service Economies*, 18–24.

92 Jie-Hyun Lim, "Conference Report: Coercion and Consent: A Comparative Study of 'Mass Dictatorship,'" *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 2 (2004): 249. See also Lim, "Historiographical Perspectives," 325. Besides concept of mass dictatorship, Jie-Hyun Lim also conceptualizes the notion of "victimhood nationalism" to analyze how modern nation-states use narratives of historical victimization to shape national identity and obscure their own complicity in violence. Societies often downplay or erase their roles as perpetrators by emphasizing their status as victims. This lack of critical self-reflection not only distorts historical understanding but also leads to selective memories of the past, as is the case with authoritarian era South Korea. See Jie-Hyun Lim, *Victimhood Nationalism: History and Memory in a Global Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2025).

them.[93] Furthermore, mass dictatorship belongs to the 'problem space' of modernity. Operating a mass dictatorship requires the modern platform of mass society, the public sphere, and the transformative individual. In this sense, to understand how dictatorship works from below also requires examining the modernization, as I do in this study.[94] I follow historian Carter J. Eckert's definition that modernization (*geundaehwa*) belongs to the contemporary vocabulary as Park Chung-hee and other contemporaries used it to describe the development goals of the state. Thus, modernization in this study is employed as a historical context and not taken to imply a "normative or linear process."[95]

Mass dictatorship operates here as a subcategory of authoritarianism seeking to explain how society was organized during the authoritarian era. While much of the previous research on dictatorship has focused on the characteristics of the dictators and their regimes, the theory of mass dictatorship shifts the focus to society, and the agency of the masses and on "the structure of consent."[96] Recognizing there are differences on the level of consent among society and individuals and in the temporal dimension is important.[97] Jo Hui-yeon emphasizes this point because generalizing consent is as problematic as the simple division between resistance and collaboration. Jo argues that the 1960s and the 1970s were different phases of mass dictatorship; in the 1960s, Park was supported, but by the Yusin Constitution, general support started to vanish.[98] Shedding light on these processes, I examine how the relationship between the Korean National Council of Women and the authoritarian regimes developed through three decades. As Yonson Ahn reminds, the Korean narrative of the decolonization process still severely lacks an understanding of the continuities between the colonial and post-colonial eras. Keeping collaborators and resistors in their own stalls prevents us from seeing that historical and institutional changes are not necessarily drastic but marked by fluidity.[99]

93 Lim, "Series Introduction: Mapping Mass Dictatorship," 16–17; Lim, "Historical Perspectives," 329.

94 See Lim, "Conference Report," 249; Michael Kim and Michael Schoenhals, "Introduction: Mass Dictatorship and the Radical Project for Modernity," in *Mass Dictatorship and Modernity*, 1; Jie-Hyun Lim, "Mass Dictatorship: A Transnational Formation of Modernity," in *Mass Dictatorship and Modernity*, 13–14, passim.

95 Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea*, 325n1.

96 Lee, "The Theory of Mass Dictatorship," 43.

97 Lim, "Conference Report," 250.

98 Jo Hui-yeon, "Bak Jeonghui Sidae-ui Gangap-gwa Dongui: Jibae, Jeontong, Gangap-gwa Dongui-ui Gwangye-reul Dasi Saenggak Handa" [Coercion and Consent in Park Chung-hee Era: Rethinking the Relationship between Domination, Tradition and Coercion] in *Mass Dictatorship 2*, 403–404.

99 Yonson Ahn, "The Colonial Past in Post-colonial South Korea: Colonialism, Modernity and Gender" in *Contesting Views on a Common Past: Revisions of History in East Asia*, ed. Steffi Richter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 164.

To reconstruct the state-society relationship under mass dictatorship, asking the following questions is helpful: How widespread was the support among the masses, particularly among whom? How was the consent among the masses created? How did the state affect people's private sphere? How was popular sovereignty reached so that the masses participated willingly? What kind of forms of participation, conformation, coping strategies, and everyday resistance existed?[100] Asking such questions will eventually lead the researcher to study the previously unsearched "grey zone" (*hoesaek jidae*), as historian Yun Hae-dong calls it. Yun's notion of a "grey zone," which refers to an everyday realm in which the colonized people concurrently operated with resistance and collaboration or consent, also applies to the Park Chung-hee era.[101] Studying consent, however, does not imply that repression or terror is denied, but studying mass dictatorship is more interested to know why the majority ignores or accepts the violence. Thus, one characteristic feature of mass dictatorship is how it proved its popularity by "the channels of plebiscitary acclamation" to convince people of the legitimacy of its actions.[102]

While some previous research suggests that Park's mass politics de-politicized people, it has also been suggested that the mobilization process helped people find their agency and citizenship.[103] Including the gender perspective on mass

[100] See Ahn, "Colonial Past," 168; Lee, "Theory of Mass Dictatorship," 44–46.

[101] Yun Hae-dong, *Singminji-ui Hoesaek Jidae: Hanguk-ui Gundaeseong-gwa Sigminjuui Pipan* [The Grey Zone of a Colony: Korean Modernity and a Critique on Colonialism] (Seoul: Yeoksa bipyongsa, 2003), 23–26. For application of 'grey zone' to Park Chung-hee regime, see Cho Hee-yeon, "[Nonjaeng] Bak Jeonghui cheje-ui bokhapseonggwa mosunseong—Im Jihyeon deung-ui banron-e daehan jaebanron" [(A Controversy) A Study on the Complex and Contradictory Characters of The Park Chung-Hee Regime: Rejoinder to Lim Jie-hyun's Critique], *Yeoksa bipyeong* [Critical Review of History] 2 (2005): 403–404.

[102] Lim, "Historiographical Perspectives," 327. Memory studies scholar Michael Rothberg introduces the term "implicated subject" to describe individuals who enable or benefit from systems of oppression, often indirectly or passively—thereby moving beyond the binary of perpetrators and victims. He argues that "most people deny, look away from, or simply accept the benefits of evil in both its extreme and everyday forms," making such systems possible. In the case of authoritarian South Korea, numerous implicated subjects – ranging from social organizations to ordinary citizens who benefited from the state's modernization efforts – played a role in sustaining the regime. Recognizing these forms of implication invites a more nuanced understanding of historical responsibility, one that neither excuses participation nor confines accountability to the most visible actors. See Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 20.

[103] On de-politicization, see, e.g. Hwang Byeong-joo, "Yushin Cheje-ui Daejung Insik-gwa Tongwon Damnon" [The Mass Perception and Mobilization Discourse of Yushin Regime in the 1970s], *Sanghoehakbo* [Joural of Social Sciences] 32 (2011): 142–186; Jo Hui-yeon, *Tongwondeon gundaehwa: Bak Jeonghui gaebaltongwonchejeui jeongchi sahoejeok ichungseong* [Mobilized Modernization: Sociopolitical Duplicity of Park

dictatorship as an analytical category provides a window to a sphere of action normally overlooked in research on authoritarianism and its common male-centered narrative. In this study, how Korean women operated a women's organization under the authoritarian regime while joining the transnational feminist front provides such a window to the past.[104] When creating the faithful and conscious masses, mass dictatorships relied on people's sovereignty, meaning the possibility for women to mobilize in an equal setting to the men. Thus, even environments considered patriarchal, like Korean Confucian culture, could appeal to people with imaginary equality. Women were called to participate in the public sphere of mass dictatorship, but only their own responses made the system complete.[105] The mass dictatorship theory helps us look at the actions of women's organizations under the Park regime as a compromise.

There are examples where women's collaboration has also provided opportunities for empowerment. As Yonson Ahn points out, women in pro-Japanese women's organizations during colonial Korea have faced moral questioning by contemporaries and later generations for reaching for support from the colonial power to enforce various projects beneficial for women, such as female education, to empower themselves and other women.[106] However, the framework of mass dictatorship approaches such actions not merely as collaboration but understandable in the everyday realm of negotiating with the dictatorship. Also, Jeong Hui-jin considers gender ideology a central factor in voluntary consent created during the Park regime. She uses the example of the New Village Movement, in which women actually participated more than the state had expected them to do because the participation gave women more room in their gender space and chances to negotiate with the patriarchy.[107]

Chung-hee's Mobilization System for Development] (Seoul: Humanitas, 2010). On empowerment, see, e.g. Keum Bowoon, "Mobilized Spontaneity: The Park Chunghee Regime's Conversion of College Student Volunteer Activities for Rural Communities as Observed through the Taehan News," *International Journal of Korean History* 20, no. 2 (August 2015): 47–84.

104 Initially, the theory of mass dictatorship was criticized for omitting the gender perspective. For instance, Jeong Hui-jin considered the lack of gender analysis the biggest shortcoming of the new paradigm. She believes male intellectuals studying mass dictatorship had accepted each other's views too easily because they did not need to cross the gender gap. See Jeong Hui-jin "Hanguk sahoe-ui jisik saengsan bangpbeop-gwa daejung dokjeron" [The methods of knowledge production and mass dictatorship in Korean society] in *Dictatorship at the Margin of Modernity*, 404–409. Responding to the criticism, Jie-Hyun Lim and Yeom Woon-ok published an edited book in 2010, *Daejung Dokje-wa Yeosong* [Mass dictatorship and women].

105 Lim, "Series Introduction: Mapping Mass Dictatorship," 14.

106 Ahn, "Colonial Past," 164, 171.

107 Jeong, "The methods of knowledge production," 417–419.

Drawing from the above-presented notions on mass dictatorship, I claim it was largely women's organizations' own initiatives that motivated their actions. Thus, to understand women's mobilization, we must also understand their interests and opportunities to mobilize. It is important not to have a homogenizing approach to participation or resistance but to admit that historical actors have an individual agenda.[108] My study analyzes the historically specific processes and developments along with present opportunities and constraints that shape the conditions for women's organizations to form and mobilize. While the need to mobilize might be local, an international dialogue on feminist actions often occurs. With this notion in the background, this study will pay attention to local conditions in Korea and international influence and interaction in analyzing the activities of the KNCW.

2.2.2 Cold War Feminism

Before discussing the terminology of Cold War feminism and how I use it in this study, I begin by discussing the meaning of the concept of "feminism" for this study. Roughly defined, feminism includes two aspects: the idea of equality between the genders and organized activity towards that goal.[109] According to gender historian Karen Offen, the banner of feminism covers ideologies that can be very far from each other, making describing it in any homogenous set impossible.[110] In principle, borders, assumptions, and convictions are targets of criticism in feminist thinking and theorizing. Thus, accepting the concept's elasticity is valuable since feminism does not remain as a "fixed set of ideas" over time and place.[111] According to historian Asunción Lavrin, the difficulty of categorizing feminism should be seen as

[108] See Ahn, "Colonial Past," 168.

[109] The word feminism originates from French and was used in English by the end of the 19th century. In Korean, the word *peminijeum,* indicating its origin in the English language, 'feminism,' has been used at least since the 1930s when it was mentioned first in the newspaper *Dong-A Ilbo*. However, sino-Korean word *namnyeo donggwonjuui,* which also translates into feminism, consisting of Chinese characters of 'men and woman' and 'equal rights,' was used in the 1920s at the latest. That shows that feminist ideals were adopted in Korea quite early, probably not least because of female missionaries who entered the country in the late 19th century. Kim Yung-hee has located the origins of Korean feminism in the late 19th century when Western and Korean ideals for the country's development collided and coincided. See Kim Yung-Hee, "Under the Mandate of Nationalism: Development of Feminist Enterprises in Modern Korea, 1860–1910," *Journal of Women's History* 7, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 120–121.

[110] Karen Offen, *European Feminisms 1700–1950: A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2000), 20–23.

[111] Asunción Lavrin, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, 1890–1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 354.

richness and proof of its ability to adapt to changing political situations. Based on Lavrin's ideas, I employ the following as the description for feminism: Feminism is practiced whenever women's role in society is reevaluated and discussed in biological, cultural, or legal terms, even though this does not always occur under the banner of "feminism."[112] Feminist historian Judith M. Bennett elegantly phrases it: "All these feminisms were and are not the same, but all share the core conviction that women, like men, should be able to realize fully their humanity."[113] As the analysis will show, this humane approach was one of the cornerstones in the KNCW's agenda. In my reading, the KNCW sought to reevaluate women's status in theory and practice despite not seeking to completely challenge the social order.

For this study's purposes, including an organizational approach to the practice of feminism is accurate. According to Leila Rupp, feminism must also be regarded organizationally and tactically. In Rupp's definition, organized actions are essential for the women's movement.[114] Karen Offen draws the line so that only discussing the "women's question" without organized actions does not constitute a movement.[115] Barbara Molony, Janet Theiss, and Hyaeweol Choi's exploration of gender histories in East Asia define feminism as the "desire for improved status of women evolved into a movement."[116] Also in this study, feminism and women's movements go hand in hand. Furthermore, I call the protagonists of this study feminists while acknowledging that the women did not always do so. As historian Laura Bier remarks, several post-colonial feminisms rested on historical and epistemological preconditions that were not feminist. However, treating them as part of feminist histories helps us expand the definition from a social movement to strengthen the view that local feminisms are not inauthentic or merely Western

112 Lavrin, *Women, Feminism, and Social Change*, 353–354; Jocelyn Olcott, "A Happier Marriage? Feminist History Takes the Transnational Turn," in *Making Women's Histories: Beyond National Perspectives*, ed. Pamela S. Nadell and Kate Haulman (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 238–239.

113 Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 12. See also discussion on the plural format of feminisms in Francisca de Haan, "Writing Inter/Transnational History: The Case of Women's Movements and Feminisms," in *Internationale Geschichte in Theorie und Praxis / International History in Theory and Practice*, ed. Barbara Haider-Wilson et al. (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2017), 504–505.

114 Rupp, *Worlds of* Women, 4–5; Leila J. Rupp, "Feminisms and Internationalism: A View from the Centre" *Gender & History* 10, no. 3 (November 1998): 536; Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, "Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement: A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 2 (1999), 366–367.

115 Offen, *European Feminisms*, 109.

116 *Gender in Modern East Asia*, 136.

imports.[117] Uncovering feminist praxes cannot depend on women's usage of feminism as a label, but requires a broader definition of feminism to include an array of bodily, cultural, or legal practices that reevaluate women's roles in society.[118] Most often, the KNCW represented itself and the Korean women it claimed to represent as "we women," referring to women as an all-encompassing social category with shared interests. Instead of feminism, the KNCW commonly refers to the idea of an "equality of the sexes" (*namnyeo pyeongdeungjuui*).

Building upon the scholarship of feminisms in the Cold War, I propose Cold War feminism as an analytical tool to examine the strategies of multiple feminisms on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In Lisa Yoneyama's definition, "Cold war feminism can be understood as a variant of liberal and radical feminism in that it values equality between the two sexes, autonomy, individual choice, and spontaneity. Insisting on a pure notion of gender by disavowing race, class, and other social relations, it prescribes equal opportunity for men and women as well as the dissolution of gender inequities and barriers within the given liberal public sphere."[119] Using Japan as an example, Yoneyama links American-model gender justice to Cold War feminism. Yoneyama argues that Cold War feminism, carrying an American understanding of democracy and freedom, focused on equality between the sexes without considering the social and economic structures of power (race, class, colonial pasts) that limited women's status.[120] Yoneyama's discussion joins that of Mire Koikari who makes US occupied Japan a case of "Cold War imperial feminism" practiced by the Americans and informed by their racism, imperialism, and sexism instead of being a showpiece of women's liberation.[121] These works focusing on the framework of postwar Japan are critical in their tone regarding the feminist influence of the Americans in the nation-building project.

This study goes beyond Yoneyama's definition of Cold War feminism. Cold War feminism, in my reading, is not just about how the Americans imposed their understanding of gender roles and the status of women to their allies. Discussion on feminism in the Cold War must go further than the United States and include both sides of the Cold War division and areas that negotiated their position in relation to

117 Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 8–9.

118 In recent scholarship on socialist women and how to name their activism for equality and women's rights, a similar issue was raised. See Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 15.

119 Lisa Yoneyama, "Liberation under Siege: U.S. Military Occupation and Japanese Women's Enfranchisement," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (September 2005): 899.

120 Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 86, 95, 97.

121 Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*, 5, 11, passim.

that division. Historian Suzy Kim analyzes Cold War feminism as "bifurcated theorizing of women's oppression solidified during the Cold War on both sides of the divide."[122] Instead of providing a single definition for the Cold War feminism, I employ it to ask how the Cold War influenced the possibilities of women to organize and advocate their own issues. The competition between the superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union reached all the way to the status of women. International women's organizations participated in the competition by targeting their campaigns and recruitment to certain areas and influencing gender-related decision-making in the Economic and Social Council of the newly established United Nations, where they held a consultative status.[123] That makes women's organizations a good topic to observe Cold War feminisms. As I show later, the International Council of Women defined itself and its affiliated councils as apolitical and thus neutral counterparts in the Cold War ideological rivalries; however, their histories reveal how they actively shaped Cold War feminisms. Suzy Kim emphasizes how women deployed, especially peace and maternal feminism, in which women utilized their role as mothers to mobilize for a common purpose.[124] This study proposes that other motives were also relevant to Cold War feminisms.

My usage of Cold War feminism has also been informed by Christina Klein's discussion on "Cold War cosmopolitan feminism."[125] Klein uses the term to address the 1950s South Korean film culture, similar to Yoneyama and Koikari; she also considers the American influence. By employing the idea of cosmopolitanism, she seeks to go beyond the "fetishization of America," include influence from other parts of the world, and focus on individuals' revolt against the national sphere of life.[126] Klein's definition of Cold War cosmopolitan feminism "sought to emancipate women from the patriarchal constraints of Korea's Confucian heritage by claiming for them the liberal ideal of individual freedom."[127] Cosmopolitanism in South Korea

[122] Kim, "Origins of Cold War Feminism," 462.

[123] Helen Laville, "Gender and Women's Rights in the Cold War," in *Oxford Handbook of the Cold War*, edited by Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 20.

[124] Kim, "Origins of Cold War Feminism." For a broader discussion on Cold War feminism in East Asia, I joined Kim and other feminist scholars in a special issue of the journal *positions* to reflect on the various meanings of feminism and the Cold War. See Katri Kauhanen, "From Seoul to Paris: Transnational Character in the Work of the Korean National Council of Women in Authoritarian South Korea," *positions. asia critique* 28, no.3 (August 2020): 575–602.

[125] Klein borrows the idea of Cold War cosmopolitanism from Antoinette Burton. See Antoinette Burton, "Cold War Cosmopolitanism: The Education of Santha Rama Rau in the Age of Bandung, 1945–1954," *Radical History Review* 95 (Spring 2006): 149–172.

[126] Klein, *Cold War Cosmopolitanism*, 5.

[127] Klein, 34.

during the Cold War division meant dependency on transnational circuits and integration to the other non-communist parts of the world. As treated by Klein, cosmopolitanism ranged from a modernity attitude to material practice and cultural style; however, most importantly for my work, cosmopolitanism was a political discourse tying South Korea as a full participant in the international community.[128]

The idea of Cold War feminisms is linked with the discussion on how the Cold War came into being. The new socio-cultural history has helped broaden the image of the Cold War as a period beyond the so-called hot and cold conflicts. Individuals have gained more attention in the process at the local level. Also, questions on how people's or organizations' actions were related but not totally dependent on the Cold War are emphasized.[129] Japanese historian Masuda Hajimu argues that attempts to create domestic stability and tranquility, such as McCarthyism in the US, anti-labor movements in Great Britain, the Red Purge in Japan, or militaristic nationalism in both Koreas, were driving forces in creating a mindset of a Cold War rather than products of it. Under the threat of a nuclear war, world leaders and ordinary people contributed to making a parallel global and domestic order in which they imagined the Cold War. In other words, the Cold War did not exist at a certain time and place but in people's minds because people believed in it and made it "an imagined reality."[130]

Masuda's approach is intriguing because it leads us to consider how the Cold War was produced, and why people joined the fantasy. For example, in the primary sources used in this study, the threat of war and communism is constantly present. Thus, the process of producing the Cold War can be followed beyond the chain of events we normally recognize in writing diplomatic history or the history of international relations in the Cold War era. This matches Masuda's interpretation: that people created the reality of the Cold War in their everyday lives. It is particularly important to recognize that the origins of many actions preceded the Cold War and that experiences of colonialism and the cruelty of the war shaped people in the post-Second World War world. Those roots were also local and diverse compared to the idea of the Cold War as a global conflict.[131] Masuda's account connects and conflicts with Korean historian Heonik Kwon's view on the Cold War. According to Kwon, the Cold War was not imagined for those who experienced it in

128 Klein, 5–6.

129 See, e.g. *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945–1960*, ed. Hans Krabbendam and Giles Scott-Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), *The Cold War in East Asia, 1945–1991*, ed. Hasegawa Tsuyoshi (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011*); De-centering Cold War history.*

130 See Masuda Hajimu, *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 2.

131 Masuda, *Cold War Crucible*, 2–5.

their flesh and bones, as is the case in Korea and Vietnam, where the Cold War has lasted much longer than until the Soviet Union's collapse. In Kwon's words, the "cold war was a globally staged but locally diverse regime of ideas and practices."[132] Nevertheless, Masuda and Kwon share the idea of locality – Kwon taking it all the way to the village level. These notions lead us to consider the unending Cold War on the Korean peninsula and how it frames our understanding of Cold War history and pre- and post-Cold War histories.

Here, considering the geopolitical divisions between "First," "Second," and "Third World" that the Cold War world order created and maintained is important. I refer to these categories in this study to highlight the historical reality in which the people in focus lived. Crucial for this study is to understand the division of the world and Korean peninsula between the capitalist West and the communist or socialist East and how countries like South Korea and Japan were not part of that geopolitical East to which they geographically and culturally belonged.[133] During the Cold War, the Third World emerged as a political category to represent countries, especially in what is currently called the Global South in Africa, Asia, and South America. At the time of the liberation in 1945 and still after the Korean War, South Korea was economically part of the Third World, sharing a colonial background with many other countries. Still, although these categories were fluid, South Korea cemented its place in the First World with the support of its alliance with the US. North Korea similarly moved between the categories of the Second and Third World.[134] In the framework of Cold War feminisms, recognizing that geopolitical relations and

[132] Heonik Kwon, *The Other Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 32.

[133] To avoid the division into the West and East, I have sought to describe the people or movements with their nationalities whenever doing so precisely has been possible. However, hierarchical language is in the sources I use. Marie Sandell remarked that the division between the West and East was something the international women's movement celebrated because it proved how far the movement had spread. Also, the Korean women I have studied have placed themselves as belonging to "the East" in their texts. Although this vocabulary was acceptable 40 or 60 years ago, it does not mean I should be content with that. I have done my best to carefully indicate when I use the language of the sources to point out my case so it is not confused with the researcher's language. A good example is the term "free world," which was widely used to describe the Cold War division between the communist Soviet front and the capitalist US front from the latter's perspective. I use the term in quotation marks to highlight that it had a certain meaning during the Cold War and not to confuse it with my contemporary worldview. Thus, I use quotation marks around "the East" to indicate the term is in the sources. See Marie Sandell, *The Rise of Women's Transnational Activism: Identity and Sisterhood between the World Wars* (London: Tauris 2015), 15–16.

[134] For a discussion on the Cold War's geopolitical categories, see, e.g. Kim, *Among Women across Worlds*, xv.

conflicts shape feminist practices, I demonstrate the possibility of women from a decolonizing nation furthering their own agenda by collaborating with Western women.

2.2.3 Post-corrective Historiography and Writing Feminist Narratives

Having justified the need to consider how mass societies work, the meaning of feminism, and the Cold War for the work of the KNCW, I move to consider the ways of history writing in the last part of the theoretical framework. This study leans on post-corrective historiography as a method of history writing. The following reflects on the concept in relation to Korean historiography and explains how it informs this study.

The term "post-corrective historiography" is derived from the works of Kelly Coogan-Gehr and Clare Hemmings.[135] Developed as an approach to feminist historiography and the history of feminist theory, Coogan-Gehr and Hemmings argue that the existing historiography can and should be challenged by opening up "future possibilities rather than dwelling past omissions."[136] Hemmings argues that by intervening in the pre-existing stories, it is possible "to allow a different vision of a feminist past, present, and future." Instead of telling different stories, the intention is to tell the stories differently.[137] I adopt this narrative approach to tell the story differently from the established narratives and to study the history of South Korean women during the authoritarian era and the Cold War. The organization of chapters in this dissertation forms a narrative. The chronology is incomplete; Chapters 5 and 6 are especially organized around a thematic rather than chronological structure to discuss the KNCW's domestic and international activities in sufficient detail. The chronology has been built around the key events in Korean history without going into too much detail in themes where other sources of reference can be easily found to focus on the KNCW's perspective and its leadership. This framework has been designed and chosen to participate in feminist knowledge production and critically investigate the limits and possibilities of such knowledge production in certain historical, geopolitical, and social circumstances.

Although Coogan-Gehr and Hemmings have proposed a post-corrective historiography to rewrite the history of feminist scholarship, I demonstrate how it applies to the history writing of women's activism and the women's movement. Like

135 Clare Hemmings, "Telling feminist stories," *Feminist Theory* 6, no. 2 (2005); Coogan-Gehr, *Geopolitics of the Cold War*; Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter.*
136 Hemmings, "Telling feminist stories," 119.
137 Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter*, 1.

the wave metaphor, many national accounts of the development of the women's movement or the status of women in general rely on so-called stock narratives. Stock narratives are well-established accounts and beliefs on how the history of women's movements has proceeded. According to Coogan-Gehr, stock narratives "incorporate stories and contestations in ways that structure past conflicts so that the present gets accredited. Views that were originally articulated to challenge hegemonic accounts are folded within the stock narrative as a story of progression through lessons learned."[138] The legitimacy of stock narratives comes from their repeating pattern, which creates consensus on how things must have developed and how any other account appears suspicious.[139] In Hemmings's and Coogan-Gehr's views, the feminist making of the past has been guilty of getting stuck with already established stories without attempting to critically examine why the narratives are formed as they are. Stock narratives make the past a cohesive entity where relations between things are agreed upon.

To be fair, I presented the stock narrative of Korean feminism earlier in this chapter when reviewing the previous literature. In the Korean stock narrative, the Korean women's movements originated at the turn of the 19th century, almost disappearing under the wars and authoritarian regimes, only to burst again in the late 1980s as part of the democratization process. Part of the stock narrative has been to present the KNCW as a collaborator of the authoritarian state that was inefficient in bringing changes to women's lives. The stock narrative also fails to recognize the international cooperation in women's issues during the authoritarian era. To challenge the stock narrative's hegemony in this study, I wish to complicate not only the image of the authoritarian era in South Korea and women's role within it but question the image of the isolation of Korean women from the transnational women's movement during most of the Cold War.

One central issue in the current historiography of South Korea's authoritarian era is how it is frequently told from today's perspective. Interpreting the past is often too easy because we know the outcome. It almost resembles a black-and-white struggle towards a better tomorrow, although knowing what form the future would take was

[138] Coogan-Gehr, *Geopolitics of the Cold War*, 3.

[139] Probably the most famous stock narrative of feminist scholarship is that the scholarship's development originates in the social movement – the second wave of feminism in the 1960s. Coogan-Gehr wants to complicate this image and explains the emergence of feminist scholarship not only by activism but by changes in higher education, the geopolitical motivations of the Cold War, and the development of developmental studies in the United States. Using the archive of the journal *Signs* as a case study, she demonstrates how neoliberalism and US hegemony ideals in the universities coincide with the emergence of feminist scholarship. See Coogan-Gehr, *Geopolitics of the Cold War*, 1–3.

impossible back then. In the following chapters, I attempt to write the history of each present moment without reflecting the knowledge of my present moment too much on the past. I found feminist theoretician and historian Tani Barlow's term "future anteriority" useful here. Future anteriority refers to a verbal construction that guides us to look at the present moment in the past and how the future was embedded in that moment. In feminist historiography, the kind of future the writers of our sources had in mind interests us. If we consider what "women will have been" in the future anterior tense, we can open the future of a specific past and treat feminism as a "constantly unfinished, discontinuous project."[140]

Barlow criticizes the assumption historians make that their subjects represent the past because they lived in it and that the past can explain the subject for the same reason. The assumption that the subject knew where in time she or he was when acting historically is misleading.[141] Thus, Barlow guides historians to contextualize the historical present moment: "If future anteriority is one way of stabilizing in historical time the volatility of the people who did the thinking, it is important to ask what conditioned them: What forces larger than consciousness acted on them? What sorts of assumptions did they make about past and future in their own uncertain presents?"[142] Was Hong Sook-ja aware of the criticism towards Park Chung-hee in the 1980s? Yes, definitely. Was Kim Hwallan aware of criticism towards Park Chung-hee when she sat beside him in 1961 to discuss the future of Korea? No, she was not. In this manner, the historical investigation must constantly return to those present moments in the past and treat the potential future of those moments as if we did not know how the future came to be.

With the perspective of postcorrective historiography, I join Korean historian Chun Kyung-ock in her quest to include Korean women's political history in the historical grand narratives. By "political history," Chun does not mean the history of politically active women but the process of making the history whole by including women from all walks of life. Furthermore, she views gender relations as political relations and reminds that the state is only one among many holding power.[143] Chun demands that women be taken as subjects in history (not only women's history) and insists upon the rooting of epistemology from a gender perspective, arguing, "Anyone who experiences the events is a subject of history. If a black man is talking

140 Tani E. Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 3.

141 Barlow, 16.

142 Barlow, 19.

143 Chun Kyung-ock, "Hanguk Yeoseong Jeongchisa Yeonguui Insingnongwa Bangbeomnon," [Epistemology and Methodology for the Study of Korean Women's Political History] *Segye Jiyu Gyeongu Nonchong* [Korean Journal of Area Studies] 24, no. 3 (2006): 303, 305–306.

about his experiences, he is a subject; if a woman is talking, she is a subject, and if a Korean or Japanese is talking, they are the subject. If the subject is distorted or ignored, it is only justified by the gaze of others."[144] Here, she proposes a moral approach, indicating that if we exclude other's subjectivities, we produce an illegitimate record of history. Chun emphasizes that when we design questions about important matters, we must stop to ask, "Why is it important to whom?"[145] In her three-volume *Hanguk Geunhyeondae Yeoseongsa* [Korean Women's Political History, 2011], Chun utilizes the microhistory perspective and focuses on sources that can reveal women's history, e.g. newspapers, periodicals, popular culture, and various private collections, and emphasizes that more research is needed in the post-1945 era, especially regarding the US occupation, the Korean War and restoration, and the industrialization and development period, from the perspective of women. According to Chun, scholars should be asking what these periods meant for women and women's lives instead of focusing on the power of the state.[146]

In my historical inquiry here, my interest lies in how Korean women worked to negotiate gender equality with the authoritarian regime, and how the difficulty of the task was experienced. I am not interested in how Korean society or the authoritarian regime exploited or oppressed Korean women but in what was done to overcome the situation. I agree with Chun, who thinks that instead of simply focusing on analyzing how women have been subordinated, women's own experiences should be used to contextualize how and why such subordination was possible.[147]

Here, we come to the idea of telling the story differently. In my study, I revisit the familiar trajectory of Korean contemporary history, but from the viewpoint of the KNCW women, and show how gender frames the experiences of the same situation. For example, in 1983, South Korea faced two important incidents which, in conventional history, are interpreted as Cold War aggression: In September, the Soviet Air Force shot down the KAL007 flight from New York to Seoul, killing 269 passengers and crew members. In October, North Korea tried assassinating President Chun Doo-hwan during a visit to Burma. Chun survived, but 21 died in the bombing. When I look at these incidents from the KNCW's perspective, information on them is found in the correspondence between the KNCW and ICW. Soon following the KAL incident, the KNCW President Sohn Il-sil contacted the ICW President Miriam Dell and demanded on behalf of "20 million Korean women" that the ICW must take

144 Chun, "Epistemology and Methodology," 306.

145 Chun, 307.

146 *Hanguk Geunhyeondae Yeoseongsa: Jeongchi Sahoe* vol 1–3 [Korean Women's Political History: Politics and Society], ed. Chun Kyung-ock (Seoul: Motive Book, 2011). For microhistory and its sources, see also Chun, "Epistemology and Methodology," 306, 310–311; Chung, "Korean Women's History Research," 72.

147 Chun, "Epistemology and Methodology," 301–302.

action against the Soviet Union to isolate it from the "free world" and pressure it to apologize and take responsibility for the incident.[148] However, the bombing in Burma prevented Hong Sook-ja, then the vice president of the KNCW and ICW, to attend the ICW Board meeting because her son was targeted in the bombing as part of the South Korean delegation.[149] As the example above suggests, individuals and their life stories make a great part of my narrative in this study.

In this study, the role of the state is secondary to the dreams of women. With this combination of theoretical discussions and tools presented above, I utilize the theory of mass dictatorship, Cold War feminism, and post-corrective historiography to paint a picture of a world the KNCW women – the main protagonists here – aimed to reach through their activism. The chosen theoretical perspective lays the groundwork for the subsequent empirical investigation of the KNCW's activities from the late 1950s to the turn of the 1990s. This framework aims to help me rethink what nation-building, modernity, and democracy meant for Koreans in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and analyze the arguments, attitudes, and worldviews of the KNCW women.

2.3 Research Methodology

This section reflects on the research methodology and discusses my primary sources. The collection of sources and feelings of surprise and disappointment related to the process have guided my methodological choices. Selecting certain sources has led me to draw inspiration from unknown and unexpected linkages that using transnational archives has made visible. The empirical material I found has also modified the research questions from my original plan and sharpened my focus on South Korea's authoritarian era to a much more transnational direction. The wide array of sources forms the basis for this research, along with how I read them. Thus, this dissertation is my recreation of the past, as I see it through my sources, my reading of them, and my position as a researcher.

Gender is, as Joan Wallach Scott famously puts it, a useful category of historical analysis. Scott's main argument is that using gender as a category of analysis provides a broader understanding of the past and people's interaction in different times and spaces. While in general use, gender refers to an area beyond the physical sex, in Scott's definition, gender connotes social relations, how they are organized, and how they are based on the sex differences between men and women.[150] In other words, the experience of gender is not only related to one's physical sex but one's

[148] Sohn In-sil to Miriam Dell, September 14, 1983, folder 1986 AVG-Carhif.
[149] Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, 13 Oct 1983, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.
[150] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053–1075.

societal role; class and family background, marital status, education, age, and living location. Gender might seem like it was only invented to provide a more neutral term for women. Scott points out that "'gender' as a substitute for 'women' is also used to suggest that information about women is necessarily information about men, that one implies the study of the other."[151] Thus, while the obvious focus is also on women in this study, the power relations of society can also be discussed through the category of gender. Kenneth M. Wells's work on the early Korean women's movement highlights how the position of women as a researcher's starting point can help overcome the barriers of nationalist historiography.[152] While gender works here as an analytical tool, it is not to hide that the focus is strongly on the female gender, thus the position of woman. Without taking femaleness for granted, it is important to point out here that women under examination in this study, according to the materials consulted, categorized themselves as a woman without much confusion about gender roles or gender identity.[153]

As I accept gender as one social construct informing this study, I also adopt critical, intersubjective ontology common for feminist research. This ontological starting point means that power relations are understood as socially constructed. States and people are not material but social, not autonomous but relational, and the world is based on gendered norms. That said, feminist research, as adopted here, is postpositivist, interpretivist, and qualitative. In postpositivist research, the goal is not to uncover the truth and tell how things really were and are but to focus on the process and how they came to be.[154] Furthermore, the feminist methodological perspective suggests that research is a process of knowledge-building; during the process, what knowledge is also ought to be rethought.[155] Per the reasons above, this type of research is hardly replicable. I will not test a hypothesis but see what kind of stories can be told about South Korea's authoritarian past that are not yet visible

151 Scott, 1056.

152 Wells, "The Price of Legitimacy," 191–192.

153 However, one exception to this might be Assemblywoman Kim Ok-soon, who was also one of the early representatives of South Korean women in the ICW-related events in the 1950s, as Chapter 3 discusses. Kim is known as a female politician who wore men's suits in public. For the history of queer and queer identities in Korea, also during the authoritarian era, see *Queer Korea*, ed. Todd A. Henry (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

154 Jennifer Heeg Maruska, "Feminist Ontologies, Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in International Relations," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. Published online December 2017, DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.178.

155 J. Ann Tickner, "Feminism meets International Relations: some methodological issues," in *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, ed. Brooke Ackerly et al. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 20–21.

elsewhere. Someone else with a different background and experience might see the same timeframe differently.

From the epistemological perspective, are more accurate narratives of the past possible or desirable? Again, when the focus is on the knowledge production process, we should be more interested in answering how the past gets framed, what is remembered, and what is forgotten as a result.[156] This study and its research questions have been going back and forth between issues of memory, nation-building, and transnational networks. These themes received different weights of emphasis during the research process. Initially, the research was largely connected to what I coined "strategies of collective memory" – an idea of how collective memory can forget a certain past or frame it in an unfavorable light. This was informed by the notion that the history of the KNCW was often negatively portrayed, and the existing literature frequently denied the KNCW's role as part of Korean women's movements or the authoritarian era as any meaningful period for Korean women's history.

This inspired me to search for possible counter-narratives. In the next phase, the mass dictatorship paradigm intrigued me, not least because of its ability to produce such a persuasive argument on the possibilities of agency under authoritarian regimes. As I collected data and found more and more English-language sources, I got closer to the field of transnational feminist history, especially the Cold War women's history, which has started booming as a research field, especially in the 2010s. I initially hesitated to proceed in this direction. When I first encountered Francisca de Haan's work on the Cold War paradigm in women's history, I thought it was all very fascinating but unrelated to my work. It took me a year to return to those ideas and realize that besides the nation-building project in South Korea and the selective collective memory of South Koreans, the history of the KNCW is actually the history of feminism in the Cold War. I learned that transnational history can provide an even deeper understanding of the nation's history by considering its connections and relations to framings other than nation-states, such as transnational movements.[157] In sum, the frameworks of memory and mass dictatorship provided me ways to contribute to many discussions in South Korea, but only the history of transnational feminism provided the tools to gain a broader perspective.

My methodological choices have also been about balancing different viewpoints. I have pondered how to reach transnational history from the local level and, in

[156] See Kelly Coogan-Gehr, "Review: Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory by Hemmings," *Signs* 37, no. 4 (Summer 2012): 1033; Maruska, "Feminist Ontologies."

[157] See also Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2013), 8; *Women in Transnational History,* 16–17.

contrast, how to write local or national history from international sources. To propose a transnational perspective to study something – the women's movement in this case, whose goals were mainly on the national level –included certain risks. Am I overemphasizing the role of transnational networks in the work of the KNCW? Did I discover the rich English-language sources because they were easier to find than the Korean-language ones? Did internationalism match the worldview of regular KNCW members? By reflecting on these questions, I have followed an important guideline from historian Marie Sandell regarding the methodology of transnational women's history. First, I have seen women's organizations in their own right without preconditioning their actions. Second, I have placed their experiences in the context of their time, not ours. Third, I credited different experiences and how they are transmitted through the official archival material, considering it has been, for instance, the ICW office holders who have dictated the archive, letters, different publications, newspapers, and autobiographical accounts.[158]

For me, South Korea is neither my home country nor a country of my ancestors. My position in relation to Korea's history as an outsider is a position that is almost too easy to observe without engagement. Being an outsider has provided advantages and disadvantages for this project. I would never reach the true closeness to my research object due to generational, cultural, and national differences. However, I believe my Finnish origins have provided certain advantages that are not open to all. Francisca de Haan has noticed certain points of "not knowing" concerning transnational feminist activism, especially leftist activism.[159] One example of a leftist woman unknown to many, de Haan mentions Estonian-Finnish politician Hella Wuolijoki (1886–1954). Wuolijoki is hardly a point of "not knowing" for a Finnish historian. Observing the "West" and "East" of the Cold War period is more than familiar for the Finns. To write global history is to write our history. Many of the Korean women who were active in the KNCW leadership in the 1970s and 1980s knew Helvi Sipilä (1915–2009), the Finnish lawyer who became the first female in the office of Assistant Secretary General in the United Nations in 1972. I have discussed Helvi Sipilä in more detail in this study because she was also a Finn, and her visits to South Korea would most likely not have garnered so much attention from researchers in other countries (see Chapter 6).

The sources this research used were written in English, Korean, and French, none of which is my native language. When I picked up the first piece of correspondence related to establishing a women's council in South Korea in the archival folder at the AVG-Carhif, written in French, the five years I had spent studying French in middle and high school fell into place. I started studying Korean roughly one year before

[158] Sandell, *Rise of Women's Transnational Activism*, 16–17.
[159] de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 548.

starting my PhD studies. Learning the language and taking language courses in Finland and South Korea overlapped with my data collection process. However, translating from one language to another has not been the only challenge. The materials this study used cover a time span from the late 1940s to the early 1990s. I have also had to translate the languages over a temporal dimension, which I already described as being related to the language of the Cold War.

My ethical guideline throughout this study has been to do justice for the events and people of the past, seeing them as products of their own time without the burden of today. I fulfill the freedom of research best by conducting research systematically and with great care. Following this guideline, I could have still generated unpleasant results for some; however, I hope they are found to be argued in an objective and neutral manner. That said, I take responsibility for all possible mistakes in translation or interpretation. Researching authoritarian South Korea, particularly the Park Chung-hee era, was a demanding task, not least because of the pressure from the outside – or "inside," in this case. As an outsider to Korean society and history, writing about the Park Chung-hee era was not an emotionally charged topic. However, for many Koreans I met along the way, it was. To overcome their view of Park Chung-hee from today's perspective and focus on the society under Park from the particular perspective I had chosen required the careful selection of words at certain times. Despite the criticism and even demands to change my topic or perspective, I conducted a study of history as if I did not know about the future and got as close to the everyday life of women's organizations as possible in light of the sources. Ultimately, this is not a study of Park Chung-hee or an evaluation of his character. Rather, I focus on the fascinating history of Korean women.

2.3.1 From Seoul to Paris: Creating a Transnational Archive

This dissertation is based on material collected through archival and historical research in archives and libraries, mainly in South Korea but also in Europe and online. Most of the materials were collected during several field trips to South Korea from 2015 to 2018. Women's periodicals were available for reading in several university libraries; I worked at Ewha Womans University's Library and Kyunghee University's Library. I utilized governmental publications, publications, and other documents related to the work of women's organizations at the National Library of Korea. During the field trips, I reviewed materials at Ewha Archives and the National Women's History Exhibition Hall in Seoul. Unfortunately, materials in their collections proved not useful enough to be quoted in the text. Nevertheless, discussions with the staff members of these institutions especially confirmed some of my findings from other sources.

Besides the materials preserved in South Korea, I consulted the archives of the International Council of Women at the Archive and Research Centre for Women's History (Centre d'Archives et de Recherches pour l'Histoire des Femmes, AVG-Garhif) in Brussels, Belgium, in 2017. I also utilized online databases and search engines, such as the Korean Naver News Library, to consult scanned historical newspapers and an online database – Women and Social Movements, International 1840 to Present – to consult the ICW and the Committee of Correspondence materials. Together, these materials form a transnational, multilingual archive to tell a story of Cold War women's activism with particular attention to South Korean women.

Women's history constantly faces the problem of finding enough sources on women's lives in the past.[160] For my data collection method, I used what Sherry Katz calls "researching around our subjects." In this method, available archival sources are mapped and fulfilled by material found when "working outward in concentric circles of related sources."[161] A good example of data accessed in this way is the several interviews with the KNCW leaders found in American newspapers, not to mention relevant articles in Korean newspapers. Despite censorship during the authoritarian era, newspapers were a vast source of information; however, this study used them to a limited extent for practical reasons. Systematically reviewing Korean newspapers of a given period would have been infeasible, so only newspapers available online through the Naver News Library were used. References to the work of the KNCW were searched using keywords, names, and dates close to an event or incident identified from another source.

On the contrary, tracking down the possible sources from the existing scholarship that deals with or even mentions the KNCW has been difficult. Many articles have based their findings on KNCW's own histories, such as *Hanguk Yeosong Danche Hyeobuihoe 30nyonsa* [Korean National Council of Women 30 years], published in 1993.[162] As I discussed earlier, many contributions to research the Korean women's movement are largely based on material produced in the late

160 Nupur Chaudhuri et al., "Introduction," in *Contesting Archives. Finding Women in the Sources*. ed. Nupur Chaudhuri et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), xiii–xv. A valuable discussion on the possible sources for research on women's organizations is in Nicole A. N. M. van Os, "Ottoman Women's Organizations: Sources of the past, sources for the future," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, 11, no. 3 (2000): 369–383.

161 Sherry J. Katz, "Excavating Radical Women in Progressive-Era California," in *Contesting Archives*, 90.

162 Korean National Council of Women, *Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe 30nyonsa* [Korean National Council of Women 30 years] (Seoul: Korean National Council of Women, 1993).

1980s or 1990s. One will rarely see references to archival material or entries from the 1960s or 1970s.

The material consulted to conduct this study is abundant yet not all-inclusive. Gaps in the data and their consequences were acknowledged and weighed during the research. I have treated the different types of sources I introduce below with equal weight so that pieces of information in one can be complemented with details from another. As the data used in this research is not a cohesive collection but consists of several pieces of different types of documentation, cross-checking has been used whenever possible to confirm the reliability of the sources. Using published and printed materials also limits my focus to the organization's formal activities, and only a few activities behind the scenes could be approached. Due to the organization's hierarchical structure, those holding leading positions on the board and committees are the most visible. This work is characterized by activities in Seoul, whereas examining the KNCW's local branches would produce different images. Since the international exchange occurred at the top level, it has been justified to focus on that.

The following discusses the different types of sources in more detail and acknowledges the possibilities and challenges related to their availability and usage. My initial plan to collect the majority of data was to consult the KNCW's organizational archives in South Korea. From an article investigating the current condition of women's history archives in South Korea, I confirmed that the KNCW's archival records exist at least partly, including meeting minutes and annual reports.[163] However, the KNCW records proved difficult to access since they are neither preserved in a professionally held archive nor catalogued. After several attempts to contact the current KNCW administration regarding the consultation of the records failed, I had to abandon the idea of using their archive. Since the archives would, at best, consist of an undefined number of piles of boxes, I decided to focus on the materials I could gather elsewhere. Omitting the KNCW's archival material is not a particularly significant loss since information on the key members and personnel, the resolutions and recommendations the organization made, and the topics discussed in its conferences and meetings were published in the two periodicals published by the KNCW and their 30-year history compilation. The KNCW's annual reports, in the form shared with the ICW, can be found in the

163 Paik Young-Joo and Kim Soo-Ja, "Yeoseongsa Gwanryeon Jaryo-ui Bojon Hyeonhwang-gwa Gwalli Bang-an: Haebang ihu ~ 1980-nyeondae Yeoseong Jeongchaek mit Yeoseong Danche Jaryo-reul Jungsim-euro" [The Preservation and Management of Materials of Women's History: On the Materials of Women's Policies and of Women's Organization from 1945 to 1980's] *Hanguk Girok Gwanri Hakhoeji* [Journal of Korean Society of Archives and Records Management] 5, no. 1 (2005): 5–21.

records of the ICW. Probably the most crucial thing missing from the data is the meeting minutes of the KNCW Board, which might have included more detailed records than what has been published.

Scholars and archival professionals acknowledge that preserving materials related to Korean women's history has faced severe problems over time. Materials produced by organizations and institutions have suffered from the lack of proper archivists and archiving methods. The situation is especially severe for small organizations that lack funds. However, bigger organizations have managed to preserve proceedings, journals, general assembly reports, pamphlets, educational material, and periodicals. For example, the situation regarding materials related to the family planning campaign is good.[164] To complement the data collection, I utilized online services offered by the National Archives of Korea. Because the KNCW was a registered organization, locating some information on its activities was possible, especially when related to the responsible ministry – the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Bogonsahoebu*). Most often, the searches led me to published sources, such as different types of yearbooks or reports. The lack of proper legislation on preserving archival records in South Korea at the time reduces the number of available archival records from the 1960s to the 1980s, making the publications of governmental institutions and the organizations themselves a valuable source of information.

Because the KNCW's transnational connections comprise a significant part of this study, the archival records of the International Council of Women, preserved by the Archive and Research Centre for Women's History - AVG-Carhif in Brussels, filled some of the gaps left by the elusiveness of the Korean archives. Records of the ICW consist of correspondence between the ICW headquarters in Paris and the administrative bodies and the national councils, different standing committees and other regional structures, and non-governmental and governmental organs, such as the UN.[165] Thus, the archive holds correspondence with the KNCW from the 1950s

164 Luckily, the problem is now acknowledged; in the future, we might have better access to the records of the women's organizations, favorably in the same place. See Paik and Kim, "Preservation and Management of Materials"; Shin Hye Jung, "Yeoseong Danche-ui Girokmun Gwanri Gaeseon Bang-an-e Gwanhan Yeongu" [The study of a better management plan for the archival records of women's organizations], master's thesis on Archival Records Management (Ewha Womans University, 2008).

165 The ICW headquarters and secretariat operated in the same country as the president until 1963, when the headquarters was permanently moved to Paris; however, as the ICW President in 1957–1963, Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux was French; the correspondence had already occurred between the world and Paris since 1957. See Els Flour, "Survey of a century and a half of history," in *Women Changing the World. A History of the International Council of Women*, ed. Eliane Gubin and Leen Van Molle (Brussels: Éditions Racine, 2005), 19.

onwards, extensive records on Hong Sook-ja's presidency, and materials on the organizing of the ICW General Assembly in Seoul in 1982 – all of which were crucial for understanding the role of Korean women in the ICW. I focused on these materials and conducted further research along the way as I found pieces of information that needed further clarification from the records. The archivist Els Flour was a tremendous help. In the footnotes, all the materials collected from the AVG-Garhif are marked with folder numbers and the label "AVG-Carhif."

The ICW's archive is a precious source of the history of women's transnational activism; however, the records are partly "handicapped," as Flour described it. Because the collection is limited to the ICW headquarters' relations with the various actors, it holds only information that traveled through Paris. Thus, correspondence between individuals who did not report to the Paris headquarters on their change of information is not included in the records; such letters could only be found, most likely from personal collections. In addition, part of the collection went missing during the Second World War when the Germans confiscated it; however, presumably, any crucial information on the involvement of Korean women is not missing for reasons stated later in this dissertation (see Chapter 3).[166] Following the KNCW's establishment in 1959 and its membership in the ICW in 1960, correspondence between Seoul and Paris regularly occurred. When one follows the flow of correspondence, it is evident that some letters are missing. Sometimes, issues raised were left open due to this, but I could often interpret the contents of the missing letter by reading its answer. As time passed and communications developed, the records also show that some exchange of information occurred over the phone; thus, those conversations cannot entirely be accessed in the archives.

To complement the material collected in Brussels, I used an online database – Women and Social Movements, International 1840 to Present.[167] The purpose of the database has been to collect and make available women's history primarily related to important women's organizations. I used the database to view the ICW's triennial reports. The shortcoming of the database is that it does not include much continuous data (e.g. full rounds of correspondence). Thus, locating published works, such as reports from the events organized by the ICW, WIDF, and Committee of

[166] Discussion between the author and archivist Els Flour on May 24, 2017, at AVG-Carhif, Brussels.

[167] The searchable database includes a wide variety of materials related to women's movements across the globe, including materials from over 300 repositories, which over 100 scholars have put together and edited. See https://alexanderstreet.com/products/women-and-social-movements-international-1840-present [accessed March 1, 2017]. Access to this database was provided via Atria, Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History in Amsterdam, Netherlands, and later via Turku University Library, for which I am thankful.

Correspondence, has been most useful. In fact, the database has been my only access to the primary documents related to the WIDF and the Committee of Correspondence; accordingly, the gaps in those materials need to be acknowledged. However, it was precisely by keyword search on "Korea" that I could identify Korean participants in the Committee of Correspondence events, which Chapter 3 will discuss.

Having acknowledged the gaps in the archival material; the regular KNCW publications provide a valuable supplement to my understanding of the organization's activities. The KNCW published two periodicals of its own: a monthly Korean language *Yeoseong* (Woman or Woman's Voice, 1964–) and a biannual English language *The Woman* (1965–).[168] *The Woman* was an eight-page newsletter until 1973 when it significantly expanded in length. Initially, the bulletin was prepared simultaneously with the Korean version.[169] Yet the publication frequency between the bulletins greatly differed as *Yeoseong* appeared monthly and *The Woman* during the first two years three to four times a year, but from then on, only once or twice per year. These periodicals distributed organization-related news to the members and the public in South Korea and abroad. They included essays on the status of women and women's movements in Korea, information on meetings, conferences, and courses held, news from affiliated organizations, and travelogues by members from meetings abroad. These bulletins partially covered the same stories, but the Korean version is much more detailed and often includes reports and research results with specific figures. The English version was tailored to the foreign audience to share important issues about Korean women, including frequent reports from international meetings and information on events organized in Korea.

Women's magazines and bulletins have a long history in Korea as a medium to distribute topical writings and evaluate the status of women.[170] Analyzing the texts in *Yeoseong* and *The Woman* helps to see what was on KNCW's agenda and what it considered important to distribute. In addition, comparing the agendas in KNCW's journals with contemporary political issues helps to understand the KNCW's role

[168] Heo Yun refers to *Yeoseong* with Sino-Korean term 女聲, which translates as "woman's voice," but I have been unable to confirm the name in Chinese characters from other sources. The covers of the bulletin always featured only hangul characters, 여성. Throughout the text, I refer to the Korean version of the KNCW's bulletins named *Yeoseong* to distinguish it from the English version. See Heo Yun, "1970nyeondae yeoseong gyoyang-ui balhyeon-gwa jeonhwa – 'Yeoseong'-eul jungsim-euro" [The development and alteration of women's culture in the 1970s – the case of *Yeoseong*], *Hanguk Munhwa Yeongu* 44 [Studies in Korean Literature] (June 2013): 47–89.

[169] Kim, "Making of International Discourse," 168.

[170] See, e.g. Ji-eun Lee, *Women Pre-scripted. Forging Modern Roles through Korean Print* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).

and the relationship between the KNCW and the state. Decoding feminist language can reveal important connotations behind the words. According to Wang Zheng, understanding "stories behind the scenes enhance the ability to decode key words and tease out concrete gender conflicts from multiple sources."[171] I analyze the KNCW publications from this perspective, especially in Chapters 4 and 5, in which I deal with the KNCW's involvement in state-led campaigns.

As Kim Young-sun points out, since the bulletins were organizational news channels, reaching them regularly was difficult for the general audience. The primary audience of the bulletins was other women's organizations' leaders and academics. The bulletins reflected the viewpoint of the KNCW's leadership. However, subscribing individually to the bulletin *Yeoseong* at 300 won per year was possible.[172] To give an idea of the limited reach of the bulletins at the time of publication, *Yeoseong* printed 3000 copies per month (35 000 per year) and *The Woman* 7500 copies per year in 1978. How each bulletin was distributed to their readers is not perfectly clear, except that *The Woman* was sent to foreign embassies and the ICW headquarters in Paris. The few thousand copies of *Yeoseong* each month suggest they were distributed to people at the KNCW events and meetings instead of mailing them to members, the number of which reached close to half a million in the mid-1970s. Heo Yun, having studied *Yeoseong* as a medium of women's culture in the 1970s, has estimated that despite the relatively meager numbers of copies, the bulletins were widely circulated.[173]

In addition to the two women's periodicals, the KNCW published several books, booklets, and reports on its activities as well as issues concerning Korean society, such as consumerism, population, and family planning. Publications related to the UN International Women's Year and Decade for Women are also interesting documents. The KNCW has published two yearbooks: one in 1979 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the organization and another in 1993 to celebrate its 30-year history. The first is more like a coffee table book commemorating the many events and occasions in which the KNCW participated; the latter is a more serious historical review, which unfortunately does not cite its sources. Besides the review part, the book includes the rules and resolutions, name lists of the officials, events the KNCW participated in internationally, and many more materials to be used in the analysis.

171 Wang Zheng, "Creating a Socialist Feminist Cultural Front: *Women of China*," *China Quarterly* 204 (December 2010): 848.

172 Kim, "Making of International Discourse," 165, 168n7.

173 "Korean National Council of Women, Annual Report Jan 1. – Dec 31. 1978," folder 1684 AVG-Carhif. Only two years later, the figures are *Yeosong* 3200 copies monthly, *The Woman* 1500 copies twice a year. See "Activity KNCW (First half of Women's Decade)," *The Woman* 17, no. 1 (1980), 25. See also Heo's "Development and alteration of women's culture," 55.

This book was used to compensate for the lack of access to the materials likely in the KNCW's archives.[174] The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs also published information on the status of women and guidelines for women. More importantly, the ministry published reports on women's organizations. These governmental sources have been used to complement the accounts in the KNCW's publications, but the information they can provide on the KNCW, in particular, is rather limited.

Outside the scope of this research falls data gathered through interviews. Without unpublished personal comments and memoirs of the organization members, this study can only reveal the image and character of the KNCW given in published sources.[175] However, omitting interviews from the data collection was a conscious decision. Interviews and oral history carry certain methodological issues, such as nostalgia or denial of the past. There is a risk that interviewees tell things they believe the interviewer wants to hear; cultural differences also play a role. I also felt that conducting interviews on a topic like the activities during the authoritarian era, a highly sensitive and disputable issue in South Korea, could have been ethically problematic. In this case, interviews that could feasibly have been done would have only covered a small fraction of the leading members, as many active in the 1960s and 1970s have already passed away. Thus, the interviews would have covered only the younger generation of the KNCW functionaries, possibly giving a biased image. Although many encouraged me to conduct interviews, I finally decided not to due to work-economic reasons; archival and other textual data was sufficient and appropriate for my research questions and the scope and scale of my research.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter provides a literature review and connects my study with historiographical and theoretical debates in Korean studies, women's history, and Cold War studies that I contribute to. In the histories of Korean women and women's movements, the lack of attention to the authoritarian era looms large. The relevance of Cold War women's activism for examining authoritarian-era women's organizing

[174] This one also contains fragmented information. For example, data on the members of the standing committees starts only from 1973. See *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 255–258.

[175] Some of the women presented in this research have published their autobiographies, some even in English, suggesting their importance to a foreign audience. Since autobiographies greatly depend on people's memories, one must be cautious when using them as sources. Accordingly, no great emphasis has been placed on autobiographies and other eco-documents in this study; however, I have used them to track down personal connections and add some personal voices of the women involved, especially in the form of direct quotations.

in South Korea is justified because South Korea was truly a location of the lived reality of the everyday Cold War.

Building up an analytical framework around the theory of mass dictatorship and Cold War feminism makes it possible to review the state-society relationship in authoritarian era South Korea from a gender perspective. Using the Korean National Council of Women as an example of a social organization that operated near the state, I show how this group of women articulated their reevaluation of women's status by utilizing the same discourses the state was spreading. The analytical framework highlights the fluidity of the historical actors' environment. Considering the environment when contextualizing their opinions, motivations, and choices in life is crucial.

I believe it is the task of a historian to bring up issues, tell stories, and reveal details hidden in the archives. Post-corrective historiography bridges my theoretical choices with methodological ones. Telling stories about the past differently encapsulates my motives for history writing. This chapter also describes my methodological choices during the research and provides a detailed account of the variety of sources I base this study upon. Examining sources ranging from correspondence, women's bulletins, social movement archives, research reports, and ministry publications, I complicate the image of women in the scholarship of authoritarian era South Korea by showing how the KNCW women actively formulated the role of women for the future of Korean nation. As the nature of empirical material described in this chapter indicates, the narrative told here is based on fractional elements. I have had to accept the partiality to finish the story. The reader can engage critically with my arguments and conclusions.

The next chapter moves to an empirical analysis and begins the narrative on the KNCW. By focusing on steps that led to the formation of a new women's organization, I discuss how the early Cold War women's organizing and the Korean War related to the International Council of Women's initiative to establish a national council of women in South Korea.

3 Early Cold War Women's Internationalism and the Koreas: The Beginning of the Korean National Council of Women

"Internationalism is the demand of our times and local women's organizations need to actively consider the issue," Kim Hwallan declared before a group of women's organization leaders at her presidential residence in Ewha Womans University campus on January 15, 1959.[1] The meeting marked the beginning of a new women's umbrella organization, later named the Korean National Council of Women. Women's internationalism, as historian and author of *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (1997) Leila Rupp defines it, is a process where women from faraway countries come together to construct a shared, international identity and forge bonds through conflict and consent. In Rupp's view,

[1] *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 45–47. The KNCW's first president, Kim Hwallan (1899–1970), also widely known by her English name Helen Kim, was a Korean female educator and the first Korean president of Ewha Womans University. Kim was born in Jemulpo, today's Incheon, the daughter of a widowed businessman and a Christian mother. Following her Christian devotion, her mother was especially convinced to send her daughter to school. Kim was among the first students to attend all levels of education at Ewha; she entered Ewha in 1907 and graduated from college in 1918. Then, she studied at Ohio Wesleyan University for her BA in 1922–1924, earned her master's at Boston University, and returned to Korea and Ewha in 1925. In 1931, she became the first Korean woman to obtain a doctoral degree from Columbia University. She became Ewha's president in 1939 after the Japanese had banned the previous American president. Kim made Ewha the biggest university for women in Asia before retiring from the school leadership in 1961. Besides being an educator, Kim Hwallan had been active in numerous women's organizations and groups since the 1920s when she participated in organizing the Korean YWCA and Geunuhoe. See Donald N. Clark, "Mothers, Daughters, Biblewomen, and Sisters," in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 179–180; Lee Bae-yong, *Women in Korean History* (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 2008), 250–254; Klein, *Cold War Cosmopolitanism*, 43; Park Haeseong, "Christian Feminist Helen Kim and Her Compromise in Service to Syngman Rhee," *Korea Journal* 60, no. 4 (Winter 2020): 171–173.

the international women's movement was not a product of harmony but a way of organizing women who did not always agree and a process in which "the dynamics of mobilizing interacted with economic, political, and social changes that swept across the twentieth-century world."[2] The Korean peninsula was no outsider in these dynamic changes; throughout the 20th century, Korean women created connections to women abroad and ideas related to women's status. The Korean National Council of Women was born out of these connections, the Cold War, and a devotion to women's issues.

The international women's movement has its roots in the second half of the 19th century. Several national and international level meetings among women followed the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. By the early 20th century, three major international, liberal women's organizations dominated the women's movement: the International Council of Women (ICW, est. 1888), the International Alliance of Women (IAW, est. 1904, the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, IWSA, until 1926), and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF, est. 1915).[3] In principle, all these organizations were open to women across the globe; in practice, they remained Euro-American in character, which slowly started changing during the first half of the 20th century.[4]

The arena for transnational women's activism was reordered by the end of the Second World War in 1945 when the old women's organizations and activists started reconvening their groups after greatly reducing their activities during the war. The United Nations replaced the League of Nations with a task to secure world peace. The establishment of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in 1945 as a leftist option marked a split in the West-East axis; however, another split occurred along the North-South axis following the creation of solidarity movements, especially among Asian and African peoples.[5] The Cold War battle over the hearts of women took shape around these divisions and the dynamics in relations between the old women's international organizations, such as the ICW, and the new WIDF. The Korean peninsula, liberated from Japanese colonial rule in 1945 but divided due to the Cold War, played an important part in this dynamism. During the Cold War, the two Koreas participated in the international women's movement from different sides as the North Korean Women's Democratic Union joined the Women's International Democratic Federation in 1946; the Korean National Council of

2 Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 3.
3 Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 4.
4 Leila J. Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women's Organizations, 1888–1945," *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1573–1578.
5 Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood*, 161.

Women from South Korea was affiliated with the International Council of Women in 1960. Furthermore, the war in Korea fueled the international women's movement to deal with the issues of peace and violence.[6]

This chapter tracks the transnational aspect of Korean women's participation in the international women's movement from the first half of the 20th century until 1961 and argues that the Korean National Council of Women was established amidst an expansion of the international women's organizations informed by the Cold War. The first half of the chapter provides important background for this study. Before moving to events in Korea, I begin with the international framework, discuss the beginning of the race between liberal and leftist international women's organizations, and provide an overview of the history of the International Council of Women and the Women's International Democratic Federation. I also discuss how the newly established UN provided an arena in which the old and new women's organizations confronted each other in the battle defining the direction of the postwar world. In the Korean context, I summarize the key developments in recognizing women's status and the history of women's organizing in Korea before 1945. Continuing from the division lines already visible in colonial Korea, I discuss the different routes gender politics took in South and North Korea. The period following 1945 until the beginning of the Korean War in 1950 was an interesting momentum for debates on gender equality on the Korean peninsula.

Then, with an international and Korean context in the background, the second half of the chapter examines how the Korean War sparked a debate between major women's international organizations and traces what kinds of consequences a visit by a WIDF delegation to North Korea during the war bore. While recent scholarship sheds light on the delegation's motivations and connects the events to a wider picture of women's peace activism during and after the Korean War, I focus on a counter-reaction that followed from the WIDF's involvement in the Korean War. I demonstrate how the liberal women's movement's battle against the leftist WIDF contributed to the relationship between the ICW and South Korean women. The connections developed gradually through individual contacts, which proved crucial for the ICW's success in establishing an affiliation in South Korea. Lastly, based on the correspondence between Seoul and the ICW headquarters in Paris, I uncover the steps taken to establish a national council of women in South Korea. The recruitment policies the ICW practiced in the decolonizing world mattered, but the previous experiences of Korean women in women's organizing also played a significant role.

6 See, e.g. Helen Laville, "The Memorial Day Statement: Women's Organizations in the 'Peace Offensive,'" in *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe*; Castledine, *Cold War Progressives*; Kim, "Origins of Cold War Feminism, Kim, *Among Women across Worlds.*

Overall, this chapter demonstrates that the eventual organizing of the KNCW and the transnational connections it cherished through the years to come must be placed against the background of women's internationalism and the Cold War competition.

3.1 Cold War and Women's Internationalism: Histories of the ICW and the WIDF Intertwined

The following discusses the meaning of international for developing women's movements during the 20th century. I shall shortly introduce the history of the International Council of Women and the challenges it faced in the Cold War, the birth of the Women's International Democratic Federation, and the position that women's issues received in the newly established UN after 1945. The relationship between the ICW and WIDF in the early Cold War provides an important background for later developments among the organizations presented in this study.

Women started organizing around the issues of female suffrage and women's political and civil rights, and they have been discussing them across national borders since the late 19th century. Women from North America and Western and Northern Europe established the oldest, still operating international women's organization – the International Council of Women – in 1888 in Washington, D.C. The "Council Idea" was launched to unite the pre-existing women's groups in each country to create national councils that would then join the International Council of Women to build a true international women's movement.[7] American suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the ICW. The ICW wished to become an apolitical organization with a broad agenda, seeking to include all women, but this failed to please many activists. The organization was generally considered conservative; even the long-term president, Lady Aberdeen, declared that women's first mission should be her home. Despite its origins, the ICW refused to take a strong stand on female suffrage. To provide a platform to handle female suffrage, the International Woman Suffrage Alliance was born in Berlin in 1904 out of criticism of the ICW for not openly supporting women's suffrage. Soon, the Alliance adopted other issues to its agenda and, after the First World War, started embracing peace and pacifism.[8]

The wish to become "truly international" started flourishing among international women's organizations, especially after the First World War, which had challenged

[7] Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism," 1574; Rupp, *Worlds of Women,* 15. For a broader discussion on the early phase of women's organizing, see Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 13–48.

[8] Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism," 1574–1575; de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 549.

Europe's dominance in the world order. The international women's organizations recruited members in potential new member countries by proposing suitable persons for contacts, sending officials on recruitment tours (on purpose or for a purpose), and establishing connections with foreign nationals visiting Western countries.[9] The ICW and other international women's organizations started expanding outside North America and Europe more strongly starting from the 1920s on.[10] Establishing the national councils was not always an easy task. The ICW had a strong Anglo-Saxon character with the important role of Protestant Christianity at its heart, easily making the geographical distance between Europe and the rest of the world even longer. Also, traveling long distances to the ICW meetings required not only money but language skills since the organization used English, German, and French as its official languages. Gradually, the ICW community recruited increasingly more active participants outside the traditional areas of operation.[11]

The ICW started expanding towards Asia in the early 20th century. India, still a British colony, joined in 1925. China and Japan, as old civilizations and emerging players in world politics, were high on the ICW's list when it sought new affiliations. At this point, ICW was not particularly interested in Korea since, according to its own policy, the organization sought to make national affiliations in independent countries only, which Korea under Japan was not.[12] The National Council of China was affiliated with the ICW in 1925 but never created close ties with the headquarters because of the geographical distance and turbulence China faced. The establishment of the People's Republic of China after the communist victory led by Mao Zedong in 1949 closed the doors for the ICW to proceed in mainland China for several decades. Instead, the first WIDF conference in Asia was held in China in December 1949, two months after the founding of the People's Republic of China.[13]

9 Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism," 1580; Leila J. Rupp, "Challenging Imperialism in International Women's Organizations," *NWSA Journal* 8 (1996): 11; Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 77.

10 New Zealand and Argentina joined the ICW in 1900 and 1901, respectively, and South Africa became a member in 1913. These countries, however, were heavily influenced by European colonial rule and immigration. See Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 16.

11 Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism," 1576–1579; Flour, "Survey of a century," 16, 18–19; Marie Sandell, "'A Real Meeting of the Women of the East and the West': Women and Internationalism in the Interwar Period," in *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars*, ed. Daniel Laqua (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 167, 170; Cova, "Feminisms and Associativism," 20–21.

12 However, the exclusion of non-independent countries was not straightforward. For example, Finland was affiliated to the ICW in 1911, despite being a grand duchy of Russia, and India and Palestine in 1925 while being British colonies. See Sandell, "A Real Meeting of the Women," 167, 180n34.

13 See Wang, *Finding Women in the State*, 12–13.

In Japan, the ICW met rival factions of female activists unwilling to work together or with an international partner. In 1936, Japan, following its own wish, was linked to the ICW only as a committee, not as a national council. The Standing Committee of Women's Organizations of Japan seemed not to be as serious about its relationship with the ICW as the ICW had hoped for since the headquarters remained uncertain about Japan's role.[14] Eventually, the Pacific War, the mobilization of women for war, and the postwar period proved that connections to Japan get cold. Since the ICW failed to create permanent affiliations with China and Japan, creating a connection to Korea became even more important in trying to gain a foothold in East Asia, which, during the Cold War, was a crucial geopolitical location to be in. In later years, the ICW utilized Korean women as representatives of the organization in different meetings held in Japan and elsewhere in East Asia. By using local women as their messengers, the ICW, constantly suffering from budgeting issues, could benefit from low costs of attendance as the organizations did not need to send someone from Europe or America to attend. Chapter 6 shall discuss the role of Koreans as ICW representatives in more detail.

The end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War marked a new era in women's internationalism. The forms of solidarity and unity among women that had been formed before the war were challenged as the Cold War framed the ideological boundaries and conflicting views on how to advance women's issues. Beyond the two superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union – women actively found responses to their problems at national and international levels. Since 1945, the UN has become the most important arena for the ICW and other international women's organizations to operate to influence global decision-making regarding women's issues, and having close contact with the UN was important for the ICW. After the First World War, the League of Nations served a similar task, and women's organizations learned to work along with it; however, the League of Nations presented "on some levels also a new political strait-jacket" for the women's organizations since instead of introducing women's issues as an independent field, they ended up adding women's issues to the pre-existing agenda framed by other interests that were "state-based and male-biased."[15] The successor of the League of

[14] Marie Sandell's research claims that Japan became affiliated with the ICW in a council meeting held in Dubrovnik in 1936; however, the correspondence between the ICW President Lady Aberdeen and Japanese representative Matsu Tsuji reveals that Japan's status was not that of a National Council. See Lady Aberdeen to Matsu Tsuji, November 23, 1936, folder 1496 AVG-Carhif; Sandell, "A Real Meeting of the Women," 181n55; Sandell, *Rise of Women's Transnational Activism*, 83.

[15] Susan Zimmermann, "Liaison Committees of the International Women's Organizations and the Changing Landscape of Women's Internationalism, 1920 to 1945," (Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street, 2012), 2–3. Accessed via *Women and Social*

Nations – the United Nations – was established in 1945 as the new world organization to promote peace and security, create bonds between nations, and help the world live in harmony. The UN declared the universality of human rights in 1948. For the first time, human rights were credited as belonging to all women, but it was actually the socialist countries and socialist women who promoted nondiscrimination based on gender in declaring human rights, while the liberal women and their organizations could not reach a consensus on whether the declaration should mention women separately.[16]

Behind the socialist forces mentioned above was the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), a new women's organization created to make women's voices heard on how to build the new postwar world. The WIDF was established in Paris right after the Second World War ended in November 1945, immediately challenging the older women's organizations with its bold demands for women's political and economic equality along with an agenda of peace, anti-colonialism, and anti-racism. In its founding congress, the WIDF declared that a democratic and peaceful world depended on equal rights between the sexes.[17] The Union of French Women – a women's organization close to the French Communist Party – organized the founding congress. Other antifascist fighters who had resisted national socialists in European countries were also present.[18] The WIDF has largely been associated with communism and the Soviet Union, but although many of its leaders were communists, the organization involved progressive but non-communist female activists. Calling it the Soviet bloc's front organization would be an overstatement; however, the amount of commitment to Moscow remains under dispute.[19]

Movements, International [May 25, 2018]. For feminists' work within the League of Nations, see also Carol Miller, "'Geneva – the Key to Equality': Inter-war Feminists and the League of Nations," *Women's History Review* 3, no 2. (1994): 219–245.

16 Donert, "Women's Rights in Cold War Europe," 178. Eleanor Roosevelt, who opposed the format that women were separately mentioned, headed the committee that drafted the Declaration of Human Rights.

17 Donert, "Women's Rights in Cold War Europe," 182–183; Pieper Mooney, "Fighting fascism and forging new political activism," 52–53. Despite the WIDF's claims for anti-colonialism and anti-racism, its leadership remained mainly in European hands, see Gradskova, "Women's International Democratic Federation," 277.

18 de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 558; Yusta, "Strained Courtship Between Antifascism and Feminism," 177.

19 See, e.g. Francisca de Haan, "The Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF): History, Main Agenda, and Contributions, 1945–1991." Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [October 10, 2016]; Ilic, "Soviet women"; Francisca de Haan, "Eugénie Cotton, Pak Chong-ae, and Claudia Jones. Rethinking Transnational Feminism and International Politics," *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 4 (Winter 2013), 179–183; Pieper Mooney, "Fighting fascism and forging new

During the Cold War, the WIDF initiated many important projects regarding women's status, including the proclamation of the UN International Women's Year 1975 and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, as historian Francisca de Haan has strongly argued on several occasions, the WIDF's achievements in advancing women's affairs at the global level have largely been forgotten due to the mainstream Cold War history paradigm, which has recognized only the achievements of Western liberal feminism and minimized the agenda of women's organizations in socialist countries into a state-monitored front organization of communist parties.[20] Research has also shown that the WIDF was financially independent; similarly to the ICW, the WIDF secured its operation by collecting membership fees, selling its publications, and organizing fundraising instead of simply receiving operating funds from the communist governments.[21]

The UN, especially the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), under which the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established, became an important location to embrace and challenge women's internationalism. However, the Cold War ideological division weakened the Commission's agenda while much of its work ended up discussing whether "instant emancipation through communism" was better or worse than a gradual approach where women's education would lead to political rights, as the US recommended. In this manner, women's issues became the arena of superpower politics.[22] Despite the weaknesses, the new UN institutions provided the old and new women's organizations a platform to influence. The women's organizations were not free from Cold War politics, but through their membership, women from many previously uninfluential countries could access the work of the UN and participate in the discussion on the status of women. Especially women from the formerly colonized countries, many associated with the non-aligned

political activism," 52–72; Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights," 316; Gradskova, "Women's International Democratic Federation," 271.

20 See de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," esp. 564–565; de Haan, "Global Left-Feminisms," 236; Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 11–15. For a debate on the independence of these organizations, see Nanette Funk, "A very tangled knot: Official state socialist women's organizations, women's agency and feminism in Eastern European state socialism," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21, no. 4 (2014): 344–360; Kristen Ghodsee, "Untangling the knot: A response to Nanette Funk," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22, no. 2 (2015): 248–252.

21 Ilic, "Soviet women," 160. For the finances of the ICW, see Flour, "Survey of a Century," 24–27.

22 Laville, *Cold War Women*, 113–116; de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 554; Laville, "Gender and Women's Rights in the Cold War," 523–524; The superpower rivalry continued well until the International Women's Year and Decade, see Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, esp. 3–4, 9.

camp, took an important role in the discussions on improving women's status – one that went beyond the bipolar juxtaposition.[23]

The ICW and WIDF gained a Category B status in the UN's ECOSOC in 1947 when the consultative-status categories were created to provide NGOs a platform to send their delegations, participate in the discussions, and have access to the documentation. The Category B status meant the organizations' focus was on special competence, women's issues in this case, instead of UN objectives in a broad sense. It also provided access to the work of committees under the ECOSOC, including the Commission on the Status of Women.[24] In the ICW Triennial conference in Istanbul in 1960, the meaning of inclusion of the ICW to the Commission on the Status of Women was described as follows:

> Above all, we derive strength as individuals and as an organization from the continuing discussion on the international level of the questions which concern us. It is for this reason that we attach such value to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women. We profit continually from every aspect of this work – the Commission's inquiries and resulting published studies, its work to prepare the ground for international agreement on matters of fundamental importance to the life and work of women, its regional seminars where the whole picture of women can be described in their particular setting – geographic, ethnic and philosophic. The Commission continues to welcome the participation of the I.C.W. in its work in our capacity of consultant.[25]

However, the ICW and other women's organizations held conflicting views on how to coexist with the WIDF, whether in the UN or the field of women's affairs in general. Since the late 1940s, discussions on how to communicate and make contacts with the WIDF occurred inside the ICW. The ICW was curious to familiarize itself with the WIDF's agenda; however, it was cautious to distance itself from the

23 See, e.g. Antrobus, *Global Women's Movement*, 33; Devaki Jain and Shubha Chacko, "Walking together: the journey of the Non-Aligned Movement and the women's movement," *Development in Practice*, 19, no. 7 (2009): 895–905; Armstrong, "Before Bandung," 305–331. For a discussion on the legacy of the Second World women in UN politics, see Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*.

24 Hilkka Pietilä, *The Unfinished Story between Women and the United Nations* (New York: United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, 2007), 16; de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 568n26; Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 20.

25 International Council of Women, *Report of the Triennial Council Meeting, Istanbul, Turkey, 22 August – 1 September 1960* (Paris: International Council of Women, 1960), 171. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [November 28, 2016].

"politically oriented" meetings of the WIDF.[26] The complex relationship between the two major women's organizations continued well into the 1980s. Still, in 1988, an ICW official defined the role of the ICW "to play an important role in developing countries, in contrast to the Women's International Democratic Federation which connects the countries of the East and is trying to expand in the Third World."[27]

In this context of the UN and influencing gender politics, the ICW and WIDF became each other's rivals. Several scholars, including Francisca de Haan and Jocelyn Olcott, have convincingly shown how the ICW adopted an anti-communist stand against the WIDF and was cautious about its expansion. This indicates that as much the ICW wished to be recognized as an apolitical actor, it was confined to contemporary politics, locating it on the opposite side of the Cold War world against the WIDF.[28] Conversely, the WIDF keenly observed the events and policies organized by the liberal organizations, and political clashes were unavoidable. Thus, the Cold War's geopolitical divisions were reproduced in the international women's movement, as Mercedes Yusta argues.[29] Following the establishment of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and many parts of Asia, several members withdrew from the ICW, and such women's organizations joined the WIDF instead.[30]

In the Athens Triennial meeting in 1951, the ICW President Jeanne Eder reminded that the ICW had lost 13 affiliates since 1939 but received only eight new, so there were "still five to go before we even catch up," indicating the need to support recruitment of new councils. In Eder's words, ten of the lost affiliations were "behind the iron curtain."[31] The ICW was willing to create an image of the WIDF as something existing on the other side of the iron curtain; however, the WIDF had member organizations in over 100 countries, including France and Great Britain, and

26 See Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Rose Parsons, May 22, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

27 Françoise Bouteiller to J. Mouton-Brady, March 22, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif. Attachment to the letter, titled "Note à l'attention de Monsieur Mouton-Brady."

28 de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 552; Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 19–20. See also Pieper Mooney, "Fighting fascism and forging new political activism," 53–54. Francisca de Haan also emphasizes that the IAW shared a similar anti-communist stance with the ICW, and the ICW even proposed merging of the two organizations to combat the WIDF and its communist agenda. See de Haan, "Writing Inter/Transnational History," 530–531.

29 Yusta, "Strained Courtship between Antifascism and Feminism," 178.

30 Leen Beyers, "The ICW and its National Councils: A Century of Worldwide Expansion," in *Women Changing the World*, 47–49.

31 "Report by the President and the Executive Secretary on work and events at ICW headquarters," published in International Council of Women, *Report on the Triennial Council Meeting, 28 March – 8 April 1951, Athens, Greece* (Paris: International Council of Women, 1951), 16–17. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [March 14, 2017].

neutral countries such as Sweden and Finland, claiming to be the largest international women's organization during the Cold War. It also had an affiliate in the US – the Congress of American Women – which the Committee of Un-American Activities and Justice Department banned in 1950 as a communist organization.[32] Similar to the members of the ICW, the WIDF officials traveled around the world, organized conferences in various places and, most importantly, were visible in the work of the UN.[33] Due to its resistance against French colonial war in Vietnam, the WIDF was forced to relocate from Paris to East Berlin in 1951.[34]

French Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux succeeded Jeanne Eder as the ICW President in 1957, serving until 1963. She had a long experience working with the UN as a delegate of France and member and President of the Commission on the Status of Women; thus, she strengthened the ties between the ICW and the UN. Under her presidency and guidance, the ICW spread to new areas and found new problems to address, especially in developing countries. During her term, 17 new national councils joined the ICW – more than under any other president – patching the losses the early Cold War caused.[35] The ICW and WIDF were interested in expanding to the decolonizing countries in Asia and Africa.[36] An information letter on the national councils and operation of the ICW from 1957 highlights that ICW's "main aim is to cooperate with the women of *all* countries, especially the rising countries of Asia and Africa, to advise them and receive advice from them, a happy interchange of ideas and findings, based on enthusiasm and voluntary work, as far as possible; financial considerations should not prevent any women from joining the ICW."[37]

[32] de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 548. See also Pieper Mooney, "Fighting fascism and forging new political activism," 54–55.

[33] See de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 553–554; de Haan, "Eugénie Cotton," 178, passim.

[34] Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights," 317; Kim, "Origins of Cold War Feminism," 465. As Francisca de Haan points out, the relocation also contributed to the significant loss of the WIDF documents, see de Haan, "Writing Inter/Transnational History," 524–525.

[35] See International Council of Women, "Standing Committees of the International Council of Women. Sequel. 1957–1963" (Paris: International Council of Women, 1963), 3. Azak and de Smaele also confirm how the context of the Cold War initiated new affiliations, in this case, the establishment of a Turkish national council of women, see Azak and de Smaele, "National and Transnational Dynamics," 45.

[36] Beyers, "The ICW and its National Councils," 51–54; Azak and de Smaele. "National and Transnational Dynamics," 45; Gradskova, "Women's International Democratic Federation," 277.

[37] Emphasis mine. Undated letter (but 1957 in the records) from Mrs. Wm. Barclay Parsons. The letter is not designated to anyone; however, it begins with referencing "our conversation the other day," suggesting the letter was sent to potential representatives of countries where Parsons had made initial contacts. The letter is in the records of the National Council of Women in the United States, folder 1761 AVG-

Under Lefaucheux's presidency, the task of recruiting new countries to join the ICW was given to the President of the American National Council of Women and the ICW Vice President, Rose Parsons (1891–1985). Parsons was the one coming up with new ideas on how to get new national councils started. For instance, she suggested inviting observers from those countries still lacking a national council to attend the ICW meetings: "This does not mean that those women would go right home and start a Council, but they would be a source of information in their country. It certainly is easier to get the idea of a Council by talking to people than by writing. [...] This is a matter of raising money more than anything else."[38] I shall return to Parsons later in this chapter to discuss her recruitment trips to East Asia and how she eventually played a crucial role in establishing a national council of women in South Korea.

As this work shall demonstrate, the relationship between the ICW and WIDF was, in many ways, formative for what I call Cold War feminism. The local sequels of their competition remain largely uncovered. The divided Korean peninsula provides an exceptional opportunity to mirror the global politics of women's organizing in the early Cold War. Before I discuss how the Korean War affected the ICW and WIDF and shaped their views of each other, I provide an overview of the situation on the Korean peninsula before the war and what kind of paths the post-colonial gender politics took in South and North Korea.

3.2 Korean Women Organizing

By the time Korean liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, Korean women had already formed various connections to the international women's movements and the ideas of women's status and gender equality. A dramatic shift occurred in the earlier decades since Korea started opening up to the outside world. Percival Lowell, foreign secretary for the special Korean diplomatic mission to the US, wrote in 1886: "[I]n Korea woman practically does not exist. Materially, physically, she is a fact; but mentally, morally, socially, she is a cipher."[39] When Lowell was living in Joseon Korea (1392–1897), the Korean peninsula was going through significant political and cultural changes. Gradually and slowly, changes in the status of women started evolving after Joseon Korea established its first diplomatic relations with countries outside East Asia and opened up the country for international trade and

Carhif. See also International Council of Women, *Report of the Triennial Council Meeting, Istanbul, Turkey*, 5.

38 Rose Parsons to Jeanne Eder, October 23, 1956, folder 1761 AVG-Carhif.

39 Percival Lowell, *Choson, the Land of the Morning Salm; A Sketch of Korea* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1886), 143.

exchange. Korea, which had been in close contact with China for centuries, had become a scene of interest for Japan and Russia. Opening the ports also meant the arrival of many Western goods, innovations, and people to the country.

North American Christian missionaries were among the first groups of foreigners arriving in Korea. Like other missionary fields, among the first tasks of the missionaries was to establish schools and provide education not only for boys but girls. Although missionaries and their schools fueled the education of Korean women, Korean male intellectuals also viewed women's education as a means to overcome the backwardness of Korean society. As modernization was considered Korea's true path for the future, the early reformers also recognized the need to update women's status. Female education became one factor in advancing the nation – a yardstick of civilization. Thus, one can trace the interest towards women's issues all the way to the late 19th century and social – especially religious – movements. Intellectuals like founders of the Independence Club (*Dongnip Hyeophoe*) So Chae-pil (Philip Jaisohn) and Yun Chi-ho, the latter of whom became a mentor of Kim Hwallan, were among those who started the public discussion on women regarding issues of modernization, independence, and national strengthening. They emphasized the role of women's education in advancing women's status and social reform.[40] Scholars addressing these early foundations of Korean women's gender consciousness agree that women's status was polemically harnessed for nationalistic purposes amidst national and geopolitical crises, but women themselves saw that national independence would provide better chances for women's rights. Nevertheless, in the big picture, intellectual enterprises for women's liberation did not shake the Confucian foundations of Korean society and culture.[41]

The first women's organizations in Korea were established in the 1890s around the issue of girls' education. American female missionaries opened the first school

[40] Vipan Chandra, "Sentiment and Ideology in the Nationalism of the Independence Club, 1896–1898," *Korean Studies* 10 (1986), 20; Barbara Molony, "Frameworks of Gender: Feminism and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Asia," in *A Companion to Gender History*, ed. Teresa A. Meade and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 526–527; Hyaeweol Choi, "'Wise Mother, Good Wife': A Transcultural Discursive Construct in Modern Korea," *The Journal of Korean Studies* 14, no. 1 (2009): 5.

[41] See Choi Sook-kyung, "Hanguk yeoseong haebang sasangui songnip" [The Establishment of Women's Liberation Ideology in Korea], *Hanguk Sahak I* (Seoul: Hanguk Chongsin Munhwa Yeonguwon, 1980); Choi Sook-kyung, "Formation of Women's Movements in Korea: From the Enlightenment Period to 1910," *Korea Journal* (January 1985): 4–15; Chandra, "Sentiment and Ideology"; Kim, "Under the Mandate of Nationalism."

for women, *Ewha Hakdang*, in 1886.[42] The strong presence of North American missionaries and Protestant Christianity in Korea at the turn of the century not only contributed to women's education and discussion on women's status but secured funds for specific Korean women to travel abroad and continue their studies.[43] Because the institutions providing other than basic education for girls were limited to mission schools, basically, all female intellectuals who emerged during and after the colonial era were exposed to Christianity, giving Christian a women dominant position in the Korean women's movement as historian Hyaeweol Choi notes.[44] Choi, along with Janice Kim, argues that Korean women's participation in these educational and religious institutions provided them with the leverage to build their agency in society and contemporary politics. The first declaration of women's rights in 1898 was a manifesto of women's ability to draft plans for their liberation, although the elite women made the declaration to strengthen their position in the aristocracy.[45] Christianity and missionary work also provided good examples on how the religion could provide women opportunities for education and professional life on their own. The example set by female missionaries who traveled far from their homes and families and worked on their own was an important one for many future Korean feminists and contributed to the success of Christian mission in Korea.[46]

After China lost the Sino-Japanese War to Japan in 1895 and Russia faced the same destiny in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, Korea, which had declared itself as an empire (1897–1910), lost its position in the game for national survival. Korea first became a Japanese protectorate in 1905 and then a colony in 1910. In the 1920s, during the Japanese cultural rule when the Japanese colonial policies had become less restrictive for Korean publications, newspapers, and journals, Western and Japanese suffrage activists truly introduced the overseas suffrage movement to Koreans.[47] For instance, Carrie Chapman Catt, leader of the American suffragist movement, visited Korea in 1912. As the president of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), she toured Africa, the Middle East, and South and East Asia to meet with existing suffrage groups and spread information on women's

42 Molony, "Frameworks of Gender," 527; Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters*, 33. On Ewha's early years, see also Clark, "Mothers, Daughters, Biblewomen, and Sisters," 177–180.

43 See Choi, "Gender and Mission"; Barraclough, "Red Love and Betrayal," 88.

44 Choi, "'Wise Mother, Good Wife,'" 10.

45 Janice Kim, "Gender, Labor and Political Consciousness: Female Factory Workers in Colonial Korea," PhD diss. (University of London, 2001), 30.

46 Clark, "Mothers, Daughters, Biblewomen, and Sisters," 168.

47 Yoon, "Women's Movement for the Entry," 214–217.

suffrage. However, little breeding ground existed for suffragist organizations in colonial Korea, occupied by Japan, where even men were not allowed to vote.[48]

Besides the spread of foreign pamphlets, books, and plays, such as Alexandra Kollontai's *Red Love* (1927) or Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), which had been translated into Korean, ideas on women's organizing traveled to Korea.[49] Several women's organizations had been established at the beginning of the century, and groups such as the Korean YWCA (est. 1922) and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (est. 1923) held strong international aspect in their work. Similarly, as networks of socialist and communist women were linked to Moscow and Shanghai, Christian women were mainly connected to their counterparts in the United States and Western Europe. These networks served as routes for ideas and ideologies to travel.

In colonial Korea, female activists and their organizations can be roughly divided into moderate, often religious reformers and more radical leftists. During the colonial era, female activists from both categories started organizing into groups and participating in the public discussion. For a short time, the socialists and religious groups even came together to bring women's issues clearly to the nationalist arena and, in socialist fervor, demanded that women needed to liberate themselves. The joint experience – a women's organization of some 1000 women called *Geunuhoe* (Friends of the Rose of Sharon) – was established in 1927. The short-lived organization broke down into inner conflict and the Japanese ban on group meetings.[50]

In Geunuhoe, post-liberation women's movement leaders in two Koreas, such as Kim Hwallan and Ho Jong-suk (1908–1991), worked together. After 1945, their life paths took different routes. In liberated Korea, the colonial era female activists chose to follow their ambitions; eventually, some, Ho included, ended up in North Korea to build the socialist revolution while others, like Kim, followed reformist ideals first under the American occupation and later participated in nation-building in South Korea. It could be argued that the Cold War only finalized the split between the

48 On the lack of the suffrage movement in Korea, see, e.g. Mark Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009) 138; Wells, "Expanding their realm," 152.

49 See Park, *The Proletarian Wave*, 201–204; Hyaeweol Choi, "Debating the Korean New Woman: Imagining Henrik Ibsen's 'Nora' in Colonial Era Korea," *Asian Studies Review* 36, no. 1 (March 2012): 59–77.

50 Molony, "Frameworks of Gender," 527–528; Seung-kyung Kim and Kyounghee Kim, "Mapping a Hundred Years of Activism: Women's Movements in Korea," in *Women's Movements in Asia*, 193. For Geunuhoe, see also Wells, "The Price of Legitimacy"; Lee, *Women in Korean History*, 253; Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea. From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Lanham et al.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 67.

socialist and religious women's groups from the colonial era. Notably, both directions continued to operate in a transnational sphere after the liberation.

After Japan's defeat in the Second World War, Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule in August 1945 was followed by rapid changes in the two occupational zones divided between the Soviet Union and the US along the 38th parallel.[51] The superpowers had arrived on the Korean peninsula to secure Japan's surrender; the Soviets and the Americans set up military regimes in their zones. Eventually, the division remained as each side formed its own government, and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) were established in August and September 1948, respectively.

Before 1948, however, the so-called liberation space was full of hopes for different futures.[52] Two days before the Americans arrived in Incheon, the People's Republic of Korea was declared the provisional government in early September 1945. Koreans had already formed different groups and people's committees to fill the vacuum left by Japanese authority. The People's Republic aimed to represent Koreans' will for self-governance and true independence. In general, at the time of the liberation, civil groups quickly replaced the structure of colonial rule and organized around different groups of people: labor, peasants, and women. Their mobilization was somewhat chaotic and motivated by socialist, communist, nationalist, and reformist endeavors. The Americans labeled the people's committees as leftist; eventually, in the south, people's committees were cleared away by the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK).[53]

The immediate aftermath of the liberation was also fervent for women in the south: Several women's magazines were launched, a women's political party was established, new women's organizations emerged, and those closed during the colonial era continued their activities. The pressing question for all was the "liberation of women and building a new country."[54] As a counter-reaction to the communists, several rightist women's groups were formed, like the Korean Patriotic Women's Association (*Hanguk Aeguk Buinhoe*) and the Women's Alliance for

51 How the division unnaturally occurred is explained in William Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War. A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 11–15. For an in-depth overview of post-1945 Korean society, the occupation of Korea, and the origins of the Korean war, see Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2010).

52 For a discussion on the liberation space and women, see Lee, *Liberation space*.

53 Suzy Kim, *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2013), 44–45.

54 Kim and Kim, "Formation of Public Sphere and Gender Politics," 114. See also Yoon, "Women's Movement for the Entry," passim.; Lim, "Democracy Propaganda and Women Liberation," 56.

Independence (*Geonguk Bunyeo Dongmaeng*). The USAMGIK encouraged these rightist groups to operate; during the process, they also adopted anti-communism.[55]

Meanwhile, in the northern part of the Korean peninsula, Korean communists who had survived imprisonment, purges, and the war in China, Manchuria, and the Soviet Union returned to the peninsula, forming the core of the political elite in North Korea after 1945. These returning communists included Kim Il-sung, who became the leader of North Korea, and several women.[56] In the north, the Soviets supported people's committees and their organizing for reforms; unlike in south, the Soviets did not form a military governance. In addition to people's committees, people mobilized into different mass organizations meant for targeted groups: workers, women, and children.[57] The women's organization, the North Korean Democratic Women's Union (*Puk Choson Yosong Tongmaeng*, hence KDWU), was among the first established in November 1945. It gathered smaller women's groups born amidst the political activity following the liberation. Within a year, some 20% of the female population in the north belonged to the KDWU.[58] Among the founders of the KDWU was Pak Chong-ae (1907–?, internationally also known as Pak Den-ai), who became the chair of the organization for the next 20 years, and the already mentioned Ho Jong-suk, who became the Minister of Culture (1948–1957) and Minister of Justice (1957–1959), chief justice of the Supreme Court in 1959, and vice chair of the Supreme People's Assembly, North Korea's legislature organ, in 1972.[59]

Following the KDWU's establishment in the north, a month later, in December 1945, a similar structure among the women in the south was formed under the Korean Women's League (*Choson Punyo Chong Tongmaeng*). Among the honorary chairs of this organization were the leader of KDWU women, Pak Chong-ae, who received the title in absentia, as well as foreign women; the WIDF leader, French Eugénie Cotton; and American Eleanor Roosevelt, the previous First Lady of the United States (1933–1945), at the time of the United States Delegate to the UN General Assembly and human rights activist, signaling the international expectations of the organizations and the mixed political feelings; at this point, it was unclear that the two Koreas would become two opposite countries: one communist and one anti-

55 Sunhyuk Kim, "South Korea: Confrontational Legacy and Democratic Contributions" *in Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 140–142.

56 See Barraclough, "Red Love and Betrayal," 88, 96–97; Barraclough, "Red Love," 28–29.

57 Kim, *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution*, 36–37, 45–46.

58 Suzy Kim, "Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, no. 4 (2010): 750–751.

59 Barraclough, "Red Love and Betrayal," 88, 96–97; Barraclough, "Red Love," 28–29; Kim, *Among Women across Worlds*, 12. The mentioned works by Ruth Barraclough and Suzy Kim also include information on the personal histories of Pak and Ho.

communist. With increasing American presence and pressure in the southern side of Korea, things developed quickly; by 1948, the leaders of the organization, Yu Yong-jun (1890–1972) and Chong Chil-song (1897–1958), had chosen to move to North Korea.[60] Before the Korean Women's League disappeared from South Korea amidst the American suppression of leftist activity, its membership grew to 800,000 in 150 branches from cities to villages. Its activities focused on the educational needs of the rural population regarding literacy and the political and economic skills of women.[61]

The KDWU joined the WIDF in October 1946. By joining the WIDF, "the women of Korea, liberated from the colonial yoke which oppressed them for half a century, for the first time gained the possibility to form their own democratic organization and to take part in the international democratic movement of women, to enlist under the banners of the democratic women throughout the world."[62] *The Women of Asia and Africa* (1948), a pre-conference report for the following year's Conference of the Women of Asia to be held in Beijing, echoes the developments that women in North Korea had experienced in just a short time: equality in law, literacy, and agricultural and technological advantages. The report is highly critical towards the Japanese and Americans and praises the Soviets.[63] During the Cold War years, North Korean women were occasionally seen at the WIDF conferences; importantly, they were in the WIDF publications.[64] Pak Chong-ae also served as an executive committee member of WIDF from 1948.[65]

The Conference of the Women of Asia, the first international meeting held in China after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, was organized by the WIDF and hosted by the All-China Democratic Women's Federation.[66] Delegations representing South and North Korea were at the conference.[67] At this point, however, the southern part of the organization had merged with the northern KWDU. Following the resistance against American occupation in the fall of 1946,

60 Like Ho Jung-suk and Kim Hwallan, Yu and Chong had been active in Geunuhoe during the colonial era. See Kim, *Among Women across Worlds*, 13.

61 Kim, *Among Women across Worlds*, 13.

62 Women's International Democratic Federation, *The Women of Asia and Africa: Documents: Report of the Commission* (Budapest: Women's International Democratic Federation, 1948), 151. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements International* [December 21, 2017].

63 *Women of Asia and Africa*, 150–152.

64 Kim, *Among Women across Worlds*, passim.

65 de Haan, "Eugénie Cotton," 180; Kim, "Origins of Cold War Feminism," 467.

66 See Armstrong, "Before Bandung," 305–331; Wang, *Finding Women in the State*, 12–13.

67 British Committee Women's International Democratic Federation, *British Woman in New China: Marian Ramelson's Report on the Asian Women's Conference, Peking, 1949* (London: Women's International Democratic Federation, 1949), 8–9, 10–11.

many leftist organizations, the Korean Women's League included, were forced underground by 1947.[68] Interestingly enough, when the CIA examined the WIDF in the mid-1950s, a report from 1956 lists South Korea as one of the affiliated countries, although acknowledging the likelihood that the organization had merged with its northern counterpart and existed only in name.[69] The same report reveals the uncertainty on the true scope of the WIDF and its presence in different countries as there were several uncertain cases on whether affiliation existed.[70] The CIA report is a telling example on how the WIDF and its affiliations were treated during the Cold War. I shall return to the WIDF's actions during the Korean War later in this chapter.

The people's committees disappeared from the south while they continued to be the basis of nation-building in the north. Already in December 1945, the Americans abolished the Korean People's Republic and continued working with the rightist, conservative Korean Democratic Party and a leader candidate, Syngman Rhee (1875–1965), who had returned to Korea in October 1945 after years in exile in Shanghai and Hawaii.[71] The US started planting its own principles in the Korean way of life under this limited political framework, which sought to exclude certain parts of society: the socialist elements. Gender equality was one rhetorical component of democratic nation-building. To support this, the US military government established the Women's Bureau (*Bunyeoguk*, literally "wives' bureau") as part of the Ministry of Health and Welfare in September 1946. According to historian Hwang Jong-mi, the basic principle behind the Women's Bureau was the USAMGIK's wish to create a pro-American women's network.[72] South Korea was not the only location where the United States implemented its nation-building

68 Kim, *Among Women across Worlds*, 14.

69 Central Intelligence Agency, "Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF). A Compilation of Available Basic Reference Data – Affiliates and Parallel Organizations, Strength, Officers, Addresses, Publications. Based on data available as of 1 October 1956," 23. Accessed via *CIA, Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room* [November 10, 2017].

70 "Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)," 1, 33.

71 Syngman Rhee was already an independence fighter before the Japanese colonial period. He was imprisoned for the first time in 1899. In 1905, he moved to the US to study. After briefly returning to Korea, he moved to Hawaii in 1913 and followed Japanese colonial rule from a distance. After the March 1st movement in 1919, he joined the Korean Provisional Government in exile in Shanghai and served as its leader until being impeached in 1925. After that, he returned to Hawaii; while living in the US, he created connections with the Americans. For Syngman Rhee's life, see Young Ick Lew, *The Making of the First Korean President: Syngman Rhee's Quest for Independence, 1875–1948* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014).

72 Hwang, "Construction of the Government and Women," 165. See also Lee, "Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution," 78.

programs. The occupied Japan (1945–1952) and West Germany (1945–1948) are well-known examples of these processes, and the Women's Bureau in South Korea followed similar administrative offices for women's affairs in those countries.

Historians Karen Garner, Mire Koikari, and Helen Laville view the nation-building in these countries from the perspective of women and analyze the role American women's groups played in establishing the democratic practices.[73] Laville argues that "the model of co-operation between American women's voluntary associations and the US government as applied in Germany" was used as a template for the involvement of the US with women in other countries through voluntary associations. The original idea of supporting democratic growth via the women's associations turned into support for pro-Americanism and anti-communism. In West Germany, establishing democratic practices and women's activities was closely linked with the work of international women's organizations. Americans supported the founding of Deutsche Frauenring, the West German affiliate of the International Council of Women, to countercheck the WIDF affiliation, Demokratischer Frauenbund, in East Germany. ICW President Jeanne Eder participated the founding meeting in Bad Pyrmont.[74] Thus, unsurprisingly, in South Korea, the ICW sought an affiliation among women close to the American occupation period administration. According to Heo Yun, the KNCW can be considered some kind of heir to the US occupation period of women's organizations and their leaders who worked closely with the Women's Bureau, the US administration, and Syngman Rhee's Liberal Party (established in 1951).[75]

The Women's Bureau aimed to "coordinate women's groups and unite them in their efforts to achieve recognition and social equality for women in South Korean society."[76] Koh Whang-kyung (1909–2000, also known as Evelyn Koh) and her advisor, American Helen Nixon (1900–1990), a Red Cross relief worker, led the Women's Bureau.[77] Koh had studied in Japan and the United States, finishing her

73 See Laville, *Cold War Women*, esp. 68–95; Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*; Karen Garner, *Shaping a Global Women's Agenda. Women's NGOs and Global Governance, 1925–85* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), esp. 158–178.

74 Laville, *Cold War Women*, 85, 87, 90–91. See also International Council of Women, *Report on the Triennial Council Meeting, Athens, Greece*, 16–17. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [March 14, 2017].

75 Heo, "Development and alteration of women's culture," 52.

76 Lee, "Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution," 79. See also Hwang, "Construction of the Government and Women," 166.

77 Nixon also contributed to re-establishing the Korean Red Cross. See Helen Begley Nixon Papers Finding Aid, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, https://findingaids.smith.edu/repositories/2/resources/944 [accessed June 19, 2018];

PhD at the University of Michigan in 1937.[78] In Koh's own words, the Women's Bureau's tasks was to "advice [sic] all governmental policies affecting the social, economic, political, and cultural amelioration of Korean women [...] to advance the position of women and to promote their participation in public life."[79] In the Women's Bureau's relationship with the military government, its task was to provide advice in policies that affected women and make suggestions on practices that would improve the status of women. The Women's Bureau also started offering classes on household management and the national economy to educate women. During the Korean War, the Women's Bureau introduced austerity campaigns to encourage women into a frugal and rational way of living. The Women's Bureau also worked to abolish prostitution in South Korea. To criminalize state-licensed prostitution was one goal of USAMGIK in making Korea a modernized country. Ultimately, abolishing licensed prostitution did not affect widespread private prostitution.[80]

In 1948, the Constitution of the Republic of Korea promised all citizens equal rights following the US rhetorical promotion of women's rights. Despite the new constitution, many colonial-era codes remained intact and directed the development of new codes, which only came into effect in the 1960s, such as the Civil Code, which included the family head system of placing the male at the top of family relations (see Chapter 5).[81] The First Cabinet of President Syngman Rhee, who had won the first presidential elections in July 1948, also featured a female minister, Minister of Commerce and Industry Yim Yong-sin (Louise Yim).[82] Also Kim Hwallan, who was close to Rhee and had known him since 1920s, was appointed to important positions: a member of the Korean delegation to the UN General Assembly in 1948 and Director of the Office of Public Information in 1950.[83] However, these seemingly advanced steps were more like token gestures. At the time of the liberation, over 90% of Korean women were illiterate. Providing the right to vote and equal rights did not mean that women actually possessed equal political

Karen Garner, "The International Scope of the Sophia Smith Collection" (Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street, 2012), 8, 12–13.

78 Hwang, "The Construction of the Government and Women," 186. See also "Our contributors," *Pi Lambda Theta Journal* 27, no. 3 (1949): 187–188.

79 Koh Whang-kyung, "The Status of Women in Korea," *Pi Lambda Theta Journal* 27, no. 3 (1949): 155.

80 See Lee, "Construction of U.S. Camptown Prostitution," 79n77, 89–93.

81 Lee Hye-kyung, "Gender Division of Labor and the Authoritarian Developmental State: Korean Experience," in *Gender Division of Labor*, 299, 301.

82 Chi-Young Pak, *Political Opposition in Korea, 1945–1960* (Seoul: Seoul National Press, 1980), 52. Yim Yong-sin also ran for vice presidency in the April 1960 elections but received fewer than 100,000 votes. See Pak, 197.

83 Park, "Christian Feminist Helen Kim," 176.

rights.[84] During the coming years, female activists in South Korea repeatedly based their demands on the real advancement of women's rights – on their legal right to be treated equally.

Unlike the American-driven rhetoric of women's rights as citizen's rights, North Korea followed the Marxist idea that women are liberated by a socialist revolution.[85] Women's organization such as the KDWU, operated on a platform that combined women's political, economic and social issues in search for women's liberation– today known as an intersectional approach. The KDWU's contribution to implementing gender equality amidst the North Korean revolution was important. The Labor Law and Gender Equality Law, the passing of which the KDWU promoted in 1946, probably represented the most advanced legislation in East Asia at the time as they encouraged women's equal participation in all fields of life, gave women the right to vote and be elected, allowed free marriage and divorce, promised state-paid maternity leave, and equalized inheritance rights. Only a little later, the family head system, which placed men above women in the household, was also abolished.[86]

Initially, North Korea's leader, Kim Il-sung, supported the idea of gender equality, but in the patriarchal society, old beliefs and habits sat tight. Men continued to oppose women's right to vote and become elected to People's Committees, to which Kim Il-sung reacted by bringing women's rights up in his speeches.[87] According to Ruth Barraclough, Kim Il-sung had "sought to recruit and reward the most prominent, radical and glamorous feminists on the peninsula."[88] By the 1960s, the KDWU was mobilized to build a socialist North Korea, educate the next generation of communists, and enforce the idea of socialist domesticity combined with women's productive labor.[89] Eventually, however, Kim Il-sung's attitude towards these feminists changed, and he started calling some of the early members of the organization "who went dressed to kill and wearing fancy hats" a hindrance

84 Yoon, "Women's Movement for the Entry," 237, 242.

85 Park, "Women and Revolution," 527.

86 Park, "Women and Revolution," 533, 542; Barraclough, "Red Love," 29–30; Kim, *Among Women Across Worlds*, 13–14.

87 Park, "Women and Revolution," 534.

88 Barraclough, "Red Love and betrayal," 96–97.

89 See "The Duty of Mothers in the Education of Children," speech at the National Meeting of Mothers, November 16, 1961, in Kim Il-sung, *On the Work the Women's Union* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1971), 30; "On some tasks confronting the Women's Union organizations," speech delivered at the third Congress of the Democratic Women's Union of Korea, September 2, 1965, in Kim, *On the Work the Women's Union*, 43–44. See also Andre Schmid, "Comrade Min, Women's Paid Labour, and the Centralising Party-State: Postwar Reconstruction in North Korea," in *Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship*, 188–189, 195–196.

to its work.[90] For example, Pak Chong-ae disappeared from written records in 1965; according to Suzy Kim, she was likely purged sometime in the late 1960s after Kim Il-sung's personality cult strengthened and the North Korean women's movement weakened.[91]

The first part of this chapter has introduced the ideological lines that guided the international women's movement after 1945 and the Korean women's movements before and after the liberation. The self-understanding of the historicity of the women's organizing has been a crucial building block for Korean women's movements. In 1949, in her commentary for a journal of Pi Lambda Theta – an American honor society for educators – Koh Whang-kyung described that the current movement was still the same women's movement that had participated in the independence struggles in 1919 and then "remained underground for twenty-six years and burst out at the time of the liberation by the allied forces."[92] Koh represented the stratum that benefited from the American occupation and worked along with it. She is also representative of women who started their activism during the colonial era and then, after the liberation, had to find a way to express their voices again. Some female activists left for North Korea; others stayed in South Korea and adapted to the political environment with the belief that women's rights would be achieved under American-influenced liberal values. Historian Yoon Jung-ran points out that women who, during the colonial era, had learned about suffrage movements abroad were inspired by them and awaited their moment. This heritage was carried with them into the post-liberation women's movement when women could vote and enter the parliament.[93] When the rights were given rather suddenly, women only realized that much work remained for the women's movement to educate women to exercise their rights. Organizations like the Korean National Council of Women started operating with that task in mind.

At this point of the narrative, on the eve of the Korean War, more excavation must be done to connect the women's organizing in the post-liberation years to the late 1950s and the establishment of the KNCW. The sources at hand do not support the assumption that the USAMGIK administration or the Women's Bureau would have been directly involved in creating an ICW affiliation in South Korea as in West Germany. However, the links at this point are apparent: Koh Whang-kyung, the first leader of the Women's Bureau, and Kim Hwallan, who served the US administration as an advisor for women's education, were founding members of the Korean National Council of Women. In addition, Park In-soon, as the leader of the Women's

90 "Duty of Mothers in the Education of Children," 28.
91 Kim, *Among Women Across Worlds*, 15.
92 Koh, "Status of Women in Korea," 154–155.
93 Yoon, "Women's Movement for the Entry," 226.

Bureau in the late 1950s, was part of the initiative founding committee of the new organization.[94] The next section traces how the events of the Korean War contributed to the closer links between the International Council of Women and women in South Korea. I also consider the role of the ideological division lines of the Cold War in women's organizing.

3.3 Networking Amidst the Cold War Tensions

Japanese historian Masuda Hajimu has termed the Korean War as the crucible of the Cold War, which turned the "cold" war into a "hot" one, making the Cold War a reality in people's minds.[95] The war sparked memories of the previous great wars that had ended just five years earlier. Yim Yong-sin and Kim Hwallan, two women who held positions in Syngman Rhee's government before and during the Korean War, recalled the outbreak of the war in June 1950 in their autobiographies. They felt strongly about the need to fight back, and Yim, who was in New York when she learned about the North Korean invasion on June 25, reflected on the new war in relation to the Korean people's suffering in the colonial era:

> My people at war. Dying once again as they had died for forty years. Sold out. Betrayed. Hurt. Enslaved. Beaten. Disappointed. Dying once again. Why? Oh I knew answers, the pat political phrases. The things that would go into speeches. The need to fight. We must unite. All together. Drive out the invaders.[96]

Kim Hwallan first refused to leave Seoul and her school, Ewha, but eventually decided to follow the fleeing government, first to Suwon, then Daejon, Daegu, and finally all the way to Busan on the southeastern coast:

> This was already the fourth day of the war. They [soldiers] had had no sleep and no food all that time. Some were lying on the roadside dead, or motionless from sheer exhaustion. For the first time in my life I regretted not being a man who could turn right around and go to the front to fight. Not being able to do that I resolved within my heart that I would do anything and everything I could to help with the war in which those boys had fought till exhaustion or death. This

94 Hwang, "The Construction of the Government and Women," 186; *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 49. On Kim Hwallan's role in the USAMGIK, see Lee, *Women in Korean History*, 256.

95 Masuda, *Cold War Crucible*, 2.

96 Louise Yim [Yim Yong-sin], *My Forty Year Fight for Korea* (Seoul: International Culture Research Centre, Chungang University, 1959 (1951)), 312–313.

> determination burned within my soul all during the war years. It is still burning, for the war has not ended yet.[97]

The passages from Yim Yong-sin and Kim Hwallan, the former published during the war and the latter decade after the war had ended in a cease-fire with no peace treaty signed, reveal how the Cold War was constructed in the era's literary productions. As Kim's desire to do the best a woman can do in the war indicates, the Korean War became a crucible for the international women's movement and the development of women's politics during the Cold War. To illustrate this, I draw attention to two occasions – the WIDF delegation to North Korea in 1951 and the establishment of an anti-communist women's organization, the Committee of Correspondence in 1952. First, I discuss how these events were interrelated and how the Committee of Correspondence mediated the connections between the International Council of Women and female leaders in South Korea. Second, I shed light on how the network between the ICW and South Korean women became closer after the Korean War.

Before losing the appreciation and favor of Kim Il-sung in North Korean politics, the Korean Democratic Women's Union played a key role in drawing the attention of the world to the Korean War. After the tide in the war turned and the fighting had been stuck in a stalemate around the 38th parallel, the KDWU presented an appeal to the WIDF to send a mission to investigate the wrongdoings of the American and international troops in northern Korea while they occupied the area in the fall and winter of 1950, before the Chinese joined the war. Ho Jong-suk and Pak Chong-ae orchestrated the invitation to the WIDF.[98] Women from 17 countries in Europe, America, Asia, and Africa formed the delegation 'An International Women's Commission for the Investigation of Atrocities Committed by U.S.A. and Syngman Rhee Troops in Korea,' often referred to as the WIDF delegation to Korea. Nora K. Rodd from Canada headed the delegation and traveled to North Korea in May 1951. Although the WIDF gathered the delegation, not all delegates were from its member organizations, but the group consisted of socialist intellectuals, artists, and anti-colonial activists who took the task "to tell conscientiously and truthfully to the

[97] Kim, *Grace Sufficient*, 125.

[98] According to historian Celia Donert, having examined the WIDF secretariat correspondence, decision to send a delegation to Korea occurred in a meeting of the WIDF Council in February 1951. See Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights," 321. See also de Haan, "Eugénie Cotton," 180; Kim, "Origins of Cold War Feminism," 467.

women who have delegated us to this commission and to all the common and peace-loving people of the world the facts as we have seen them."[99]

After visiting Pyongyang, the group split up to visit several villages near the Yalu River and the city of Wonsan on the west coast. The group did not manage to visit South Korea and thus could not report on the events there. The delegation's findings were published in a report, *Korea: We Accuse!* (1951), which blamed the Americans for several atrocities, massacres, and the devastation of the villages during the war. The report was published in several languages, including Chinese, Russian, and German, intentionally utilizing textual and visual representations of the war in Korea, sexual violence, and the suffering of Korean women and children to evoke maternal, protective feelings of solidarity among the female audience – a strategy the WIDF widely used in its other publications.[100] At the time, the report was largely dismissed as communist propaganda due to its severe accusations against the Americans; however, recent research has reconsidered its value and managed to shed light on its historical accuracy by comparing its contents to data on massacres and bombings against civilians during the Korean war.[101]

In June 1951, the WIDF demanded that the UN Security Council should investigate the issue of alleged US atrocities and bring the war criminals to justice, but with little response since the UN, itself a party in the war, was handicapped.[102] Following the delegation's visit to North Korea, the WIDF continued to investigate the Korean War, bringing the alleged use of germ warfare into publicity.[103] It continued to strongly react to the Korean War, publicizing its interpretation of Syngman Rhee as the aggressor in the war. The WIDF published messages from North Korean women to support the armistice. Just before the armistice was signed in June 1953, the WIDF's World Congress of Women was held in Copenhagen; although a North Korean delegation had made its way to Europe, the Danish authorities did not issue visas for them. A message from North Korea was read aloud

[99] *We Accuse! Report of the Committee of the Women's International Democratic Federation in Korea, May 16–27, 1951* (Berlin: Women's International Democratic Federation, 1951), 2. See also Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights," 313–314, 321.

[100] *We Accuse!* 2. For scholarly discussion related to the report, see Pieper Mooney, "Fighting fascism and forging new political activism," 63; Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights," 322–325; Kim, "Origins of Cold War Feminism," 469, 471–473.

[101] See, e.g. Kim, "Frustrated Peace," 83–112.

[102] Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights," 323; Kim, "Origins of Cold War Feminism," 470.

[103] Laville, *Cold War Women*, 135, 137.

in the meeting since "no government could prevent their voices from being heard."[104] A little later, a message from Pak Chong-ae, the chairperson of KDWU, was published in the WIDF bulletin to generate support for the armistice and acknowledge the role of the WIDF:

> The WIDF in the name of hundreds of millions of women in 66 countries sends sisterly greetings pledges intensify our support for your heroic 3 year struggle for the future of your children and independence of your country. We pledge to continue to fight for an armistice in Korea based on agreements already arrived at. The actions of the people will force those who want to continue the war to abide by the negotiated agreements and establish peace. Long live the heroic Korean women! Long live Peace![105]

After the Korean War ended, the WIDF faced consequences for its delegation's visit to North Korea. Awareness of the leftist women's peace movement had spread, but following the accusations the WIDF had made towards American conduct in the Korean War, the organization lost its consultative status in the UN in April 1954. The status was returned only in 1967.[106] According to historian Jocelyn Olcott, removing the consultative status of the WIDF owes to the ICW, which campaigned against the WIDF in the UN. The ICW was displeased by the WIDF's communist propaganda, its opposition to the presence of the US in Korea, and the message of peace, which the ICW considered fake.[107] The ICW had declared its position as a peace organization in the first triennial meeting held after the Second World War in Philadelphia in 1947. For the ICW, however, distancing itself from the peace message of the WIDF was important. A correspondence between the ICW President Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux and Rose Parsons on the eve of the Triennial Conference in Istanbul in the fall of 1960 reveals that the ICW carefully prepared in advance how to address the issue of peace in its resolutions so that it would represent a "Western" interpretation of such so that it would not be confused with a message by communist women:

[104] "*As One! For Equality, For Happiness, For Peace*. World Congress of Women. June 5–10, 1953 Copenhagen" (Berlin: Women's International Democratic Federation 1953), 240. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [March 14, 2018].

[105] "Women of the world must act now for an immediate cease-fire in Korea" July 14, 1953. Accessed via *CIA Freedom of Information Act Reading Room* [April 25, 2018].

[106] Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights," 314.

[107] Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 20.

> I feel that an Assembly such as that of the International Council of Women cannot take place without a resolution in favor of "Peace". Not that I have any illusions concerning the practical value of such manifestations; but it is our duty not to allow the benefit of this sort of propaganda to communist organizations.[108]

Besides losing its consultative status, the WIDF's visit to North Korea channeled other outcomes. The WIDF's report, "We Accuse!", was a tremendous concern for the representatives of the American women's organizations who feared that such propaganda would lure more women to join the communist front and its "peace offensive."[109] Eventually, to respond to the communist peace campaign, the WIDF, and what was deemed a communist propaganda machine, the Committee of Correspondence was established in April 1952.[110] The Committee of Correspondence was an America-centered, anti-communist women's organization established by Rose Parsons, the President of American National Council of Women and the Vice President of the ICW, and journalist Dorothy Bauman. According to historian Karen Garner, Parsons and Bauman "believed they were engaged in a contest for the hearts and minds of influential women leaders in developing and newly independent countries who could be misled by Soviet lies and 'negative' propaganda that criticized the US government and society."[111]

The Committee of Correspondence sought to empower women leaders in their societies and equip them with "American values." Being promoters of the American anti-Soviet agenda, the Committee also called for including women in international politics to establish democracies. While the network of correspondents covered 140 countries, with 5,000 female correspondents at the most, the leadership remained in American hands and reflected the Cold War ideology of America's leading position.

108 Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Rose Parsons, May 25, 1960, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

109 The "peace offensive" refers to the Soviet advocacy for peace, which was regarded as simply propaganda talk in the US and Western Europe. See Pieper Mooney, "Fighting fascism and forging new political activism," 55, 57. For reactions of American anti-communist women, see Laville, "Memorial Day Statement," 194–208; Donert, "From Communist Internationalism to Human Rights," 314.

110 Laville, *Cold War Women*, 171; Kim, "Origins of Cold War Feminism," 470.

111 Karen Garner, "Women organizing transnationally: the Committee of Correspondence 1952–1969," 2. Available at https://www.gale.com/binaries/content/assets/gale-us-en/primary-sources/archives-bound/primary-sources_archives-unbound_women-organizing-transnationally_-the-committee-of-correspondence-1952-1969.pdf [accessed November 1, 2017]. See also, Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 151–153.

Nevertheless, the Committee of Correspondence formed an extensive network of female figures around the world – the scope of which is still to be examined.[112]

Through the link of Rose Parsons, who held leading positions in the Committee of Correspondence and the International Council of Women, the two organizations and their recruitment practices were intertwined in the 1950s. However, sometime in the 1960s, likely related to the ambiguity around the finances of the Committee of Correspondence, the relations between the ICW and the Committee of Correspondence grew colder; for instance, the ICW refused financial aid from the Committee of Correspondence to be used to organize seminars for women in developing countries.[113] Indeed, in 1967, it was revealed that the CIA had been the funding source for the Committee of Correspondence. Only a few central members had known about the connection to the CIA.[114] Historian Helen Laville believes the funding source was not widely known, especially among the foreign correspondents. Parsons seems not to have been willing to disclose the background of the Committee, whose work was closely linked to the US policy to fund information campaigns to counter Soviet propaganda.[115]

The Committee of Correspondence also reached South Korea. Several Korean women, including Kim Hwallan, became correspondents in the circle and participated in different seminars and training sessions organized by the Committee of Correspondence. For instance, the Committee of Correspondence organized the Second Asian Workshop in New York in May 1957. Although intended for "women leaders from Arab-Moslem countries," the workshop included women from East and Southeast Asia to add value to the meeting.[116] A representative of the YWCA, Moon In-shil, participated from South Korea. Moon recalled her participation:

112 Garner, "Women organizing transnationally," 1–2. Little is known about the organization's influence on corresponding members and countries. See Jacqueline Van Voris, *Committee of Correspondence – Women with a World Vision* (Northampton: Sophia Smith Collection, 1989); Laville, "Committee of Correspondence," 104–121; Wilford, *Mighty Wurlitzer*, 155–157.

113 Flour, "Survey of a Century," 42. With Rose Parsons's retirement, connections between the American and Korean councils grew further. For instance, in 1976, the KNCW expressed a hope to meet with First Lady Betty Ford following their participation in the Triennial Conference in Vancouver and contacted the ICW headquarters to make contact with someone at the National Council of Women of the US. See Hong Sook-ja to Elena Bogdan, May 12, 1976, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.

114 Garner, "Women organizing transnationally," 3.

115 Laville, "Gender and Women's Rights," 532.

116 Committee of Correspondence, Second Asian Workshop (New York May 3–27, 1957), section B, 1, Ruth Frances Woodsmall Papers, 1863–1968, Sophia Smith Collection, Women's History Archive, Box 65, 54pp., Northampton, MA, 1957. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, Internationa*l [November 17, 2017].

> …Before I came I was working in narrow national terms. So were the people working with me. I hope when I go back to implant the broader point of view I have acquired. I thought when I came that our problems in Korea were bigger than anywhere else. Now I know they are not. Other people can solve even bigger problems, so we can too. This has been a great encouragement to me.[117]

A year later, Moon In-shil guided Rose Parsons during a visit to Seoul, which became formative in establishing the Korean National Council of Women. As this example and others indicate, cooperation via the Committee of Correspondence proved crucial for the final establishment of the Korean National Council of Women in the late 1950s.

The relations between the ICW and Korean women developed gradually and on various occasions. The first document in the ICW's archives directly referring to an interest in establishing a national council in South Korea dates to 1952. A correspondence between the preceding ICW President Marthe Böel and then the current President Jeanne Eder in February 1952 includes a list of six Korean women representing the Association of Korean Women who were considered potential contacts in the country. The names in Böel's list were Bak Sun Chon (Park Sun-chon), Ju Kap Kyong, Min Bok Suk, Han Sin Kwang, Bak Bong bai, and Hwang Sin Duk.[118] Böel weighs the association being "très Gouvernemental (donc dictatorial)" (pro-governmental, even dictatorial) as its membership reached five million women.[119] Attached to Böel's letter is a report on the activities of the Association of Korean Women. There, it claims to have been established in 1897, gone underground after the March 1st movement in 1919, and revived in 1945. The organization's purposes were stated as follows: "1. enlightening of women, fight the feudal system, develop instruction and education, teach love of nation and independence. 2. Welfare: establishment of orphanages, kindergarten etc."[120] The organization

117 Committee of Correspondence, Second Asian Workshop, section E, 1.

118 Martha Böel to Jeanne Eder, February 2, 1952, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. Böel writes that two of the Korean women had participated in the ICW Annual Conference in Philadelphia in 1947 as assistants; however, I could not verify who those women were since the triennial report from the Philadelphia meetings is unavailable.

119 Martha Böel to Jeanne Eder, February 2, 1952, and attached a report "Friday July 13th Meeting in the house of the Governor of the province with the Association of Korean Women," folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

120 "Friday July 13th Meeting in the house of the Governor of the province with the Association of Korean Women," folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. However, it is likelier that the Korean Women's Association was established in 1949 when the Korean Patriotic Women's Association (*Daehan Aeguk Buinhoe*) and Seoul City Women's Association (*Seoul-si Buinhoe*) were integrated. The first chairperson was Park Sun-chon, and the wife of President Rhee, Francesca Donner, was the honorary president. All adult females between

supported new labor legislation but felt it could not yet be implemented because better wages and shorter working hours seemed impossible in the current situation.[121]

The correspondence between Böel and Eder occurred less than a year after the WIDF delegation's visit to North Korea. It reveals interest towards affiliation in South Korea, and that background information was gathered as a report from a meeting among Korean women that had ended up all the way in Europe into the hands of leaders of international women's organizations. Was the Association of Korean Women deemed too close to the government that the ICW did not want to proceed with it? Did the conditions not seem promising enough to establish a national council in South Korea when the Korean War was still going? The archival material does not indicate this, but it is telling that no further correspondence is related to Korean women's affiliation to the ICW before 1958 when Rose Parsons visited Seoul.

Apparently, a cosmopolitan like Kim Hwallan, who traveled often as a representative of the Korean nation or educational and religious organizations, met many people and built extensive networks. Clearly, she had met with representatives of the ICW before the connection to Parsons, even if the meetings were not in any way related to the ICW's activities. For instance, in October 1947, Kim Hwallan, as a representative of the Korean YWCA, and Mme Le Jeune Kreglinger, as a representative of the ICW, participated in the YWCA World Council meeting in Hangzhou, China.[122] Records also show that some Koreans participated in hospitality committee meetings organized by the National Council of Women in the

16 and 60 belonged to the organization. After the conflict with Syngman Rhee, Park Sun-chon resigned in 1953, and Park Maria took the leadership. See *Han-guk Minjok Munhwa Daebaekkwasajeon* [Encyclopedia of Korean Culture] s.v. "Daehan Buinhoe" [Korean Women's Association], http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Index?contents_id=E0073368.

121 "Friday July 13th Meeting."

122 "Minutes of the Meeting of the World's Council of the Young Women's Christian Association, held at Hangchow, China, October 15–27, 1947" (Geneva: World's Young Women's Christian Association, 1947), 4, 6. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [May 16, 2018]. On Hangzhou meeting, see Karen Garner, "Global Feminism and Postwar Reconstruction: The World YWCA Visitation to Occupied Japan, 1947," *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 191–227. According to Choi Keum-sook, the KNCW president (2015–2021), Kim Hwallan and YWCA leader Yoo Gwi-ok had "close ties" with the leadership of the ICW. See Choi Keum-sook, "Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe 60nyeon Yeoseong Undongsa: Gukje Yeoseong Gyoryu Hwaldong – Yeoseong Chabyeol Cheolpye Hyubyak Gaip Ikkeulda" [Korean National Council of Women, 60 years of women's movement's history: Leading the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women], *Yeoseong Shinmun*, November 10, 2019, http://www.womennews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=194194 [accessed July 18, 2020].

United States in the mid-1950s.[123] In June 1957, Kim Ok-soon participated as an observer in the ICW Triennial Conference held in Montreal.[124] Kim Ok-soon's desired participation was discussed between ICW officials Alice Stetten and Helen Gmur in two months before the conference after the American Korean Foundation had recommended Kim becoming the observer.[125] Earlier that spring, Rose Parsons had suggested inviting observers from countries without national councils, mentioning (South) Korea and Japan separately. Her idea was to use women already in the US or Canada to save money: "As we cannot afford to send a "field worker" or our President to visit these countries, it seems an awfully good way to expose them to ICW."[126] The ICW agreed to invite the observers to its meetings if no expenses for the organization incurred.[127]

Following the Montreal triennial meeting, the National Council of Women of the United States organized a seminar for delegates and observers, including a tour of the UN. Although her name is unmentioned, "the young teacher from Korea" likely refers to Kim Ok-soon, whose thoughts on the event were also cited in the report from the meeting:

> After having been to the above meeting, I felt, firstly, the urgent need of cooperation for the Eastern countries with the West providing more opportunities and voices in International affairs. Secondly, the need of emphasis in the West upon the understanding of the Eastern cultures and people, through school curriculums and other various actual exchange programs. […] The knowledge and experience I gained through and at the meeting toward my future task for women's enlightenment will be inestimable.[128]

Rose Parsons hosted the event as the president of the National Council of Women of the United States. Thanking Parsons for organizing the event, Charles Hogan, the

[123] Report of the International Hospitality Committee of the National Council of Women of the United States, Inc. 1955–1956, compiled by Alice DeWitt Stetten, Chairman, folder 1761 AVG-Carhif.

[124] "List of delegates," in International Council of Women, *Report of the Triennial Council Meeting, Montreal, Canada 5 to 15 June 1957* (Paris: International Council of Women, 1957), 36. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [June 8, 2017].

[125] Alice Stetten to Helen Gmur, May 22, 1957, folder 1761 AVG-Carhif.

[126] Rose Parsons to Helen Schneider-Gmur, February 25, 1957, folder 1761 AVG-Carhif. Often, such accounts did not differentiate North and South Korea, referring to South Korea simply as Korea.

[127] Helen Schneider-Gmur to Rose Parsons, March 4, 1957, folder 1761 AVG-Carhif.

[128] Report of the seminar, June 16–20, 1957, held by the National Council of Women of the United States. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [March 14, 2018], 1–2.

Chief on Non-Governmental Organizations Section in ECOSOC, said: "[feedback from the seminar] confirmed my opinion that these two days of exposing groups to the UN, when they themselves can take part, are probably the most effective way of spreading information about the United Nations."[129] As the WIDF lost its consultative status in the UN, the ICW took full advantage of its better relations to the world organization and used the UN's expansion to reach new countries. In the ICW Triennial meeting in 1957 in Montreal, Laura Dreyfus Barney, the Liaison Officer to the UN, reminded the ICW community:

> Never before have so many war-worn and undeveloped countries turned to a central institution of authority for support or aid. Never before, with expanding growth of the UN, have the I.C.W. and N.C.W. had like opportunities to spread the 'the Council Idea' of May Wright Sewall to women in a greater number of countries and regions. To-day women are more ready than they were in the past to join together in concerted action to improve their homes and ways of life in a maturing civilization.[130]

The following year, the ICW took determined steps to establish new national councils in Asia, including South Korea. As seen above, in the years between Korea's liberation and the late 1950s, Korean women had participated in the same meetings and occasions with the representatives of the ICW, not least because of the Committee of Correspondence. The last section of the chapter shall reconstruct from the ICW's archival records how these contacts eventually led to the establishment of the Korean National Council of Women in 1959. I examine how actively the ICW recruited South Korean women to join their international women's movement and what kind of responses Koreans gave to the idea of internationalism.

[129] Charles Hogan to Rose Parsons, September 30, 1957, in Report of the seminar, June 16–20, 1957, held by the National Council of Women of the United States. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [March 14, 2018]. Mire Koikari captures a similar story in her study on Japanese women and how their American counterparts tried to place the Japanese under the influence of the UN; see Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*, 101.

[130] Laura Barney, "Third Triennial Report of the Liaison Officer to the United Nations," in International Council of Women, in *Report of the Triennial Council Meeting, Montreal, Canada*, 36. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [June 8, 2017].

3.4 Establishing the ICW Branch in South Korea

The actual impetus for establishing a South Korean branch of the International Council of Women occurred in the spring of 1958 when Rose Parsons traveled to South, East, and Southeast Asia. She was on her way to meet her son and his family in Japan, visiting several countries and participating in the Asian-African Conference of Women at Colombo, held in February in the capital of Ceylon (Sri Lanka).[131] The ICW and the Committee of Correspondence had asked her "unanymously" [sic] to represent them at the various occasions during which Parsons would have a chance to talk in a local context about women's affairs.[132]

As the President of the National Council of Women of the United States, the Vice President of the ICW, and a Committee Member of the Committee of Correspondence, Parsons reported on the trip to Washington and Paris and to the Committee of Correspondence's director Alison Raymond Lanier. Since the copies of these letters are kept in the records of the ICW, from which I accessed them, it means that at some point, they were also sent to the ICW's Paris headquarters and that the headquarters was well aware of the activities of the Committee of Correspondence. The letters and reports Parsons wrote during the trip show that their purpose was not only to inform the recipients about the travel but create a list of new correspondents, as the following shows:

> Mrs. S. A. Adams, USOM, Addis Ababa [sic], Ethiopia (please note, C. of C.) said she would be glad to receive our Bulletins and she got the pattern and met Ethiopian women she would give us some names of women leaders. Alison, would you send her our "personal" bulletin and start with the last one saying I had asked you to send it to her, please.[133]

In another letter, Parsons discusses a Pakistani woman representing the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) and adds in brackets: "(C of C? Or what do you think? I would seem that APWA, although doing an excellent job in many ways, is run by a few good ones, but others are more interested in what they get out of it.

[131] Report to International Council of Women of Asian African Conference, February 15–24, 1958, submitted by Rose Parsons, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif. For more on the conference, see Armstrong, "Before Bandung," 305, 316.

[132] Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Rose Parsons, February 8, 1958. AVG-Carhif 1762; Around the world in 70 days, report from Rose Parsons, undated, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

[133] Letter No. 1 from Mrs. William Barclay Parsons, February 4 Rec'd February 10, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

[…])."[134] These examples hint that a continuous discussion was underway about who to invite to be part of the correspondents for the Committee of Correspondence. Often, the same names appeared as potential contacts for the ICW.

Creating contacts in Asia was important for the ICW. As Parsons started her journey, President Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux sent her a letter on behalf of the board stating her "Asian Journey" to be something "to which we all attach such great importance."[135] When Parsons attended the women's conference in Colombo as an observer and felt insecure in her role, she wrote to Lefaucheux before the conference began: "I certainly will sit quietly for the first few days anyway until I see if there is any desire on the part of the Asian-African women for the observers to take an active part in their discussion."[136] Parsons was by no means the only observer on site; representatives from the UN agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, and WHO and several international women's organizations such as the IAW, WILPF, the Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association, and the International Federation of University Women had also sent their own observers. Upon arriving in Ceylon, Parsons received guidelines from the ICW Secretary regarding negotiations with the new council countries. These included the ICW Constitution and directives for new affiliations, and a memo on the conditions of women's organizations in Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, and Ceylon.[137]

While Parsons took the trip for recruitment purposes, the ICW was clearly not open to allowing anyone to join. For instance, continuing her description of the Asian-African Conference of Women, Parsons organized the Iranian women into "very good and bad." Parsons also dismissed the request of one Iranian women's organization to set up a national council but expressed interest towards another.[138] Parsons thus also possessed the power to decide how to proceed in potential member countries and what kind of women's groups could become representatives of the ICW. In Colombo, Parsons found it unfortunate that she did not meet the South

134 Letter No. 2 from Mrs. William Barclay Parsons, February 4 Rec'd February 10, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

135 Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Rose Parsons, February 8, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

136 Rose Parsons to Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux, January 13, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

137 Burma joined in 1958, Singapore and Thailand 1960. Mrs. Delavenay-Musson to Rose Parsons, February 7, 1958. AVG-Carhif 1762. Attached is a letter from ICW Secretary Mrs. Delavenay-Musson to Rose Parsons, February 7, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

138 Rose Parsons to Alice Mayer Stetten, February 26, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif. Alice Stetten had become the convener of the Committee for Peace and International Relations at the 1954 Helsinki meeting. See International Council of Women, *Report of the Triennial Council Meeting, Montreal, Canada*, 23. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [June 8, 2017].

Korean delegation, which did not attend due to a misunderstanding on the nature of the conference: “Many countries, such as South Korea, thought it would be a communist meeting and so did not send delegates which was too bad!”[139] Simultaneously, many countries, including Burma and China, decided to send delegates for the same reason: to attend a communist conference. Parsons did not regard the communists benevolently; she even asked in the cover letter of her trip report not to widely circulate the report because it included a confidential discussion on “the delegates and the Communists.”[140] Parsons’s wording is a telling example on the Cold War climate surrounding women’s organizations at that time and how eager women were to build networks with other countries. The number of different meetings even led to much confusion.

On her way to the final destination in Japan, Parsons traveled from the Colombo conference to Seoul via Bangkok and Taipei. She arrived in Seoul on March 2, 1958, staying in the capital for a week before departing for Tokyo. In Seoul, Moon In-shil, whom Parsons had met earlier in a Committee of Correspondence workshop, accompanied her; Parsons stayed in a boarding house for missionaries since “the hotel accommodations are not the kind to draw tourists yet, to put it mildly.” Despite the city being all gray in Parsons’s view, she was surprised at how quickly it had recovered from the Korean War.[141] The official report of Parsons’s trip to the ICW is brief and includes information on Parsons’s negotiations in Thailand. As for South Korea, Parsons only explains that she had conversations with several women leaders on possibly establishing a national council in Korea. The only name she mentions is that of Kim Hwallan, whom she regarded as “perhaps the most respected woman there.” The report summarizes that Korean women “felt that this was not the right moment to form a Council of Women, as organizations were still very unsure of themselves.”[142] In contrast, Parsons’s communication with the Committee of Correspondence is much more multifaceted on the situation of Korean women and reveals what happened in Seoul during her week’s stay.

Soon after her arrival in Seoul, Parsons was invited to a dinner hosted by Kim Hwallan, and the two were joined by some faculty members of the Ewha Woman’s University. “We talked about the Committee of Correspondence and Dr. Kim did not feel that it was very helpful as far as the realities of Korean women were concerned, but others like the information and find it interesting. Those who did not

[139] Rose Parsons to Alice Mayer Stetten, February 26, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

[140] Cover letter for a report “Around the world in 70 days,” Rose Parsons to Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux, April 6, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

[141] Rose Parsons to Alison Raymond Lanier, March 2, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

[142] Report from Mrs. Parsons on Korea and Thailand from her April 1958 letter, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

belong were anxious to do so."[143] During the trip and several dinners, Parsons collected many names for the correspondence circle. In a meeting organized by the YWCA, Parsons gave a speech while Moon In-shil collected the names of the participants who, according to Parsons, later "joined up" with the Committee of Correspondence.[144] Parsons visited Ewha and Yonsei University and met more Korean women through the contacts of the Americans in the country. Despite new names to contact, Parsons expressed her disappointment with the lack of openness among these women, as they were unwilling "to talk unless you get them alone."[145]

Many of the women Parsons met in Korea remain anonymous in the correspondence, but the women she contacted on her last day in Seoul are mentioned: Kim Shin-sil, Kim Churl-ahn (Kim Chol-an), and Koh Whang-kyung.[146] Kim Shin-sil was the General Secretary of Korean Red Cross, which had been re-established after the Korean War. Kim Chol-an was the only female representative in the 3rd National Assembly (1954–1958), belonging to the Liberal Party of Syngman Rhee. Koh Whang-kyung, the former head of the Women's Bureau under the USAMGIK,

143 Rose Parsons to Alison Raymond Lanier, March 2, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif; Around the world in 70 days, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif. In the spring of 1961, before the military coup, Kim Hwallan traveled to the United States. In March, she participated in the Vassar College International Conference held with the theme "Emerging Values and New Directions: Their Implications for Education." The meeting brought together several female scholars, educators, and officials, including Hannah Arendt and several participants from Asian countries. The Committee of Correspondence supported the conference. Although Kim Hwallan had been skeptical about the usefulness of the Committee of Correspondence for Korean women, she kept participating in the events. See "Vassar College International Conference, 19–24 March 1961. Theme: Emerging Values and New Directions: Their Implications for Education," Committee of Correspondence Records, 1952–1989, of Sophia Smith Collection, Women's History Archive, Box 19, folder 199, 16pp., Northampton, MA, 1961. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [June 8, 2017].

144 Rose Parsons to Alison Raymond Lanier, March 2, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif. During the Korean War, George Paik was the first President of Yonsei University and the Minister of Education who demanded continuing higher education despite the war. See Kim Jong-chol, "Historical Development," in *Higher Education in Korea: Tradition and Adaptation*, ed. John C. Weidman and Park Nam-gi (New York and London: Falmer Press, 2000), 37.

145 Rose Parsons to Alison Raymond Lanier, March 2, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

146 Among the potential contacts in Seoul Parsons met during her trip were Kim Ok-soon, who had participated in the Committee of Correspondence activities in North America, and Choong Ryang-chong, who was invited to participate in a four-week long workshop held in several locations in the United States organized by the Committee of Correspondence. For Choong's participation, see Report of a Four-Week Seminar Attended by Women from 22 Countries: Workshop 27 April–26 May 1960, Committee of Correspondence, Ruth Frances Woodsmall Papers, 1863–1968, Sophia Smith Collection, Women's History Archive, Box 65, 72pp., Northampton, MA, 1960. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [June 8, 2017].

was now a sociology professor at Ewha Woman's University. Parsons clearly liked her, describing Koh as the "greatest of them all. A very lively and attractive woman, and a ball of fire."[147] Parsons also reported Koh's opinion on Korea's insecure situation:

> And she ended her fascinating story by saying that their country is a very rich country and be very productive and economically advanced if they had the know-how. [...] What they lack is the spirit and the courage to go ahead and do things. Her word about the Government was that after the war, heroes were put in top jobs, but heroes do not know how to govern. So at this moment it's a big mess, and no one trusts each other.[148]

Parsons's travel report also cites an anonymous Korean – "a dear friend" whose comments are worth quoting at some length since they indicate the attitude towards internationalism among the women Parsons had met:

> Your visiting Korea is a very successful one. This is one of the best way to make Korean women to understand what the women in other countries are doing or trying to do. Due to many reasons, our women's life are far behind compare to many other's. Yet we have great hope in front of us. We are trying hard to build up step by step. We need good friends to help us and encourage us, for this purpose specially. Again I want to thank you for your visiting this country.[149]

Similarly to this unnamed woman, during the following decades, the Korean National Council of Women often drew comparisons between South Korea and other countries and referred to the help Korean women received from other countries while trying to decide how to improve the conditions in South Korea.

In her correspondence from Japan, Parsons was very straight in her expressions that she was there to form a National Council of Women.[150] Letters from Seoul are not so straightforward on the matter, but in her travel description, she writes that "I talked to several people about the possibilities of forming a Council, and we will be in touch with Dr. Helen Kim [Kim Hwallan], the president of EWA [sic] University, who will advise us to the hopes, through the facilities of her office as president of

[147] Letter No. 6 from Mrs. William Barclay Parsons, March 14, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.
[148] Letter No. 6.
[149] Around the world in 70 days, April 6, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.
[150] For example, in her first letter from Japan, Parsons writes, "2½ quiet days in Tokyo with two chats regarding the formation of a National Council of Women." See Letter No. 6 from Mrs. William Barclay Parsons, March 14, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

University Women."[151] Following Kim Hwallan's suggestion, a pre-existing organization instead of an individual was selected to be the contact with the ICW. Parsons trusted Kim's help since "she, I am sure, will see that her secretary answers letters and reports to ICW as to the future hopes of a NCW of Korea." Parsons asked the ICW headquarters to write to Kim to thank her for the willingness of the University Women to be the contact and possibly express the hopes for a national council in Korea; however, she also repeated that the contact could not be regarded "as paying members."[152] The last remark suggests the ICW was not only after new affiliations but affiliations capable of paying for their membership.

After Parsons visited Korea, no steady process towards an affiliate with the Korean Council of Women seemed in sight. In the summer of 1958, Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux inquired from Parsons about an update on the prospects of a council in Korea when surveying the status of the ICW contacts to different countries.[153] Eventually, Lefaucheux followed Parsons's suggestion and wrote to Kim Hwallan, although only in November 1958. President Lefaucheux again expressed the ICW's interest towards having close contact with Korean women, although she remarked that forming a council would take time and require "propitious conditions." Her letter aimed to create regular contacts between the ICW and Korean women, "pending the formation at a later date of a National Council of Women of Korea." Instead of pushing Korean women to immediately form a council, Lefaucheux suggested that Korean women could start cooperating with the International Standing Committees of the ICW because "[i]t seems to us that if we could establish in those countries where we have not yet any National Council a small nucleus of women working actively with our committees we should be able to broaden the scope of the Council's actions considerably, while building up at the same time useful international experience for the Council of that country when it is eventually formed."[154] Besides asking for Kim Hwallan's willingness to participate in the work of the Standing Committees, Lefaucheux requested her to provide other possible names to be contacted for the same purpose.[155] The ICW headquarters had to wait for two months

151 Around the world in 70 days, April 6, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

152 Report from Mrs. Parsons on Korea and Thailand from her April 1958 letter, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

153 Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Rose Parsons, July 23, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

154 Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Helen Kim, November 14, 1958, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. In the correspondence between the ICW and Korean women, I have marked the letters addressed to or sent by Kim Hwallan with her English name, Helen Kim, because they can be found in the archives in that format.

155 Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Helen Kim, November 14, 1958, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

before Kim replied with the good and surprising news in mid-January 1959: an initiative meeting for a national council of women had been held.[156]

The Korean National Council of Women first saw the light of day at the residence of Ewha Woman's University's President on January 15, 1959. Kim Hwallan, the Ewha President, led the "unusual meeting" among 26 women representing different women's groups since the purpose was not only to celebrate the New Year but discuss a new women's umbrella organization.[157] The meeting was successful since the next day, Kim wrote to ICW Paris headquarters to announce that a decision for establishing national council had been made. An initiative committee was formed to formally prepare to establish a national council. Kim, representing the University Women, was elected as a chairman of the initiative committee; in this capacity, she requested more materials from the ICW to help organize the council.[158] The other members were Park Maria and Park Esther from the Korean YWCA, Park In-soon from the Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, and Park Deok-soon from the Korean Young Women's Association. Lacking its own office space, the Korean council started operations in the same office as the University Women at Ewha; thus, it also took advantage of the existing international connections. For Kim, Ewha was essential footing to support her many social activities; indeed, the beginning of the KNCW on the school's grounds was no exception.[159]

Despite announcing the establishment of an initiative committee, the ICW headquarters still appeared to feel uncertain about the efforts of the Korean women since, in the next month, President Lefaucheux invited Kim Hwallan to attend the Congress of the International Council of Women to be held in Vienna in May – an event that "might possibly be the bait for a Women's Council in Corea [sic]..." Lefaucheux continued: "You know that many of us sincerely wish that the International Council of Women may include a branch in your country."[160] Kim Hwallan had to reject the invitation due to her duties as the President of Ewha Womans University.[161]

The ICW's uncertainty was unnecessary as things proceeded quickly in Seoul. The Korean National Council of Women was officially established on December 26,

[156] Helen Kim to Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux, January 16, 1959, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.
[157] *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 45–46.
[158] Helen Kim to Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux, January 16, 1959, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.
[159] Seo Ji-hui, "Kim Hwal-lan yeoseongnon-ui geundae yeoseong nonjeong teukseong-gwa jeollyakseong yeongu" [Study of Some Modern Feminist Characteristics and the Strategy of Helen Kim's Thesis on Women], master's thesis, (Soongsil University, 2011), 111; Kim, "Internationalization of Women's Movement," 166.
[160] Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Helen Kim, February 14, 1959, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.
[161] Helen Kim to Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux, February 25, 1959, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

1959, consisting of eight women's organizations.[162] The establishment followed the procedures given by the ICW. The ICW guidelines stated, "where no suitable national organization exists, a representative group of women and women's organizations must unite to form a national organization. [...] It is moreover important that an affiliated or affiliating Council represent as broadly as possible women's interests of all kinds in its own country."[163] Establishing as broad as possible an organization also required a constitution matching the ICW's. The constitution required the affiliated councils to "support the principles of the ICW" and to "work actively towards overcoming all social, political and other disabilities restricting women."[164] The constitution of the KNCW included the following objects:

> In cooperation with other members of the International Council of Women, this council shall work for the following three objects: a. To promote the welfare of mankind, of the family and of the individual. b. To work for the removal of all disabilities of women. c. To train women for their responsibilities as citizens.[165]

The constitution ordered the council to be administrated by the Board of Officers, consisting of the President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, and the Executive Committee, consisting of the same personnel and additionally the Conveners and Vice Conveners of the Standing Committees. The president was the official representative of the organization and chairman in different meetings.[166] The Korean council filled these positions with women who had made long careers in the fields of women's education and women's organizations. Kim Hwallan was elected as the president, a long-time YWCA worker Park Maria as vice president, and the Standing Committees were armed with women such as South Korea's first female lawyer Lee Tai-young, poet Mo Yun-sook, educator Whang Sin-duk; and the previous head of Women's Bureau, Koh Whang-kyung.[167] Most of the KNCW's founding members were born between the 1890s and 1910s; thus, they had grown up and received their education mainly under Japanese colonial rule. Becoming highly educated and obtaining positions in Korean universities, most often in Ewha,

162 *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 48.

163 Emphasis in original. "How to proceed in order to become affiliated to the International Council of Women," folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

164 "How to proceed in order to become affiliated to the International Council of Women," folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

165 Constitution of the Korean Council of Women, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

166 Constitution of the Korean Council of Women.

167 A list of officers attached to a letter from Helen Kim to Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux, March 20, 1960, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

these women were among the few having public visibility in colonial Korea. The Korean council commenced in the hands of well-experienced women.

Information on the founding of the Korean council reached the ICW only in March 1960 when Kim Hwallan made an official request for the affiliation of the Korean National Council of Women to the ICW in the aftermath of South Korea's infamous 1960 presidential elections.[168] To become affiliated with the ICW, a letter of application needed to be sent to the President or Secretary of the ICW along with a copy of the constitution and a resolution stating that an authorized body of the organization has expressed the will "to become a member of the ICW and to abide by the Constitution of ICW."[169] Following the application letter, the issue was taken to the ICW Board, which decided whether the proposed organization was to become "a National Council of Women or a Council of Women" at the meeting of the Executive Committee. The final decision on affiliation was to be carried out in the Triennial Council meeting.[170] The KNCW's affiliation with the ICW was ratified in August 1960 during the 16th Triennial Assembly meeting of the ICW held in Istanbul, Turkey. The military had taken over Turkey just two months before the Triennial Conference, but the ICW did not care to problematize the situation any further and proceeded to organize the conference under the protection of the new rule, which utilized the conference to showcase the modernization of Turkey.[171]

On the same occasion as South Korea, the national councils of Bolivia, Columbia, Haiti, Iran, Singapore, Thailand, Tunisia, and Turkey were also ratified. Against the ICW's wish, no Korean delegate was present at the meeting, but eventually, the information on the successful affiliation was delivered to Seoul through Rose Parsons.[172] At the time of the Istanbul conference, the ICW's recruitment policies were in full swing. The conference report featured a long list of countries, including Afghanistan, Ceylon, the Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Cuba, and Japan, along with other countries from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, to which contacts had been made.[173] In her letter to Parsons, the ICW President Marie-Hélène

[168] Helen Kim to Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux, March 20, 1960, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. According to the KNCW history compilation, the request for affiliation was made on March 30; however, the letter from Kim was already signed on March 20, see *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 56.

[169] "How to proceed in order to become affiliated to the International Council of Women," folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

[170] "How to proceed in order to become affiliated to the International Council of Women."

[171] Azak and de Smaele, "National and Transnational Dynamics," 53–56.

[172] See Helen Kim to Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux, November 23, 1960, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif, International Council of Women, *Report of the Triennial Council Meeting, Istanbul, Turkey*, 8, 149, 208–216.

[173] International Council of Women, *Report of the Triennial Council Meeting, Istanbul, Turkey*.

Lefaucheux emphasized the importance of consolidating the existing network of the ICW's branches and to reach out to countries without branches, which reflected the ICW's Cold War policies.[174]

The slowness of international mail set obstacles in making closer connections between the ICW and Korea. Letters went missing due to confusion in mailing addresses; for example, Kim Hwallan never received an answer from the ICW to her letter announcing the National Council of Women's establishment in Korea. Only after requesting the issue from Parsons, who again delivered the information to Paris, could Kim obtain confirmation from the ICW that the affiliation procedure was underway and would be handled in the Executive Board meeting at the Triennial Conference in Istanbul.[175] The problems in correspondence continued; the following year, Kim wrote to Paris headquarters asking to continue the correspondence with the National Council of the US as she was already in close contact with Rose Parsons. This request was unusual, and the markings to the original letter in the archives show that Parsons asked the ICW to ignore the request from the Koreans since it was not a policy of the ICW to have another council as a medium of correspondence.[176] However, Parsons promised to ensure all circulars from the ICW reached Korea to secure the flow of information. This was important because, in the eyes of the ICW, the new council in South Korea had taken its work seriously by providing counterparts for all International Standing Committees.[177] Both players experienced the obstacles between Korean women far away from Paris and the ICW, but the ICW assured the need to maintain connections to Korea: "We are really anxious to establish a regular and direct contact with you."[178]

The obstacles of internationalism were more practical than ideological. At the moment of establishment, it was clear the KNCW would apply for affiliation to the ICW, thus selecting its English name accordingly.[179] Conversely, the Korean-language name *Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe* reflects the post-liberation

174 Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Rose Parsons, October 19, 1960, folder 1763 AVG-Carhif.

175 Catherine Pomonti to Helen Kim, June 30, 1960, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. The records of the ICW show several missing letters from the side of the ICW and the Korean Council, also confirmed by Helen Kim in a letter to Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux, June 13, 1961. For the issue of missing letters, see Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Helen Kim, May 8, 1961, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

176 Helen Kim to Catherine Pomonti, April 25, 1961, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

177 Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux to Helen Kim, May 8, 1961, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

178 Catherine Pomonti to Helen Kim, June 13, 1961, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. Sometimes, the reports sent by Korean women to ICW's questionnaires did not make it in time for them to be included in the ICW's final reports. See, e.g. Catherine Pomonti to Wheng Sinduck [Hwang Sin-duk], April 17, 1962, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

179 *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 48.

developments concerning women's position and its conceptualization. The term *yeoseong* became increasingly politicized in liberated Korea. For example, the Korean Patriotic Women's Association – a nationwide women's organization established in the aftermath of the liberation – adopted *buin* in its Korean name: *Hanguk Aeguk Buinhoe*. The term *buin* referred more to a married woman and was more middle class in its character than the more progressive – and recent – term *yeoseong*.[180] Contrary to this discussion, the National Council of Women, which, after all, was very much middle class in its character, interestingly chose to use *yeoseong* in its name.

Four of the KNCW's eight founding organizations had been members of an earlier coalition, the Federation of Korean Women's Groups (*Daehan Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe*), established in 1953 by lawyer Lee Tai-young. After proving its anti-communist stand, the Federation was one of the civil society groups allowed to operate under Rhee's regime. The Federation focused its work on legal reform to gain gender equality. The Federation-associated groups that participated in establishing the KNCW were the Korean Association of University Women (*Daehan Yeohaksa Hyeophoe*), the Korean Association of YWCA (*Daehan YWCA Yeonhaphoe*), the Korean Women's Association (*Daehan Buinhoe*), and the Society for Research of Women's Issues (*Yeoseong Munje Yeonguhoe*).[181] The last mentioned had been established in 1952 by Park Sun-chon, Hwang Sin-duk, Lee Tai-young and Lee Hui-ho, who, except Park also joined the KNCW early on.[182] The original eight of the KNCW also included the Mother's Union for the Republic of Korea (*Daehan Omonihoe*), the National Association of Protection of Women and Girls (*Bunyo Bohosaeop Jeonguk Yeonhaphoe*), the Hanyang Women's Club (*Hanyang Yeoseong Keulleop*), and the Counseling Center for Students' Problems (*Hakseng Munje Sangdamso*).[183]

The tour Parsons made to Asia described above provided an impulse for Korean women. The 30-year history compilation of the KNCW published in 1993 acknowledges that the events leading to forming the organization were due to

[180] Charles Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 94.

[181] Ki-young Shin, "The Politics of the Family Law Reform Movement in Contemporary Korea: A Contentious Space for Gender and the Nation," *The Journal of Korean Studies* 11, no. 1 (2006): 99; Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement*, 21.

[182] Kim and Kim, "Mapping a hundred years of activism," 195.

[183] The Korean Women's Association, which the ICW had reviewed back in 1952, had already ceased being a member in October 1962 after having been dissolved by the military government that came to power in 1961. See *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 397. See also Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement*, 21, 34–35n3.

Parson's visit.[184] An outside impulse in establishing the Korean National Council of Women was actually common among the national affiliations of the ICW. Anne Cova has discussed that in Europe, the national councils of France, Italy, and Portugal originated with some kind of a foreign impact, often mediated through events, especially the ICW's own conferences. Personal contacts between women were also important for establishing networks leading to the beginning of a new council.[185] However, the particular trips for recruitment were often related to areas outside the West: South America, Africa, and Asia.[186] It needs to be noted that the ICW was not interested in accepting any conceivable women's group that was willing to join the ICW. The travel report from Parsons's trip to Asia reveals her reluctance to accept suggestions from certain women or groups from, for example, Singapore and Iran, without providing many more details than her personal judgement.[187]

The personal connections of Korean women, mediated via educational and religious circles and the Committee of Correspondence, seemingly played a role in establishing the Korean National Council of Women. Historian Kim Young-sun's analysis summarizes that the reason behind the successful networking between the ICW and Kim Hwallan lies in the partnership between the anti-communist state, its Christian right-wing orientation, and the conservativeness of the ICW.[188] Heo Yun views the establishment of a new women's umbrella organization as an achievement and limitation to the women's movement. Although women could gather their voices and secure political influence together to improve women's status, Yun views that in 1959, the connections the founding members and organizations had with the First Republic were also burdensome.[189] I shall continue delving into this topic in the next chapter and discuss how the relationship between the KNCW and the anti-communist, yet authoritarian state developed.

The beginning of the KNCW was dramatic in many ways. When the organization was established, the situation on the Korean peninsula was still fragile following the devastating Korean War. Syngman Rhee, the first president of the Republic of Korea, had ruled for over a decade and faced resistance to his authoritarian measures. The resistance culminated on April 19, 1960, in the April Revolution, as it is known

184 *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 46–47.

185 Cova, "Feminisms and Associativism," 22; Anne Cova, "The National Councils of Women in France, Italy, and Portugal Comparisons and Entanglements, 1888–1939," in *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective,* 46–76.

186 Sandell, *Rise of Women's Transnational Activism*, 137.

187 See Rose Parsons to Alice Stetten, February 19, 1958, and February 26, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

188 Kim Young-sun, "Internationalization of Women's Movement," 179.

189 Heo, "Development and alteration of women's culture," 54.

(a.k.a. 4.19, *sa-ilgu* in Korean), following election fraud around the presidential elections held the month before. Rhee's primary opponent in the election, Cho Byeong-ok, died just before the election, and Rhee secured victory despite his old age. President Rhee had handpicked Lee Ki-poong as his favorite for vice president; when Lee won with a clear margin against the opposition candidate Chang Myon, the opposition announced the election was a fraud. Major demonstrations spread from Masan to Seoul, reaching the gates of the Blue House on April 19, demanding the president's resignation. By April 26, Rhee agreed to step down, and the First Republic came to an end. The Americans helped him leave for exile in Hawaii, where he eventually died in 1965. The Second Republic was based on a parliamentary system, and the power of the president – the position to which Yun Bosun was elected in August 1960 – was given to Prime Minister Chang Myon. However, the democratic experience only lasted until the following spring.[190]

Coincidentally, on the day of the April Revolution, the newly elected KNCW officers visited the border village of Panmunjom on the DMZ, separating the two Koreas. Upon departure, the group did not foresee what the day would bring, but on their way back to Seoul, the roads were blocked, and the group landed in a difficult situation since many of the women were wives to politicians from Rhee's party or members of the National Assembly.[191] In the aftermath of the April Revolution, the KNCW lost its first vice president, Park Maria, the wife of Lee Ki-poong. When Lee and his family had to escape the angry mob, their son Lee Kang-seok killed the whole family and himself in such a desperate situation.[192]

The KNCW faced another loss a year later when young Whang Yun-seuk, South Korea's first female judge, was found dead at her home in April 1961. Whang had been selected as the vice-convener of the KNCW's Standing Committee of Laws and Suffrage in 1959, the convener being lawyer Lee Tai-young. Whang's death was important news for a moment, but the newspapers soon found something more acute to write about.[193] On May 16, 1961, the army took over Seoul and staged a coup. In the coming years, the KNCW had to find a way to work with the leader of the coup, General Park Chung-hee.

190 See, e.g. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea*, 376–378.

191 *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 57.

192 On the April Revolution and the fraud election, see Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, *A Modern History* (New York and London: W.W. Norton Company, 2005), 344–352. On the death of Lee's family, see Je-Yeon Oh, "Yeohaksaeng on the Streets: The Participation and Marginalization of Yeohaksaeng in the April 19 Revolution," *Korea Journal* 60, no. 4 (Winter 2020): 232–233.

193 Hwang Yun-seok was found dead along with her husband; the police suspected food poisoning or suicide. See "Hwang Yun-seok yeopansa jeolmyeong" ["Female judge Whang Yun-seuk dead"] *Dong-A Ilbo*, April 21, 1961, 1.

3.5 Conclusion

In her path-breaking study, *Worlds of Women*, Leila Rupp discusses the Cold War only briefly but captures a central idea that has continued to fuel recent research on women's international organizing: The rivalry between the socialist and liberal women's organizations increased women's global participation, especially in areas that gained their independence during de-colonization.[194] This chapter describes how the situation of international women's organizations appeared before 1945, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War. I shed light on the same period on the Korean peninsula and argue that feminist activism in the early Cold War period in the two Koreas and globally was a parallel phenomenon. By accepting the Women's International Democratic Federation and the West-origin women's organizations as sources or actors of feminism, I discuss how tensions between them were also productive. This chapter aims to propose a polycentric approach to the history of Cold War feminisms and remind us that social movements are not born nor operate in a one-dimensional reality.

The recent scholarship on the WIDF has restored the organization's legacy and its affiliations in different countries by demonstrating its contributions to women's rights, peace, and anti-colonial movements during the Cold War. In the North Korean case, the histories of women's organizing and its international connections suffer from partial and fragmented sources. Despite these difficulties, the Korean case has received some attention in the previous literature regarding the WIDF. As precious as this research has been for a greater understanding of women's activism in the Cold War, most of the works one-dimensionally focus only on the WIDF and do not consider its relations to other organizations. My aim here has been to contribute to the gap in research and demonstrate some of the consequences of the Cold War rivalry. The ICW surrounded itself with the aura of an apolitical non-governmental organization throughout the Cold War. However, the choices the ICW considered apolitical were tightly bound to contemporary Cold War politics, which was evident in its commentaries on communism and indifference towards the military coup in Turkey in 1960, just before an ICW Triennial was organized there, and a similar attitude towards the military coup in South Korea in 1961 as the following chapter addresses.

For this study's purposes, it is crucial to acknowledge that on the Korean peninsula, the rivaling international women's organizations, the ICW and WIDF, established affiliations on both sides of the division, similar to the divided Germany. The diverging routes feminism took on the Korean peninsula make it a valuable

[194] Rupp, *Worlds of Women*, 47.

example of the complexity of networks and negotiations in play when women sought ways to make their voices heard and activities count. Both Koreas underwent fervent nation-building, and women wanted to be active participants. In North Korea, women quickly mobilized into a national-level organization and passed a Gender Equality Law. North Korean women joined early on in the international head organization of the socialist camp, the WIDF, sharing the discourse of anti-colonialism and critique of American domination. However, the role of the Democratic Women's Union as a feminist front in North Korea started fading away as it increasingly became a supporter of the patriarchal state, in which legislation such as the Gender Equality Law could not change the old practices, after all. In South Korea, the KNCW was established following a process of multilayered international connections. The story of the KNCW's establishment in 1959, reconstructed from the archival records of the ICW, presents a perspective missing from the previous research. The existing scholarship has sidelined the process and roots of the organization. My study shows that the KNCW originates from the international women's movement and its Cold War motivations. Formative in the process were Rose Parsons's personal visit to South Korea, her meetings with local female leaders, and eventually, Kim Hwallan's initiative to call the representatives of different women's organizations together.

Seeing daylight in the last moments of Syngman Rhee's First Republic, the KNCW had to face difficult domestic conditions for operation despite being born out of international aspirations. The April Revolution in 1960 and the military coup in 1961 caused havoc for social organizations. From the early 1960s onwards, however, the KNCW consolidated its national role in Park Chung-hee's South Korea. The topic of the next chapter is what kind of position the KNCW established in relation to Park's regime and how the organization framed its role in nation-building.

4 The Korean National Council of Women, Nation-building, and the Park Chung-hee Era

> In light of gender history, people's sovereignty meant a unique opportunity for women under mass dictatorship to be mobilized as citizens equal to their male counterparts. Despite its frequently overt patriarchal ideologies, mass dictatorship could even appeal to some feminists due to its imaginary equality among citizens. [...] Viewed from the interplay between the construction of gender identities and the formation of other identities, such as nation, class and race, women in mass dictatorships cease to be passive victims.[1]

Women exercise essential agency in a mass dictatorship. The literature on mass dictatorship and women suggests that reading women's role as oppressed or fooled by the ruling systems gives an unbalanced view of the past. Instead of making women blind followers and victims of the dictatorship, the mass dictatorship paradigm challenges the conventionally held interpretations of women's roles and agency and seeks to find new perspectives for the analysis. For instance, Kim Kyu Hyun's study on women in the total mobilization programs of the Japanese Empire during Korea's colonial era notes that women's participation in mobilizing or supporting patriarchal ideals was a survival strategy. He argues: "When the conditions of total mobilisation made it difficult for them to assert their desires, they opted for compromises, some through active participation in the state-sponsored mobilisation programmes, others by means of manipulating the rhetoric of being homemakers to resist patriarchal coercion."[2] In this manner, the mass dictatorship paradigm finds explanations to women's behavior and motivations under coercive regimes.

1 Lim, "Series Introduction: Mapping Mass Dictatorship," 14.

2 Kyu Hyun Kim, "The State, Family and 'Womanhood' in Colonial Korea: 'Public' Women and the Contradictions of the Total Mobilization Programme," in *Gender Politics and Mass Dictatorship*, 189.

Thus, instead of depicting women as mere victims of an authoritarian regime, this chapter accounts for women as agents in making South Korea's political history. It reminds that not every woman adopted the same role under the authoritarian regime and that the roles of women are not limited to those of victim and perpetrator. The case of the Korean National Council of Women – a novel organization striving to establish its activities at the turn of the 1960s – illustrates the process of "attempted mobilization" and how the mobilized selves worked as active agents in building their empowerment, believing they were invited to do so as sovereign members of the society.[3] In this process, the feminism of the KNCW took a particular Cold War-inspired shape: one that did not question anti-communism yet actively articulated a greater role for women in nation-building. I argue that during the period of militarized modernity when South Koreans were disciplined to the national project of industrialization, economic growth, and protecting their nation from the communists, the KNCW was among those who adopted the state rhetoric into its own work to find room for its own operation.

By applying the concept of mass dictatorship to the case of authoritarian South Korea, this chapter accounts for and analyzes the KNCW's activities during Park Chung-hee's rule in the 1960s and 1970s. The current chapter and the next examine how the KNCW raised the national projects of the Park regime: the modernization of the fatherland, all-out national security, and the population problem as essentially women's issues in its publications and reports to the ICW. Here, I shall discuss the mobilization of civic organizations, such as women's organizations, to the nation-building of Park's increasingly authoritarian regime. The first section discusses the consequences of the 1961 military coup for the KNCW and how the relationship between the state and the organizations was formed during the early Park Chung-hee era. I introduce how the KNCW received responsibility for organizing the National Convention on Women and hosting the new Women's Hall in Seoul. The second section discusses how the KNCW's work is linked to the political history of Cold War South Korea and how what we now perceive as historical key events were important daily life issues for historical figures. I also discuss how the KNCW was engaged in enforcing the subimperial position of South Korea by supporting the Vietnam War, participating in projects of all-out national security, and fighting against communism. The final section shows how the gender identities proposed by the state were not only used for its benefit but against it. I also return to the relationship between the KNCW and the International Council of Women and inspect the meaning of the Cold War to understanding the state-civil society relationship.

[3] See Jie-Hyun Lim and Karen Petrone, "Introduction: Meandering between Self-empowerment and Self-mobilisation," in *Gender Politics and Mass Dictatorship*, 25.

4.1 Everyone is Needed for Nation-building

The democratic experience under the parliamentary government of Prime Minister Chang Myon that had followed the April Revolution in 1960 did not last long as the military took power in South Korea on May 16, 1961. The democratic administration had been unable to provide solutions for the country's social unrest and economic difficulties. The military junta, led by middle-rank military officers including Park Chung-hee and Kim Jong-pil, regarded civil rule as incapable of taking care of the situation and replaced the Second Republic, dissolved the National Assembly, and three days following the coup, established the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction. This organ ruled South Korea until the return of civilian rule in 1963 and the establishment of the Third Republic. General Park had already purged the first chairman of the Supreme Council, General Chang Do-young, in early July 1961. Kim Jong-pil, who was married to Park's niece, became the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), which aimed to control domestic opposition and security threats. The new rule set economic growth, anti-communism, and rooting out corruption as its main tasks.[4]

In her autobiography *Grace Sufficient*, Kim Hwallan described the sentiments at the dawn of the coup as follows:

> The first I knew of the military coup was being awakened by the noise of rifles. My first thought was that the Korean war [sic] had suddenly become hot and that firing was taking place on the thirty-eight parallel. Within twenty minutes I heard that it was our own military coup. Like myself, everyone began to feel safe and secure, welcoming the new situation not because we believed in a military coup but because we knew that was the last resort to fall back upon.[5]

Kim continues by describing how she and many others believed the well-trained military officers held leadership potential in contrast to the politicians, many of whom were her friends, who became helpless and useless after gaining power and trying to govern the populace who had no experience of democracy.[6] Although some intellectuals condemned the moral aspect of the coup, many South Koreans accepted Park Chung-hee's intervention similarly with Kim Hwallan and felt that authoritarian rule could still be tolerated if it provided development, improved lives, and could fight

[4] Sarah Chunghee Soh, *Women in Korean Politics* (Boulder et al.: Westview Press, 1993), 5; Kim Hyung-a and Clark W. Sorensen, "Introduction," in *Reassessing the Park Chung Hee Era,* 5; Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 185, 188.

[5] Kim, *Grace Sufficient*, 180.

[6] Kim, 180–181.

the threats of communism, disorder, and corruption.[7] Women were similarly disappointed with Chang Myon's government inability to provide women a greater role in society; thus, many female intellectuals turned to favor the military coup.[8]

Aware of these popular sentiments, Park Chung-hee carried out Korea-style democracy, which limited democratic rights for the sake of the economy and escape from poverty.[9] The post-4.19 optimism, as historian Charles R. Kim calls it, which followed the successful April Revolution, framed the South Korean sentiments at the time of the military coup. The optimism was born out of the mass movement of the April Revolution, which created hope for a new era, new democracy, and new development that would bring economic growth. The youth, students, and intellectuals adopted this optimism. According to Kim, Park and the military junta could turn the optimism into their own use and adopt the discourse and spirit of modernization.[10] Park justified his own actions by pointing out the previous regime's ineffectiveness. However, the Park administration cannot be disconnected from the previous Syngman Rhee regime since they shared the Cold War framework, its conservativeness, and its complicated relationship with the United States. Park also inherited the small successes of Rhee, such as the benefits of utilizing American foreign aid to build the basic infrastructure, new roads, and new schools, leading to an increase in education level.[11]

This section examines the early years of the Korean National Council of Women, established less than a year and a half before the military coup, and how it formed its relationship with the Park Chung-hee regime. After viewing the setting the military regime provided for social organizations in the early 1960s, I introduce two activities that reveal how the KNCW was mobilized for women's social participation and its reactive role in the mobilization. First, I discuss the National Convention on Women and how it served as a medium between women and the state. Second, I

[7] Lee, *Making of the Minjung*, 28–30; Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 177.

[8] Yoon Jung-ran, "4wol Hyeongmyeonggwa Yeoseongdeurui Chamyeo Yangsang – Yeoseong Sinsaenghwar Undonggwa Jang Myeon Jeonggwongwaui Galdeungeul Jungsimeu-ro –" [The April Revolution and the pattern of women's participation. Focused on the conflict between women's new life movement and Jang Myeon's government], *Yeoseong-gwa Yeoksa* [Women and History] 12 (2010): 103–105; Oh, "Yeohaksaeng on the Streets," 233. The fascination towards the junta's opportunities to bring change in Korean society was widespread among intellectuals and even among some labor activists, see Hwasook Nam, "Progressives and Labor under Park Chung Hee: A Forgotten Alliance in 1960s South Korea," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72 (2013): 884.

[9] Kim and Sorensen, "Introduction," 5; Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 189.

[10] Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 178. See also Lee, *Making of the Minjung,* 28–29.

[11] Kim and Sorensen, "Introduction," 5, 8; Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 188; Ross King, *Seoul: Memory, Reinvention, and the Korean Wave* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 78.

discuss the establishment of the first Women's Hall in Seoul and the role of President Park's wife, Yuk Young-soo (1925–1974), in helping the KNCW play a role in operating the Women's Hall.

4.1.1 A Difficult Beginning

In February 1964, journalist Chung Chung-yang, the Head of the Publications Department at Ewha and a correspondent for the Committee of Correspondence, published a piece in *Korea Journal* on the activities of Korean women's organizations. She wrote on the KNCW that it had "failed to achieve anything worthy of note." Yet, she blamed the unstable political situation in South Korea for the organization's current irrelevancy. She anticipated that the KNCW could only operate as an important promotor of friendship among many organizations if it managed to secure its finances since its member organizations are "all non-governmental organizations that receive no form of government subsidy."[12] Half a year later, when the first issue of the KNCW's bulletin *Yeoseong* came out, the KNCW vice presidents Kim Shin-sil and Lee Sook-chong recalled the events of 4.19 (April Revolution) and 5.16 (military coup): "It is regrettable that we could not yet start our business when we experienced two revolutions shortly after the foundation of the nation."[13] These vignettes show how the KNCW faced a difficult beginning, and its means to operate were meager under the new regime.

Contrary to the hopes of women who had sought more political influence, the military regime declared martial law and abolished almost all social organizations, including the KNCW, by the summer of 1961. Among women's groups, only the YWCA and three others were allowed to continue their work.[14] To hinder independent groups with a risk of being anti-governmental from operating, the military government issued a Social Organizations Registration Law, which required all organizations to register with the state and prove their anti-communist stance and be politically neutral.[15] The KNCW faced the same procedure as almost all

12 Chung Chung-yang, "Women's Organizations and Their Activities," *Korea Journal* 4, no. 2 (1964): 15. The Korean National Commission for UNESCO established the scholarly publication *Korea Journal* in 1961. On Chung's association with the Committee of Correspondence, see Klein, *Cold War Cosmopolitanism*, 39, 238n17, 239n27, 239n30.

13 Kim Shin-sil and Lee Sook-chong, "Hanguk yeoseong danche hyeobuihoe pyeon" [Direction of the Korean National Council of Women], *Yeoseong* 9 (September 1964), 6.

14 *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 61; Oh Ji-Young, "A woman's history: The family law reform in Korea, 1948–1991," PhD diss. (New York University, 1993), 118.

15 Oh, "A woman's history," 118; Jeong Sang-ho, "Hangugui siminsahoe jedosa yeongu: Saneopwa dangye (1961–1986)ui sahoeyeongyeogeul jungsimeuro" [The Research on

organizations, even though its President, Kim Hwallan, had started building a relationship with Park Chung-hee immediately after the change of power within the military junta. In early July 1961, Kim rushed to a meeting with Park after she had just returned to Seoul from the United States. She had been sent there in June along with two others, Choi Doo-sun from the *Dong-A Ilbo* newspaper and Hahn Kyung-jik from Young-Nak Church, for "a goodwill mission."[16] Since there was concern about how other nations would view the military coup, they group went to meet the press, government circles, and organizations to explain the new situation of military leadership in South Korea. After returning home, Kim did not hesitate to set up a meeting with Park, which she recalled in her autobiography: "I knew General Chang personally much better and could answer all the questions asked about him. So upon return I went straight to General Park and learned directly the answers to questions about him through heart-to-heart talk. From then on I could and would support him without reservation."[17]

The KNCW had to apply for registration with the state several times. In December 1961, Kim Hwallan wrote the following bad news to Rose Parsons, who forwarded it to the headquarters of the International Council of Women in Paris: The KNCW had not managed to re-register to date and thus could not be active. However, Kim was optimistic that "in time, we know, we shall be all right."[18] The records of the National Archives of Korea show that the KNCW had sent several applications between 1962 and 1963 to different organs to get registered: Seoul City Committee of Education (*Seoul Teukbyeolsi Gyoyuk Wiwonhoe*), Ministry of Education, Department of Culture and Physical education (*Mungyobu Munye Cheyukguk*), and Ministry of Women and Family (*Yeoseong Gajokbu*). The archives contain records of applications, canceled permission, and returned documents.[19] The KNCW's 30-year history claims that the KNCW was registered as a social organization by the Ministry of Education on September 16, 1962, but the start of activity was slow due to "frost-like martial law."[20] The difficulties in registration for the recognition of the military government are also mentioned in the KNCW's triennial report for the ICW from 1960 to 1963: "The Korean Council of Women had to discontinue all its

the history of civil society's institutions: Focusing on the social sphere during the industrial period (1961–1986) in Korea] *Siminsahoewa NGO* [Civil Society and NGOs] 14, no. 1 (2016): 65–66.

16 Kim, *Grace Sufficient*, 181.

17 Kim, 181–182.

18 Helen Kim to Rose Parsons, December 17, 1961, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. Rose Parsons forwarded a copy of the letter to the Paris headquarters to inform them about the situation with KNCW.

19 The information on applications was retrieved online from The Korean National Archives Portal Service (NAPS), archives.go.kr [accessed April 16, 2016].

20 *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 61–62.

activities temporarily due to the fact that Korea has had two revolutions during the past three years. The KNCW, like all the other organizations, was to reregister for the recognition by the new Military Government."[21] Due to changes in women's affairs administration, the permission to operate was canceled with the Ministry of Education and applied from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs instead. A report on women's organizations from 1974 indicates that the Korean National Council of Women was permitted and registered under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs on April 2, 1964, and became an incorporated association (*sadanbeobin*). At that time, 23 other women's organizations operated under the same ministry, the KNCW being the second largest after the Housewife Association (*Hanguk Buinhoe*) with 450 000 members.[22]

The KNCW chose to register and collaborate with the state to continue its work.[23] The organization was waiting for more settled times and believed the new rule could bring them. Along with her announcement of retirement from the presidency of Ewha Womans University, Kim Hwallan's letter to the ICW headquarters affirmed the general trust in the future among Koreans, stating, "Our young army officers are doing their best to map out a course which would bring order, security, prosperity, and peace to our nation. They have [been] quite successful so far and there is all the reason to predict that their success will continue."[24] In their response to Kim, the ICW noted that "the International Council of Women is depending on your continuous collaboration in our work" and for the

[21] "Korean Council of Women. Review of Activities from January 1960 to May 1963," folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

[22] Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, *Bunyeogwangye Jaryo 1. Yeoseong Danche Pyeonram* [Sources on Women 1: Directory of Women's Organizations] (Seoul: Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1974); *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 67.

[23] Upon the military coup, the KNCW faced similar circumstances as the ICW-affiliated women's councils in Italy, Portugal, and Germany during the interwar period under authoritarian and fascist regimes. In Germany, the National Council of Women was disbanded soon after the National Socialists gained power in 1933, but in Italy and Portugal, the councils continued to operate and initially collaborated with the authoritarian regimes. The conditions for national councils in these countries became harsher as they were confronted by state organizations for women; for example, the national council in Portugal was finally abolished in 1947. See Cova, "International Feminisms," 607–608.

[24] Open letter from Helen Kim to the ICW headquarters, September 18, 1961, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. Kim Hwallan had to retire since the Ministry of Education gave a temporary proclamation to lower the retirement age in educational work to 60; she was 62 at the time.

relief of the ICW; despite her retirement from university work, Kim continued to lead the KNCW and remained the foremost contact in South Korea for the ICW.[25]

Historian Anne Cova, who has conducted comparative research on the ICW-affiliated women's councils in Europe, does not see the collaboration as unconditional support of the regimes; instead, the national councils continued to make demands on improving the status of women. According to Cova, the collaboration can be explained by a belief among the women's organizations "that any government could undertake reforms in favor of women."[26] With a similar conviction, the KNCW continued to operate under the Park Chung-hee's regime and tried to influence the regime to undertake reforms. Amidst the difficulties, the KNCW still reported its activities to the ICW in 1962 and assured that the council had made a strong start "despite unsettled political conditions in Korea," made initiatives to the Government and National Assembly on issues of concubinage and prostitution, influenced public opinion through media channels, called for improvement of inheritance laws and establishment of the Women's Bureau under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.[27] The following section introduces two examples of how the KNCW became a representative of women's affairs in initiatives of the government. Eventually, the National Convention on Women became the most important yearly event of the KNCW, whereas operating the Women's Hall ended up being a disappointment in just a few years. These two instances demonstrate how the relationship between the KNCW and the state was not pre-scripted but changed over time.

4.1.2 Opportunities Open: The National Convention on Women and the First Women's Hall in Seoul

> Along with the special attention of the state to youth requirements, the rights of women should be treated with equal care. While it is the essential requirement of fundamental human rights to materialize de facto equality between the male and female sexes legally, socially, economically, yet due to the traditions of hundreds of years, these rights were usually utterly ignored. Any attempt to maintain and advance democracy as a foundation of the people's daily life will

25 Catherine Pomonti to Helen Kim, October 11, 1961, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

26 Cova, "International Feminisms," 607. The German Council, Frauenring, from West Germany, was re-affiliated with the ICW in 1951.

27 Report on the activities of the National Council of Women of Korea, November 1962, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. Interestingly enough, although the KNCW had mentioned the military coup and the junta's rule to the ICW, its reports did not distinguish that under the military junta, no government or national assembly operated.

> be doomed to failure without the protection and expansion of women's rights. Everything possible should be done to stimulate the intellectual development of women through education, and to provide for free choice of occupation, or professional activity. Social rewards should be equally provided for women. We should caution here that equality for females does not include the psychological and physiological differences of the softer sex. Home management should be considered, therefore, as professional labor. Housewives and mothers need special assistance. We must try our best to eliminate the economic necessity for mother who have children in school or at home to seek jobs outside the home.[28]

A text from 1962 depicts women's rights as human rights, which in Korea had been suppressed for centuries. The passage above also suggests advancing protective measures for women – an idea that socialist and communist feminists cherished in their structural analysis of gender equality in which the protective legislation for women was recognized. A passage in General Park Chung-hee's book *Our Nation's Path* (1962) shows that Park was not completely ignorant about the international discussion on women's role at the time. Quite the opposite, Park successfully utilized the revolutionary rhetoric about women. Revolutions throughout history have addressed women as the vehicles of social change; and as a revolution Park and his contemporaries called the events in 1961. *Our Nation's Path* is an ethnonational narrative of development meant to legitimize the 1961 coup and mark it as the starting point for South Korea's rise.[29] In a book justifying the military coup, it was necessary to address women's role in modernization and paint a picture of the socio-political environment in which developed nations were assumed to operate. In the early 1960s, soon after the military coup, Park's efforts to appeal to women were apparent, as the following examples will demonstrate.

In the fall of 1962, the KNCW was still insecure about its position as a state-registered organization and sought ways to relaunch its activities when it suddenly received an invitation from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and the National Reconstruction Movement to host a national convention for women to discuss women's issues.[30] The National Reconstruction Movement was a program Park Chung-hee started after the military coup but failed to gather much support.[31] The regime had already tried to create an event for women's issues in 1961 but did

[28] Park Chung Hee, *Our Nation's Path* (Seoul: Hollym Corporation, 1970 [1962]), 227–228.

[29] Hughes, *Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea*, 136.

[30] *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 62.

[31] Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Narratives of Nation Building in Korea: A Geneology of Patriotism* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2003), 80.

not manage to raise enthusiasm among its target group.[32] The invitation came at a short notice, giving the KNCW only a couple of weeks to prepare. Despite the sudden invitation, the KNCW demanded a right to participate in planning the program "if they were to be listed as co-sponsors."[33] Seeing the event as an opportunity to legitimize its goals, the KNCW accepted the invitation.

The first National Convention on Women (*Jeonguk Yeoseong Daehoe*) occurred on November 1 and 2, 1962, with some 1000 participants. Kim Hwallan gave the opening speech, and Lee Tai-young and Choi E-soon, whose contributions to the KNCW's work will be discussed in the next chapter, delivered the keynote lectures. Park Chung-hee's wife, Yuk Young-soo, was also present. The following day, *Dong-A Ilbo* reported that the KNCW and the National Reconstruction Movement had hosted an event in the National Assembly building and made resolutions concerning improving women's lives.[34] The conference adopted the following resolution that was delivered to the government:

> To contribute to the welfare of society by promoting women's status and healthy family life, the National Convention on Women, representing 15 million women, resolves to strive to lead a healthy family life by improving the living conditions and urges for a national policy to rationalization of life by reforming housing system, strive to reform the irrationality related to women, such as women's unequal position in family law and discrimination in social life, and ask for establishment of family court, and strive to cultivate women's ability, and serve home and society by learning, working, and uniting women, we will also cooperate to establish a women's center.[35]

[32] A video clip from the event at the Visual History Archive reveals a military man giving a speech to a group of women sitting in their winter coats. See "Yeoseong Daehoe Je 1 Hoe Jeonguk Yeoseong Daehoe mit Je 4 Hoe Yeokwon Ongho Ungbyeon Daehoe" [Women's Conference: 1st National Women's Conference and 4th Women's Rights Advocacy Speech Contest], December 23, 1961 (the actual day of convention was December 12, 1961), *Visual History Archive,* http://www.ehistory.go.kr/page/view/movie.jsp?srcgbn=KV&mediaid=20034500&mediadtl=30094&gbn=DK [accessed November 9, 2017].

[33] Philip C. Habib, American Embassy in Seoul, to Secretary of State in Washington, "Korean National Women's Conference," November 9, 1962, accessed via online collections of Korean National Assembly Library [October 31, 2016]; *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 62. KNCW's history says the notice came 2–3 weeks before the designed event, while Habib writes it was only one week.

[34] "Yeoseong-ui sahoe chamyeoreul guhyeon gasa jepan jedo," [Implementing women's social participation and housekeeping] *Dong-A Ilbo*, November 3, 1962; "Korean National Women's Conference"; *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 266.

[35] *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 266.

The KNCW's report on the gathering to the ICW summarized that the event protected the interests of "us" – 15 million women – and advanced women's abilities. The KNCW also assured that the government officials had taken their message seriously and promised "immediate attention" to the women's issue.[36] The event also raised interest in the American Embassy in Seoul, which reported about it to Washington. Counselor Philip C. Habib, who served the Embassy from 1962 to 1965, presumed in his report that the military government asked the National Council of Women to assist in organizing an event for women to avoid the lack of audience and publicity it had faced during its first attempt to draw women's attention. Habib concluded the report:

> While there was nothing overtly political about the conference, in a fundamental sense the meeting was political in character, an exercise in nation-building. [...] Feminist activists raised their voices at this meetings – and they obviously wish to be heard. The fact that the military government organized and backed this conference suggests that they hope to use the dynamism and energy of these women and their organization to further their own plans of remaking and reorienting the nation.[37]

However, what the American Embassy perceived as the military government's attempt to control women for its own purposes allowed the KNCW to present its ambitions publicly and participate in nation-building from a female perspective. In the coming years, the National Convention on Women provided a multi-voiced arena for various statements and declarations drafted by the KNCW and its members. For some reason, no women's conference was organized in 1963; thus, the second National Convention on Women followed in 1964 with a theme "Towards the growing strength of Korean women."[38] Among the speakers was the vice president of the American National Council of Women, Regina Andrews, whose presence "gave additional significance to the Conference," according to Kim Hwallan.[39] Representing the ICW community, Andrews commented on the effort of Korean women: "There was an overt determination on the part of emerging women leaders to try new ideas and move

[36] The report was included in the KNCW's first triennial report to the head organization since its affiliation, see Korean Council of Women. Review of Activities from January 1960 to May 1963, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

[37] "Korean National Women's Conference." Habib later returned to Seoul as an Ambassador, serving from 1971 to 1974 at the height of the Yushin Constitution.

[38] Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, *Bunyohaengjong 40nyonsa* [Forty-year history of the administration of women] (Gwacheon: Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1987), 101.

[39] "National Council of Women. The 2nd conference," *The Woman* 1, no. 1 (March 1965), 2; Helen Kim to Mary Graig Schuller-McGeachy, October 12, 1964, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

forward in new directions, and relate their new efforts to those of women in other parts of the world."[40] Since 1964, the National Convention on Women became an annual event; its themes varied from women's role in modernization, national defense, and civil society to the issues of housewives, raising children, and the environmental and resource crisis. On the eve of each new decade, the KNCW mentioned the current challenges: The 1970 convention was themed "The 1970s and Population Problem," and the 1980 convention "The 1980s Welfare Society and Women." By the end of the 1980s, issues related to democratization became central topics for the events. The number of participants in the conventions regularly numbered between 500 and 2500.[41]

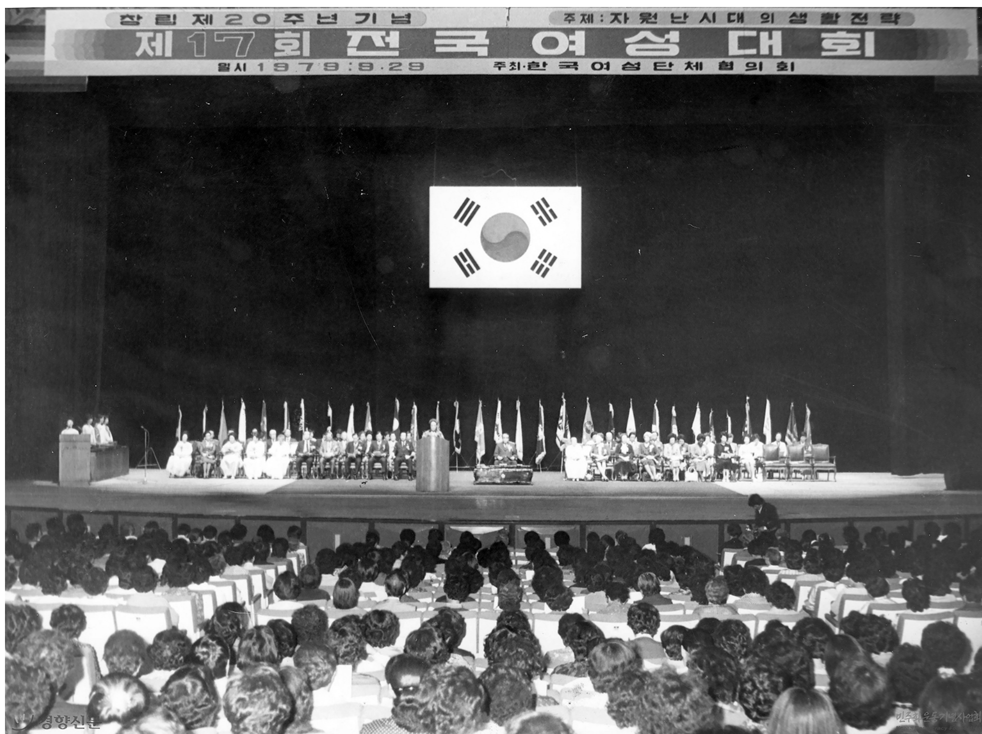

Figure 1 The National Convention on Women on September 29, 1979. Kyunghyang Shinmun, Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe juchoiro yeolrin je17hoe Jeonguk Yeoseong Daehoe [The 17th National Women's Conference Hosted by the Korean National Council of Women], 1979, the Korea Democracy Foundation's Open Archives, https://archives.kdemo.or.kr/isad/view/00726835. Korea Open Government License Type 4 [BY, NC, ND].

40 "A letter from Mrs. Regina Andrews," *The Woman* 1, no. 2 (June 1965), 4.
41 *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 376–383.

Besides the KNCW officials and members and leaders from the KNCW-affiliated organizations, the event was regularly honored by the presence of Park Chung-hee's wife, Yuk Young-soo, and some leading governmental officials and politicians. Academics and representatives of economic circles, civil society, and media delivered keynote and other speeches. The speeches by governmental or industrial notables were often dedicated to praising the country's development or its strong leader, the success of the *Saemaul Undong* (New Village Movement) and the Yushin system, giving little attention to the demands of women's organizations.[42] The role of critic was given to the representatives of civil society or academia who addressed the limits and challenges of South Korean society in their comments. For instance, in 1976, at the height of the Yushin system and in the aftermath of the International Year of Women, a professor of Ewha Womans University Baik Jae-bong, demanded that "the government must appreciate each person's dignity as a human being, and treat each person as free and equal" since the promises made in the constitution on gender equality were not taking place in reality.[43]

Most importantly, the convention provided women across the country and representatives of various groups an opportunity to gather together, draft and publish petitions and resolutions on women's issues. At the end of each convention, the KNCW drew up a list of proposals and declarations given directly to the president or the government. These were also regularly published in the KNCW's bulletin *Yeoseong*. Among the reoccurring demands were adhering to the constitution (referring to the gender equality promised in 1948), establishing a government agency exclusively designed to take care of women's affairs, passing the revisions to the Family Law, enforcing labor laws to meet the gender equality criteria, and protecting children. In later chapters of this dissertation, I shall return to the addresses and resolutions given in the National Conventions on Women.

How the KNCW took charge of the National Conventions on Women is a case example of mass dictatorship. When the dictatorial regimes utilized gender politics to mobilize the masses to the state project and control them, it is also apparent that men and women alike tried to appropriate their opportunities to their best advantage."[44] In the case of the National Convention on Women, what started as a government initiative to include women in the nation-building became an important

[42] See "Congratulatory address by Tae Wan-son at the 14th National Convention on Women," *The Woman* 12 (December 1976), 24–26. The latter half of the 1970s also witnessed a growing amount of male writers who had little to do with the organization and its work in the pages of *The Woman* and *Yeoseong*. See also Kim Young-sun, "Making of International Discourse," 174.

[43] Baik Jae-bong, "Industrial Society and Women," keynote speech at the 14th National Convention of Women, published in *The Woman* 12 (December 1976), 23.

[44] Lim and Petrone, "Introduction," 27–28.

channel for the original co-organizer to challenge the government and give a voice to issues that women themselves prepared for the conferences. In this manner, the KNCW created a space for itself within the opportunity structure the government opened up. Next, I shall introduce another example of how the KNCW actively sought a role in solving women's problems in society.

The last goal set in the first National Convention on Women in 1962 – establishing a women's center – had already become a reality in 1963, by the time the Third Republic replaced the military junta. Following the first Convention on Women, the KNCW continued seeking opportunities to participate in developing women's affairs. The KNCW turned to Yuk Young-soo for help in finding other arenas to operate. The KNCW's vice president at the time, Lee Sook-chong, contacted Yuk and asked if she could help the organization find a facility where the KNCW could operate.[45] Commonly known as *Yuk yeosa* among Koreans, the president's wife formed the closest link between the KNCW and the president. Yuk Young-soo was a frequent honorary guest at KNCW's events. Popular among citizens, she was considered a mediator between the people and the president. Yuk was interested in women's and children's affairs, contributed to establishing several daycare centers and women's halls, and participated in charity work.[46] In an interview in *The Woman*, Yuk Young-soo stated, "Since I moved to the Blue House, I have been trying to do my best for the welfare of women."[47]

Indeed, Yuk Young-soo helped the KNCW find a place to operate; thus, the KNCW took charge of the first Women's Hall (*Yeoseong Hoegwan*) in 1963. According to Kim Young-sun, it was essential that the help came from someone close Park Chung-hee. The KNCW planned the management of the Women's Hall with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and took over the building during Park's presidential inauguration on December 17, 1963.[48] The KNCW held the

45 *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 62, 66–68. See also Kim, "Making of an International Discourse," 168n8. Lee Sook-chong (1904–1985) founded Sungshin Women's School in 1936. She was from an elite family and had studied in Japan and China. She played a pivotal role in the KNCW throughout the years, starting as the vice president in 1960, elected president in 1970, and serving until 1982. See Shin Bong-Jo, "A Small Seed Grew into a Giant Tree," *The Woman* 22, no. 2 (December 1985), 41.

46 Michael Keon, *Korean Phoenix. A Nation from the Ashes* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall International, 1977), 196.

47 "An Interview with the First Lady," *The Woman* 1, no. 2 (June 1965), 2.

48 Kim, "Making of International Discourse," 168, 168n8, 183. See also *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 65–66. Following pressure from the US to return to democratic governance, Park had promised to hold presidential elections. Retired from the military, Park won the elections held in October 1963 with 47% of the vote but only with a small margin over Yun Posun, who had served as the president under the parliamentary system in 1960–1961 and under the military junta until he resigned in

Women's Hall as its headquarters from late 1963 to early 1966. The four-story building of 600 *pyeong* (almost 2000 m^2) was in central Seoul near the Namsan Mountain and the South Gate. The Women's Hall started operating for the public in January 1964 to provide various social services for women and "promote the welfare of women."[49] A picture of the new Women's Hall was on the cover of the first issue of KNCW's bulletin *Yeoseong* in September 1964. The bulletin introduces the activities of the Women's Hall, including a library, restaurant, and beauty salon, as well as counseling rooms for family planning and women's issues (*yeoseong munje*).[50] Kim Hwallan was the director of the Women's Hall from December 1963 to December 1965 before Kim Young-ja replaced her.[51] Following the first women's hall in Seoul, several others were built in major cities. Nine women's halls were established in the provinces from 1966 to 1971.[52]

The KNCW had to leave the building sooner than anticipated in 1966 when the leasing contract with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs ended, and the ministry took the Women's Hall under its direct control.[53] Initially, in October 1965, the ministry gave the KNCW a chance to apply for an extension to the leasing contract asking the organization to submit an application along with attachments,

March 1962. See Kim, *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee*, 30; Kim and Sorensen, "Introduction," 6; Chang, *Protest Dialectics*, 16.

49 "Yeoseong hoekwan" [Women's Hall], *Yeoseong* 9 (September 1964), 3; "Activities of the Women's Center" *The Woman* 1, no. 1 (March 1965), 7. Contradictory information exists on how the building of the first Women's Hall was materialized: according to Seungsook Moon, the idea of women's halls originated from the military rule period (1961–1963), and the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction gave the funds for construction. However, Moon does not mention that the responsibility of women's centers would have been given to the KNCW, see Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 78–79. In its report to the ICW, the KNCW mentions that it had proposed that the government allocate funds to build a Women's Center in Seoul to work as headquarters for all women's organizations. Ultimately, an anonymous donation secured the building's completion. See Korean Council of Women. Review of Activities from January 1960 to May 1963, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

50 "Women's Hall," 3.

51 Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, *Yeoseong Hoegwan Changnip 10 Junyeon Ginyeomji* [Women's Hall 10th Anniversary] (Seoul: Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1973), unnumbered.

52 *Women's Hall*, 62–63; Korean National Council of Women, *Mirae Sahoe wa Yeoseong: Yeohyeop Changnip Je 20 Junyeon Ginyeom* [Future society and women: Korean National Council of Women 20 years] (Seoul: Korean National Council of Women, 1979), 39; *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 67–74; Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 79. A publication by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs on the 10th Anniversary of Women's Hall does not include the budget for the place under the KNCW's control. The budget tripled from 1966 (appr. 4 000 000 won) to 1973 (12 400 000 won) under the Ministry. See *Women's Hall*, 28.

53 Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, *Women's Hall*, 25.

including a plan for activities, budget, list of officers, and their résumés. However, in a few weeks' time, the ministry announced that the leasing contract would not be extended.[54] The disappointing letters from the ministry were printed in a special issue of *Yeoseong* in March 1966, titled "Details on the departure from Women's Hall."[55] The editorial in the previous issue in February had demanded, "Leave the operation of Women's Hall for women!"[56] Frustrated with the acts of the ministry responsible for the KNCW's activities, the KNCW also bitterly reported to the ICW's international community that "it is regretful that the government officials only regard their way of thinking and disregard our opinion. It is certainly a great loss for them to ignore the importance of women's activities."[57]

After losing the Women's Hall, the KNCW had to operate without its own premises. Before obtaining a new headquarters near central Seoul in Yongsan District in 1975 after a long period of fundraising, the organization had its meetings and events in several locations such as Methodist Theological University, Ewha Womans University, the Chodong Church Building, and the Christian Academy.[58] Despite the discord related to operating the Women's Hall, the new KNCW headquarters' opening ceremony in 1975 featured the wife of Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil, acting chairman of the ruling Democratic Republican Party Rhee Hyo-sang, Vice Minister of Health and Social Affairs Park Seung-ham, president of the Korean Anti-communist League Yim Byung-jik, and the president of the National Reconstruction Movement Ahn Ho-sang. This time, the KNCW had bought the building on its own, with money collected from member donations and selling music records.[59]

The story of the Women's Hall and how the KNCW first received and then lost its first headquarters illustrates the changing conditions in which the organization had to operate. On one day, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs could invite women to cooperate; on the other, it could discontinue its support for the KNCW's activities. Contrary to the case of the National Convention on Women, operating the Women's Hall ended in grave disappointment. However, as the attempt to organize a women's conference right after the military regime's establishment in 1961

54 "Yeoseong Hoegwan Daeyeo (Giganyeonjang) Sincheongseo" [Women's Hall Rental (Extension Requested) Application] *Yeoseong* 3 (March 1966), 17.

55 See the cover of *Yeoseong* 3 (March 1966).

56 "Yeoseong-ege jun Yeoseong Hoegwan-eun yeoseong jayul unyeong-e matgyeora," [Leave the management of Women's Center to women] *Yeoseong* 2 (February 1966), 3.

57 "Farewell to the Woman's Center," *The Woman* 2, no. 2 (April 1966), 4.

58 "Farewell to the Woman's Center," 4; "New Headquarters Building of KNCW," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), 6. See also *Yeoseong* and *The Woman* 1965–1975, passim.

59 "New Headquarters Building of KNCW," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975): 6. On the KNCW's fundraising, see Chapter 5.

demonstrates, the regime was interested in involving women in the nation-building project. According to Kim Young-sun, the KNCW starting its activities in this manner, with a negotiation contact with the government-state, paved the way for the organization to create a space to solve women's problems.[60] In my analysis, I agree with Kim's view and confirm that during its early years, the KNCW established several connections with the regime and could utilize them as communication channels.

The KNCW and Yuk Young-soo maintained their relationship until her tragic death in 1974. Yuk was killed in an assassination attempt against President Park in the National Theater on August 15 during a speech Park gave in commemoration of Liberation Day. The assassin was a man of Korean descent born in Japan who belonged to a pro-North Korean group.[61] Yuk's death was a shock for the KNCW; above all, she was the organization's honorary president.[62] The KNCW women organized a separate memorial service for Yuk and commemorated her in both its bulletins for Korean and international readers and continued to respect the late First Lady by visiting her grave on anniversaries.[63] In her speech during the memorial service, the KNCW President Lee Sook-chong compared Yuk's faith to the previous time when "the mother of the country" (*uri nara eomeoni*) was killed – the assassination of Queen Min by the Japanese in 1895.[64] Cases like the assassination reminded that the North Korean threat was ever-present and that South Koreans could not only trust the help of the US when building the future of their nation. Such a violation against national security also prompted the KNCW to adopt a strong vocabulary on national defense and women's role in it. The following section discusses how the KNCW engaged in the priorities of the Park Chung-hee regime, such as the war in Vietnam, anti-communism, and South–North Korean relations.

60 Kim, "Making of International Discourse," 183.

61 Keon, *Korean Phoenix*, 198–199.

62 Kim, "Making of International Discourse," 168. See also "Je 3 Hoe Jeonguk Yeoseong Daehoe" [3rd National Convention on Women], *Yeoseong* 10 (October 1965), 4. For the relationship between the KNCW and Yuk Young-soo, see Heo, "Development and alteration of women's culture," 68–73.

63 See Kathleen Crane (K.C.), "Woman of the Year," *The Woman* 9 (December 1974), 5–7; pictorials at the beginning of *The Woman* 13, no. 1 (November 1977), 6.

64 "Go Yuk Yeong-su yeosa-ui seogeowa uri-ui jujang" [The Passing of the Late Lady Yuk Young-soo and Our Position], *Yeoseong* 9 (September 1974), 5.

4.2 Women on the Mission of the State – and on Their Own

The Cold War and anti-communism were intertwined in the issue of gender equality in the work of the KNCW. This section examines the KNCW's reactions and involvement in the political history of South Korea in chronological order, focusing mainly on the central phases of the Park Chung-hee regime and national security threats. Park utilized the Cold War to benefit his policies in many ways. The South Korean national project was characterized by prioritizing economy and national security; over time, anti-communism trumped unification. Park's discourse on revolution utilized the memory of the Korean War; by reproducing the image of the war era, he created a social and cultural environment in which the population accepted mobilization for economic growth and security. After the First Five-Year Economic Plan (1961–1966), during which Park gained self-confidence in his revolution and its success, mobilizing the masses became an even more apparent strategy, while armed incursions by North Korea helped build an image of potential war and the need to accelerate the buildup of economic and military power.[65]

During the Cold War, South Korea was economically part of the Third World, but politically, its identity was a semi-peripheral subempire, benefiting from its relationship with the United States and the broader anti-communist camp. The Park Chung-hee regime successfully exploited its position in this global development paradigm and mobilized South Koreans behind the nation-building project.[66] It is in this context the goals and desires of the Park regime in which the KNCW operated. The next chapter discusses how the KNCW utilized the discourses on modernization and population problems to extend women's role in society. The following focuses on the KNCW's actions and outcomes regarding the regime's anti-communism and reading them as a case of the "ideological commitment from the masses," central to the mass dictatorship paradigm.[67] These two chapters show that the themes and issues the KNCW regularly raised were linked to the nation-building paradigm and the development of women's rights; often, distinguishing them from one another is impossible. Nevertheless, as several examples will show, the KNCW did not accept

65 Sheila Miyoshi Jager and Jiyul Kim, "The Korean War after the Cold War. Commemorating the Armistice Agreement in South Korea," in *Ruptured Histories. War, Memory and the Post-Cold War in Asia*, ed. by Sheila Miyoshi Jager and Rana Mitter (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2007), 237–238.

66 Lee, *Service Economies*, 18–24; Lee Jin-kyung, "Immigrant Subempire, Migrant Labor Activism, and Multiculturalism in Contemporary South Korea," in *Routledge Handbook of Korean Culture and Society*, 149; Simeon Man, *Soldiering through Empire. Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 105; Hwang, "'Politics of Desire,'" 210.

67 Lim, "Historiographical Perspectives on 'Mass Dictatorship,'" 326.

that women should only be mobilized to be domestic, but their role should be actively built in several spheres of life, including national defense.

4.2.1 Making the Subempire

During the Park Chung-hee era, South Korea did not shake off the colonial legacies. Park Chung-hee himself was trained in the military academies of the Japanese Empire, drawing inspiration from the empire's mobilization programs, surveillance, and militarization.[68] Instead, South Korea became a subempire, following Lee Jin-kyung's definition by moving from the complete periphery to semi-periphery in "the global hierarchy of the nation-states and their economies" under the aegis of the United States and the anti-communist camp.[69] The subimperial position was reinforced by South Korea's involvement in the Vietnam War in which the previous war-ridden country dependent on others' help was now helping a weaker nation in a similar situation. The subempire was also actively produced by internationalization of domestic development projects such as the New Village Movement. Following the Second World War, development became the catchword of international relations, linked to seeking and providing foreign assistance. Instead of being an exception, Park's regime represented a global trend of the time. The economic development was a global and national injunction, part of "the United States' invention, promotion, and purveying of 'development' as an ideology and policy in the Third World," which the Park's regime enforced in South Korea.[70] Nation-building conducted to attain development was not thus simply a national issue and should not be viewed as one. Strong militaries and new infrastructure showcased a commitment to nation-building to send a message to domestic and foreign audiences on the development occurring.

Two events in the 1960s helped South Korea gain US support and jumpstart its industries. The events were intertwined with the larger goal of nation-building in which construction and national defense, development and militarism, walked hand in hand, namely, entering the Vietnam War in 1964 and normalizing diplomatic relations with Japan in 1965.[71] The treaty with Japan enabled Park Chung-hee to invite Japanese investments to South Korea, especially in infrastructure and heavy

68 For the Japanese influence on Park Chung-hee's personality and leadership, see Kim, *Korea's Development*, esp. 15–21; Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea*, passim.

69 Lee, "Immigrant Subempire," 149. See also Lee, *Service Economies*, 18.

70 Lee, *Service Economies*, 21.

71 Lee, "Surrogate Military, Subimperialism, and Masculinity: South Korea in the Vietnam War, 1965–73," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 17, no. 3 (Winter 2009): 657–658; Man, *Soldiering through Empire*, 111.

industry, to strengthen the government-corporate cooperation and expand export-orientation, all of which were components of the Japanese imperial model that Park was exposed to while in Manchuria in the 1930s and during the Pacific War.[72] South Korea received $800 million in loans and grants from Japan, and Park's regime invested them into economy modernization projects and infrastructure. The sufferings of the Korean people under Japanese colonial rule were left uncompensated – an issue that still hinders South Korea–Japan relations. Especially the treaty with Japan caused much unpopularity for Park, unlike the war in Vietnam; however, both actions were central building blocks in Park's policy, which was targeted to secure economic growth and national security.[73]

The KNCW openly supported South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War, where "our sons and husbands were helping the Vietnamese fight for their freedom."[74] By doing so, the organization could contribute to the regime's subimperial desires. South Korea entered the Vietnam War following the call of the United States to participate in the solidarity of the "free world," becoming the largest third-party supplier of troops to the war. By the time of the withdrawal in 1973, South Korea had provided 340 000 troops to Vietnam. South Korea's engagement in the war was motivated by the ideological interest to prevent another communist invasion and the willingness to help fellow anti-communists in Asia. The war also provided a platform to train South Korean soldiers for another potential war in their own country, secured continuous US support for South Korea, and helped boost the potential of South Korean industries as they were used for the war effort.[75] The tensions with North Korea in the late 1960s was a reminder that the second Korea War was possible and thus the whole nation needed to be prepared.[76] Against this background, it is unsurprising that no major popular movement against the Vietnam War erupted in South Korea.[77]

The Vietnam War and its consequences held a special place in the KNCW's publications. When some KNCW members visited Vietnam during the war, they reported to the readers of *The Woman* not only about the righteous fight of Koreans

72 Eckert, *Park Chung Hee*, passim.; King, *Seoul*, 78, 81.

73 Park promised to send his troops to the Vietnam War on the American side to secure continuing US financial aid and to keep US troops in South Korea, thus protecting national security. Chang, *Protest Dialectics*, 16–20. On the Japan treaty, see Lee, *Making of the Minjung*, 30–32.

74 Moh Yoon-sook, "Korean Soldiers in Vietnam," *The Woman* 2, no. 2 (April 1966), 1.

75 B.K. Gills, *Korea versus Korea. A Case of Contested Legitimacy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 151; Lee, "Surrogate Military," 657–658; Lee, *Service Economies*, 28, 41; Man, *Soldiering through Empire*, 104–105.

76 Won Kim, "Korea's Vietnam War and the Fall of Saigon: Reconstructing the War Memories of Detained Diplomats," in *Korean Memories*, 182.

77 Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 26.

against communists in another divided country but about how Koreans contributed to providing medical care, rebuilding schools, and visiting orphanages to provide assistance.[78] In this manner, the KNCW participated in the process Lee Jin-kyung defines as constructing South Korea as a subempire helping Vietnam.[79] An important theme the KNCW used to build solidarity between the Koreans and the Vietnamese was maternity – a crucial building block in Cold War feminisms.[80] Poet and KNCW official Moh Yoon-sook (1910–1990), who visited Vietnam several times, published a poem dedicated to First Lady Johnson in *Yeoseong* on the occasion of US President Lyndon B. Johnson's visit to Seoul in 1966. An extract from the poem highlights the importance of women as the mothers of the soldiers:

We are the mothers of the boys,
Who are the defenders of freedom,
The soldiers in the jungle,
Fighting against our common enemy
We are mothers of praying
For our sons in the war
Your wish is our wish
The voice is one.[81]

After the end of the war and fall of South Vietnam, the KNCW resisted the possibility of withdrawing US troops from South Korea because of what they considered an imminent North Korean threat with the possibility of a fate similar to South Vietnam.[82] An editorial in *The Woman* in summer 1975 expressed amazement on the fall of Republic of Vietnam to the hands of communists despite all the help the Americans provided and demanded the maintenance of UN or American forces

78 Moh, "Korean Soldiers in Vietnam," 1; Sun Hi-won, "Visit to Korean Soldiers in Vietnam." *The Woman* 3, no. 2 (September 1967), 2–3.

79 Lee, "Surrogate Military," 664.

80 See Kim, "Origins of Cold War Feminism," 460–479.

81 Moh Yoon Sook, "Welcome to Korea, Mrs. Johnson," *Yeoseong* 11 (November 1966), 4. For a broader discussion on Moh, who is also regarded as a pro-Japanese collaborator, see Kong Im-soon, "Seukaendeulgwa Bangong 'Yeoryu' Myeongsa Mo Yunsuk-ui Chinil-gwa Bangong-ui Ijungju" [Scandal and anti-communism: Mo Yoon-sook as a 'woman intellectual,' double concerto of pro-Japanese and anti-communism], *Hanguk Geundae Munhak Yeongu* [Journal of Modern Korean Literature] 17 (April 2008): 165–192.

82 Cathleen Crane, "Mark This Lesson Well," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), no page; Lee Sook-chong, "President's Message," *The Woman* 13, no. 2 (December 1977), no page; Triennial Report (Jan. 1. 1977 – Dec. 31. 1979) Korean National Council of Women, undated, received in ICW headquarters on February 25, 1980, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif.

in Korea since "the enemy is only minutes away and will lose little time in putting their plans into action. […] Americans must not stick their heads in the sand. This year Indochina, the next Korea. If Korea goes, American is closer to her turn. That lesson is also clear."[83] The editorial praised the ability to counter-attack, the importance of an all-out defense, and the "free world" allies, and criticized American détente policy with China and the Soviet Union. The KNCW's statements regarding the fate of Vietnam and fear of American troops' withdrawal came out when President Park was assuring his trust in the Americans' commitment to follow their Mutual Defense Treaty (1954) to the foreign press.[84]

If the war in Vietnam had evoked memories of the parallel Korean War among South Koreans since its beginning, losing South Vietnam to communists and discovering North Korean tunnels under the Demilitarized Zone in the mid-1970s brought the fears of war even closer.[85] These two instances, the Vietnam War and the continuing threat from North Korea, contributed to creating an "anti-communist national identity" in South Korea.[86] The case of the KNCW and how the organization adopted anti-communism provide important material to understand the engagement of intellectuals with the Cold War system.[87] South Korean political scientist Jang-jip Choi formulates the operation of this ideological adaptation as follows: "The wartime experience and the suffering left in its wake were articulated and rearticulated through the ideological apparatuses of the state to control the language, to set the parameters of common discourse, and to produce and reproduce an anti-communist worldview that was immediate and real. The terror of war rearranged the political terrain, and anti-communism achieved a hegemonic hold over civil society."[88] The next section discusses how national security issues captured the work of the KNCW for most of the 1970s and explores how the women's organization explained the relevancy of the crises for women.

4.2.2 Mood of Crisis

In September 1972, on the occasion of the National Convention on Women, the KNCW gave a resolution – "Women's attitude toward national unification" – that called for a joint effort from women in two Koreas. By doing so, the KNCW

83 Crane, "Mark This Lesson Well," no page.

84 See collectively published interviews with President Park and representatives of foreign presses in *Toward Peaceful Unification. Selected Speeches & Interviews by Park Chung Hee* (Seoul: Kwangmyong Publishing Company, 1978).

85 Lee, "Surrogate Military," 658; Kim, "Korea's Vietnam War," 181.

86 Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 18.

87 See also Kim, "Making of International Discourse," 177.

88 Choi, "Political Cleavages in South Korea," 23.

supported the regime's ongoing, although short-lived, attempt to revive relations with North Korea. The resolution painted women as agents of unification who should simultaneously reach liberation:

> It is heartbreaking and ironic that the biggest obstacle in the women's liberation movement is not men's lack of understanding but women's contempt for themselves. Women, it's time to realize! Women, it's also time to act! Let us cultivate ourselves, elevate ourselves, and become responsible companions in these turning times of history. Let's become workers who respond sturdily to the call of the fatherland.[89]

The KNCW had supported Korea's unification since its foundation. The organization even sent messages to North Korean women, regretting that a joint meeting was impossible.[90] A brief period of warming inter-Korean relations in the early 1970s followed after a serious period of conflict between the Koreas in the late 1960s. The escalation of the Vietnam War was linked to relations between the two Koreas, each of which supported their respective counterparts in Vietnam.[91] In January 1968, North Korean commandos attacked the Blue House in an attempt to assassinate President Park Chung-hee, and the American *USS Pueblo* and its crew were captured in North Korean waters.[92] The most serious security threats since the Korean War in the late 1960s also evoked the KNCW to comment on the situation of national security; in 1968, the National Convention on Women was themed as "National defense both you and I." The convention focused on homeland security and, in a letter to President Park, stated that "men and women should not be treated differently, but both should participate in homeland security against the enemy nation."[93]

A true mood of crisis existed in South Korean society at the turn of the 1970s. The US reaction to what South Korea perceived as severe national security violations

89 "Daehoe Bureum," [Calling of the Conference] *Yeoseong* 10 (October 1972), 13.

90 Choi Keum-sook, "Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe 60nyeon Yeoseong Undongsa: Tongil Yeoseong Undong – Nambuk Yeoseong Gyoryu Hyeopryeok Mulggoreul Teuda" [Korean National Council of Women, 60 years of women's movement's history: Unified women's movement - Paving the way for North-South women's exchange and cooperation], *Yeoseong Shinmun*, December 5, 2019, http://www.womennews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=194755 [accessed July 18, 2020].

91 Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 29.

92 Kim Sungsoo, *The Role of the Middle Class in Korea Democratization* (Paju: Jimoondang, 2008), 53.

93 "Daetongnyeongkke Deurineun Geonuimun" [A petition to president] in *Yeoseong* 44, no. 10 (October 1968), 10.

was mild. President Richard Nixon announced a gradual troop withdrawal from South Korea in 1969 in accordance with the Guam Doctrine.[94] Park Chung-hee had enforced his nation-building projects in the late 1960s to create popular support for his regime, moving towards more authoritarian measures; in 1969, he, through a national referendum, secured a constitutional amendment to allow the president to run for office for a third time, sparking anti-government demonstrations among students and opposition. The economic decline in the early 1970s further eroded Park's popularity; in the 1971 presidential elections, Park won only slightly against the opposition candidate Kim Dae-jung. Demonstrations against the result and possible fraud followed as people were also dissatisfied with South Korea's involvement in the Vietnam War. In the following month's parliamentary elections, the votes of the opposition were almost equal to those of the ruling party. As threatened, Park declared a state of emergency at the end of 1971.[95]

The changes in the Cold War system, especially decreasing US presence in Asia during President Richard Nixon's term, détente in US-Sino relations, and withdrawal of some of the US troops from South Korea, created an insecure situation in Northeast Asia in the eyes of Park Chung-hee. Park asked the US not to abandon Asia but proposed two policies in reaction to the changing situation: warming up relations with North Korea and issuing a declaration of the Yushin Constitution. These reflected the changing attitude towards the US as Park could no longer trust that the ally would protect South Korea from the communist threat. To respond to the outside threat, South Korea would need to build up a stronger nation.[96] Amidst the talks with North Korea, including signing the July 4 Joint Communique in which the two Koreas agreed on principles of unification, Park implemented what he viewed as necessary for a stronger nation and declared the Yushin Reform in October and a new constitution in December 1972. The new constitution removed the limitations from presidential terms, allowing Park to rule for life.[97]

Although the issues of national security and relations with North Korea were regularly discussed in the pages of *Yeoseong* and *The Woman*, in the correspondence

[94] In the Guam Doctrine, also known as the Nixon Doctrine, the US maintained its interest in assisting its allies but declared it would no longer take responsibility for its defense; the nations would need to do so on their own. See Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea*, 149.

[95] Jager and Kim, "Korean War," 236–237; Kim, *Role of the Middle Class*, 148; Kim Byung-kook, "Introduction: The Case for Political History," in *Park Chung Hee Era*, 5; Kim and Sorensen, "Introduction," 6; Kim Yong-Jick, "Security, Political, and Human Rights Conundrum, 1974–1979," in *Park Chung Hee Era*, 460.

[96] Gills, *Korea versus Korea*, 154; Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 51; Jager and Kim, "Korean War," 238–240. For a broader discussion on the relationship between military and economic development, see Kwon, *Cornerstone of the Nation*.

[97] Soh, *Women in Korean Politics*, 7; Kim and Sorensen, "Introduction," 6.

between the KNCW and ICW, only on rare occasions can one notice the peculiar circumstances surrounding the Korean peninsula and the divided nation when the Cold War was shifting between hotter and colder phases. One such incident occurred in August 1973, shortly after the kidnapping of opposition leader Kim Dae-jung in Tokyo.[98] As I discussed, the KNCW supported the idea of unification and asked the ICW to recognize the two Koreas as non-exclusive partners in international organizations. The KNCW President Lee Sook-chong wrote to the ICW Treasurer of Honour: "I sincerely hope that our reasonable and realistic approach to unification will be truly understood by our neighbors, and our sincerity will appeal to you." Lee's letter included the hope that both Koreas could be accepted into the UN with the precondition that it would not hinder the unification.[99] The KNCW received a cold and short answer from the ICW, stating that "no single member of the board, not even the Treasurer of Honour, can act alone on any question relating to The I.C.W." [100] This indicates the reluctance of the ICW to take a stand on such a question, which was highly political. The KNCW's request to recognize the two Koreas as equal partners came soon after a new initiative had been provided to settle the Korea question in the summer of 1973 when the US Secretary of State William Rogers proposed having two Koreas in the UN.[101] Also, President Park completely changed South Korea's UN policy and supported the idea of the two simultaneously joining the UN if it would ease the tensions and support cooperation between the Koreas. Previously, South Korea had sought to be treated as the only legitimate representative of Korea in the UN. As a sharp response, North Korea ended the dialogue between the Koreas, suspended the South–North Coordinating Committee, and disconnected the hotline between Seoul and Pyongyang. North Korea also opposed the idea of dual membership, and both remained outside the UN membership.[102]

A North Korea-inspired assassin's attempt to kill President Park on August 15, 1974, deteriorated relations even further, accompanied by the reveal of tunnels dug by North Koreans under the DMZ in 1974 and 1975. After the failure in dialogue, the KNCW participated in several events that tell the story of increasing militarization, again worsening relations with North Korea. Since the mid-decade, the KNCW has organized annual women's rallies to promote women's role in national defense. The rallies were one important feature the KNCW reported to the

[98] See Kim, "Security, Political, and Human Rights Conundrum," 460.
[99] Lee Sook-chong to Karen Glæsel, August 25, 1973, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.
[100] Karen Glæsel to Lee Sook-chong, September 13, 1973, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.
[101] Gills, *Korea versus Korea*, 159–160.
[102] Gabriel Jonsson, *South Korea in the United Nations: Global Governance, Inter-Korean Relations and Peace Building* (London: World Scientific, 2017), 37–39.

ICW.[103] In June 1975, an address on Emergency Measure No. 9, accompanied by an image from a mass rally against North Korea, was published in *The Woman*. Emergency measure No. 9, predated by several other emergency measures, penalized criticism towards the constitution and the government and was part of the tightening rule followed by the declaration of the Yushin Constitution in 1972.[104] In *The Woman*, the writer Lee Jung-ja declared that the measure is timely and necessary to protect South Korea from the communist threat from North Korea.[105] It is no coincidence that this piece of writing came out in the English language bulletin. The writer does not seem to have any regular connection with the KNCW, but the message was clear: to provide legitimacy for the emergency measures in the eyes of the international audience by reminding them of the communist threat. By the Yushin Constitution, South Korea's relations with other countries had been weakening as the irregularities in its democracy and limited human rights came to be known.[106]

The strong rhetoric on national security occurred simultaneously with the celebration of the UN-promoted International Women's Year and the adoption of international arguments on improving women's status in the KNCW's work (see Chapter 6). In 1975, Member of the National Assembly Lee Beom-joon wrote in *Yeoseong*:

> National security is the priority over everything. We believe the time has come for us to make security into a slogan in this difficult era. Women leaders have the duty and responsibility to use their ability to grasp reality and point this out to the public. In the future, the interest of women's organizations should not be restricted only to women's issues but should play a pioneering role in the broader problems of the nation.[107]

As the Cold War on the Korean peninsula intensified, the KNCW continued to connect war-related themes to the pressing women's issues. In correspondence to Lee's suggestion to involve women broadly in national security, all the resolutions at the National Convention on Women in 1977 dealt with security and women's devotion to participate appropriately. The KNCW promised to work towards removing behavior that deteriorates national concordance and "executing our duties

[103] See "Activities of the KNCW through Pictures," *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 22; "Security Rally," *The Woman* 12 (December 1976), 45; "Pictorials," *The Woman* 13, no. 1 (November 1977), 6; "Korean National Council of Women 1978's Projects," *The Woman* 14, no. 1 (May 1978), 6.

[104] Kim, "Security, Political, and Human Rights Conundrum," 460–461, 465.

[105] Lee Jung-ja, "On Emergency Measure No. 9," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), 14–15.

[106] Gills, *Korea versus Korea*, 155.

[107] Lee Beom-joon, "Indojina Bando sataewa uriui jase," [Situation in Indochina and our attitude] *Yeoseong* 5 (May 1975), 7.

as mothers, as housewives and as citizens of the community." However, the KNCW articulated women's willingness to participate in "national development" and the "modernization process of our native land" with preconditions: revising the Family Law, establishing a committee of women's issues under the president, and offering preferential employment of women in governmental and industrial bodies.[108] Lee Sook-chong justified the importance of security as an action "to rearm ourselves spiritually to survive the radical changes in the internal and external situation, to liquidate the north Korea's vain desire to overpower us, and to call for a national effort to get prepared for all the possible difficulties which may happen following the withdrawal of the U.S. troops."[109] In March 1977, US President Carter had announced plans to withdraw the rest of the US troops from South Korea to which Lee's comment was a direct response.[110]

During the late 1970s, the KNCW's reports to the ICW were also filled with activities related to national security. The KNCW announced that it had participated in the national defense projects launched by the state, was part of the "anti-communist training" organized by the Ministry of Defense, and visited a tunnel dug by North Koreans "to strengthen spirit of national security and anti-communism". They also shared information on North Korea and women's status there in their education programs and organized events "to protest against North Korean irregularities" and promote "peaceful unification."[111]

Censorship in the 1970s was significant, and all media channels were monitored. To maintain its status and avoid possible consequences, the KNCW kept its publications in accordance with the state's line. However, as Heo Yun argues, while publishing things the state accepted was possible, that did not completely hinder the producers of knowledge from reproducing the state-favored discourses from the subject's perspective. Thus, reading the KNCW publications and their cooperative attitude with the regime in the 1970s has to be done through a lens of contextualized knowledge that acknowledges an interplay existed between the message the KNCW was sending and what the regime wanted to hear.[112]

108 "The 15th National Convention of Women. Resolution and Proposition," *The Woman* 13, no. 1 (November 1977), 27.

109 Lee Sook-chong, "Women's Role and Duty Increases," *The Woman* 13, no. 2 (December 1977), 11.

110 Kim, "Security, Political, and Human Rights Conundrum," 458.

111 See Triennial Report (Jan. 1. 1977 – Dec. 31. 1979) Korean National Council of Women; KNCW Business Report for 1980–1981, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif.

112 Heo, "Development and alteration of women's culture," 65–66, 82–83. As an example of the interplay, Heo mentions 1976, a congratulatory address to the United States on its 200th anniversary, by the KNCW President Lee Sook-chong, published in *Yeoseong*. According to Heo, the audience was seemingly American women, but in the Korean language bulletin, the true audience was the Park Chung-hee regime.

By the end of the 1970s, Park Chung-hee's position and legitimacy were dwindling. The opposition won the 1978 parliamentary elections after South Korea's focus on the heavy and chemical industry and two global oil crises had caused economic instability. Economic problems led to political and social unrest, and the middle class, which had given at least tacit approval to the Park regime, started expressing dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs. In 1979, a women's hunger strike at the YH Industrial Company escalated into widespread popular protests as people recognized the violation of human rights in the company. When opposition leader Kim Young-sam's position as assemblyman was revoked, it was clear that Park's regime was no longer able to maintain the political legitimacy or public confidence that it once held.[113]

On October 26, 1979, President Park Chung-hee's close aide, the head of the KCIA Kim Jae-gyu, assassinated him. Kim could never provide any clear motive behind the act that ended Park's increasingly dictatorial regime. The 1979 December issue of *The Woman* mentions the death of the country's president twice in different tones. In her "President's Message," Lee Chul-kyung, who had become the KNCW President in February 1979, grieves the "great tragedy" of losing the past president who had created a strong nation to which the expansion of women's activities owed. According to Lee, the KNCW's initiative had been to participate in projects like national security and birth control, which would have been impossible without Park's spiritual support.[114] In her acknowledgements for the successful celebration of the 20th anniversary of the KNCW, Hong Sook-ja presents a much more blunt tone as she simply mentions that the anniversary festivities had been honored by the presence of "now President, then prime Minister Kyu Ha Choi."[115]

Park Chung-hee's death was followed by another military coup staged by General Chun Doo-hwan in December 1979. Elected president through an electoral college as the sole candidate in August 1980, Chun continued the Yushin Constitution and maintained anti-communism as the cornerstone of his legitimacy. Chun also secured continuing US support from Ronald Reagan, who also came to power in 1980. Following the term of Jimmy Carter, who had emphasized human rights in his international relations, Reagan reverted to anti-communism and, under that framework, tolerated oppressive regimes.[116] However, the South Korean population's perception of anti-communism as something related to democracy and as a formation of national

[113] Kim, *Role of the Middle Class*, 150–151.

[114] Lee Chul-kyung, "President's Message," *The Woman* 16, no. 1 (December 1979), 8. Lee served as the president from 1979 to 1980. After her resignation, Lee Sook-chong returned to lead the organization until 1982.

[115] Hong Sook-ja, "Successful Celebration," *The Woman* 16, no. 1 (December 1979), 11.

[116] John Lie, *Han Unbound. The Political Economy of South Korea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 122.

identity was severely challenged after Chun's entrance.[117] I shall return to Chun Doo-hwan and the democratization in Chapter 7, along with the issue of generational change within the KNCW, which brought the organization closer to the democracy movement during the 1980s. Having examined the complex relationship between the KNCW and the authoritarian regime, I delve into the current debates on women's history in the last section of this chapter to discuss the nature of mass dictatorship.

4.3 Women, Agency, and Debates in Historiography

Figure 2 Kim Hwallan and Park Chung-hee at the President's Office on July 7, 1961. Bak Jeong-hui uijang Kim Hwal-lan yeosa jeopgyeon damhwa [Meeting and conversation between Chairman Park Chung-hee and Madam Kim Hwallan], 1961, National Archives of Korea, http://theme.archives.go.kr/viewer/common/archWebViewer.do?bsid=200200019723&dsid=000000000003&gubun=search. Korea Open Government License Type 4 [BY, NC, ND].

117 See Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 27; Moon, "Militarized Modernity and Gendered Mass Mobilization," 50–51.

In a photo from July 1961, Park Chung-hee and Kim Hwallan sit at a coffee table. Hanbok-dressed Kim looks straight at the camera while Park's eyes are covered with his trademark pilot sunglasses. The photo was taken during the occasion described earlier in this chapter, only a few days after Kim had returned from the United States and sought an audience with the new military junta leader. In the 2000s, the photo, available in the online collection of the National Archives of Korea, has been circulating on Korean blog platforms as evidence of how both Kim and Park were pro-Japanese collaborators.[118] The photo and its current interpretations capture how legacies of the colonial era intertwine with the post-liberation era and continue to surface in present debates. In this final section of the chapter, I shall read the photo as an embodiment of important debates in Korean historiography and the recent scholarship on women, feminism, and the Cold War, in which the question of agency and autonomy among women's activists and organizations has been a pressing one.

Since the 1980s in South Korean historiography, one main thread of investigation and interpretation has been formed around the argument that the failure to remove the pro-Japanese collaborators of the colonial era from the leadership of the liberated country caused the authoritarian military rule and suffering of Korean people under it.[119] The authoritarian regime kept the discourses of collaboration on hold, but when they were unleashed, the issue has been in constant debate.[120] Kim Hwallan exemplifies a female agent whose activism continued from the colonial era to the nation-building of the post-Korean War period. Feminist scholar Insook Kwon argues that "remembering Kim Hwallan illustrates how collective memory of a

[118] For writings circulating online, see, e.g. "Nara para meogeotde ttaedo isanghan eommadeuri naseotji" [Even when they sold the country, strange mothers stepped forward] *Institute for Research in Collaborationist Activities, January 27, 2016, https://www.minjok.or.kr/archives/77488;* Hyeondaesa Storyteller, "Yeoreo chinil danche-reul ikkeuleotdeon Kim Hwal-lan (woenjjok) gwa Bak Jeong-hui dangsi Gukga Jaegeon Choego Hoewi uijang-ui mannamsa, 1961-nyeon" [A Meeting between Kim Hwallan (left), who led several pro-Japanese organizations, and Park Chung-hee, then Chairman of the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction, 1961" *Blog Naver* July 15, 2019 https://blog.naver.com/telience92/221585825895; Park Joong-seok, "Jokbeol Sahakgwa Seseup 8: 'Minjok Gyoyukja'ro Byeonsinhan Chinilpa 87 myeong…13 gaegyo-neun Seseup" [Family-Run Private Schools and Inheritance 8: 87 Pro-Japanese Figures Rebranded as 'National Educators'... 13 Schools are Inherited] *Daum Newstapa* July 25, 2019 https://v.daum.net/v/20190725203502479 [accessed June 28, 2020].

[119] See Henry Em, "Historians and Historical Writing in Modern Korea," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing. Volume 5: Historical Writing since 1945*, ed. by Axel Schneider and Daniel Woolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 669–670, passim. See also Koen De Ceuster, "The Nation Exorcised: The Historiography of Collaboration in South Korea," *Korean Studies* 25, no. 2 (2001): 224, 230, passim.

[120] De Ceuster, "Nation Exorcised," 214, 218–219.

colonial era uses gender for a nationalistic construction in a way that silences feminists and interrupts their participation in it."[121] Moreover, it is not just Kim who has been sidelined. Several other key members of the KNCW were members of colonial-era organizations. Along with Kim, the most famously charged female collaborators Moh Yoon-sook, Lee Sook-chong, and Koh Hwang-kyong – all founding members of the KNCW – continued to be the most publicly visible women in the post-liberation and authoritarian era South Korea.[122] In my reading, their role in nation-building and framing gender politics remain insufficiently researched, which relates to how the very concept of women's agency is understood.

Here, I briefly return to *Grace Sufficient*, Kim Hwallan's autobiography, and her account of how she perceived her role in the nation. For her, the most important thing in her public involvement had been to serve the country despite the different leaders and their ideological cleavages:

> All I have tried to do is to be ready to serve the cause of my country as I believe all good citizens should whenever there is a need. I do not serve a particular individual, much less a political party. I am always for my country and therefore, not for any political reasons but from patriotic motives, can cooperate with the individual or the party that bears the responsibility of the nation. In this way I am able to serve my nation consistently in spite of the changes in leaders – in peaceful times as well as in revolutions.[123]

Kim Hwallan's account of her relationship with the nation during a time of fervent nation-building initiated by Park Chung-hee leads me to consider the mass dictatorship paradigm and women's agency. To date, the discussion on women, their history, and their agency in authoritarian South Korea is somewhat limited and one-sided. As the literature review discussed, scholars of the Korean women's movement have mostly constructed the authoritarian era as an antithesis of feminism. The common claim is that women were oppressed in factories and camptown brothels, and patriarchal ideals maintained women's role at home. That there were no female cabinet members in Park's government has been seen as the utmost evidence of the regime's anti-feminist stance.

It has been suggested that the KNCW managed to continue its activities under the Park Chung-hee regime because it never challenged the regime. A lack of

121 Insook Kwon, "Feminists Navigating the Shoals of Nationalism and Collaboration. The Post-Colonial Korean Debate over How to Remember Kim Hwallan," *Frontiers* 27, no. 1 (2006): 40.

122 Yang, "A Study on the Activities of the Rightist Women's Organizations," 22–24.

123 Kim, *Grace Sufficient*, 182–183.

radicalism has been interpreted as a reactionary and conservative attitude. For instance, Barbara Molony has described the KNCW as "middle-of-the-road and 'reformist'" organization that "did not call for the elimination of American bases, reunification of the two Koreas, or violent opposition to the government" but on "its political agenda was the improvement of family life, sexual equality in inheritance, mothers' rights of child custody after divorce, and the amelioration of working women's factory conditions."[124] Indeed, as Molony notes and as the following chapter will treat in detail, the KNCW's key intention was to influence the regime to make legal changes and change the discourses surrounding women's lives. However, explaining the motives of the KNCW to work under the Park Chung-hee regime is also important. Here, I agree with Sanghui Nam's opinion on the opportunity structures the KNCW managed to exploit under the authoritarian era, such as taking advantage of state policies, e.g. utilizing family planning as a communication channel to spread knowledge on gender equality.[125] That said, I also join Kim Young-sun in her investigation on the relationship between the KNCW and the authoritarian state in asking how to historically evaluate the KNCW's cooperation with the Yushin system or, in a broader sense, the Park Chung-hee regime?[126] To continue, what are the means to understand women's mobilization and their possible collaboration with the state? The following further elaborates on the relationship between the KNCW and the authoritarian state in South Korea and discusses women's agency in the framework of the Cold War.

Agency is one of the cornerstones of feminist inquiries. The recent scholarship on the Cold War women poses questions about women's agency, especially in socialist countries. Importantly, the work of historian Francisca de Haan makes visible how the historiography of the Cold War has been biased to claim that in socialist countries, i.e., in dictatorships, people had little control over their everyday choices and that people were only followers of the state power.[127] Although the Park Chung-hee regime represented the other side of the political spectrum – an anti-communist state – it shares the same assumptions about the state power. Imagining the Park Chung-hee regime merely as a centralized state, which dictated the behavior of the masses, oversimplifies the history of South Korea and eliminates the agency of women. Analyses that operate under such assumption give little to no agency for women in the process. Chinese historian Wang Zheng also recognizes this tendency

[124] Molony, "Frameworks of Gender," 529. However, Molony mentions no sources for this image of the KNCW.

[125] Sanghui Nam, "The Women's Movement and the Transformation of the Family Law in South Korea. Interactions Between Local, National and Global Structures," *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2010): 68, 74, 76.

[126] See Kim, "Making of International Discourse," 183.

[127] See de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms."

in the scholarship: that women's organizations closely attached to the patriarchal state lose their agency and gender. To overcome this, she suggests reconceptualizing the state power and encourages scholars to find sites for feminist negotiation and intervention.[128]

The previous sections of this chapter describe how and by which motives the KNCW supported the authoritarian state and contributed to making the subempire. It would be easy to leave the analysis there and close one's eyes to other instances that show the engagement in the subempire's nation-building project was not all-encompassing, and the critique towards the authoritarian regime started to appear inside and outside the KNCW. In certain instances, members of the KNCW resisted the authoritarian regime, although it cannot be said that the organization had ever explicitly done so. One year after the article in *The Woman* had celebrated the necessity of the Yushin Constitution and Emergency Measure No. 9, lawyer Lee Tai-young, an advocate for the Family Law revisions and one of the KNCW's original officers, was arrested based on the same emergency measure. Lee had participated in an anti-governmental demonstration demanding the restoration of democracy along with her husband, former foreign minister Chung Yil-hyung, and presidential candidate Kim Dae-jung.[129] Following her arrest, Lee was put on trial for violating the emergency measure. The trial lasted several months; and Lee was sentenced to lose her civil rights, was banned from practicing law for ten years, and forced to withdraw from her position as the director of the Korea Legal Aid Center she had established.[130]

As Lee's arrest suggests, increasingly more voices departing from the state orthodoxy started appearing inside the KNCW as the Yushin Constitution era continued, signaling insecurities in dealing with the authoritarian regime. The feelings inside the organization were mixed. For instance, in the editorial of the 1977 issue of *The Woman,* KNCW President Lee Sook-chong states that it is fortunate that "we are living in an open society where women can enjoy freedom to participate in political, economic and social activities," providing a rosy image of the period in which freedom in the society was more limited than ever.[131] In contrast, on the next page, Hong Sook-ja, the future vice president and president of the KNCW, demands

128 See Wang Zheng, "'State Feminism'? Gender and Socialist State Formation in Maoist China," *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 520, 543; Wang, *Finding Women in the State*, 7–8.

129 Sonia Reid Strawn, *Where There Is No Path: Lee Tai-young, Her Story* (Seoul: Korea Legal Aid Center for Family Relations, 1988), 135–136; Park Myung-lim, "The Chaeya," in *Park Chung Hee Era*, 395.

130 Strawn, *Where There is No Path*, 136–137.

131 Lee Sook-chong, "Put Our Ideals into Practice," *The Woman* 13, no. 1 (November 1977), 11.

government action to establish a governmental agency that would be solely in charge of women's affairs similarly with other Asian countries since "in our country, people are becoming increasingly aware of the demand of the times... the urgent need for participation of women to national development."[132] Again, to imply the position of the KNCW in the vicinity of the state, the same bulletin featured an article on the urgency of national security by the chairman of the Pan National Security Central Council of Korea. The article does not include a single mention of women, suggesting it was not written for a women's journal but as a reminder that given the world situation and after the fall of South Vietnam, South Korea could not trust its free world allies and thus had to emphasize national security and carry out a social purification campaign.[133]

I wish to emphasize one of my arguments for this study: The KNCW was not speaking only with one voice. Some of the previous research has suggested the KNCW was very much focused on its president, Kim Hwallan, in the 1960s, and Lee Sook-chong for most of the 1970s.[134] Both are known as pro-Japanese collaborators and anti-communists and still accepted the existence of different opinions inside the KNCW. For instance, in 1966, when Kim was the editor of *The Woman*, the magazine published a piece on women's role in modernization that openly criticized the regime: "[…] government assumes authoritarianism. They take no notice of tolerance, the spirit of democracy; and like to deal with affairs imperatively."[135] As this study later discusses, Lee Sook-chong and Hong Sook-ja were close working partners in the women's issues despite their differing views concerning the military regime and the democratization. Thus, it is fair to note that the KNCW women from different backgrounds and generations still believed they could find relevant agency within the KNCW – one of the biggest women's organizations of these times, after all.

I shall return to the issue of the agency of the KNCW during the authoritarian era and its role as part of the Korean women's movement by discussing the issue of collective memory in the recent political history of South Korea in the dissertation's conclusion. However, to continue delving into Cold War historiographical debates on women's agency, it is necessary to consider the position of the International Council of Women vis à vis its national councils and how the relationship between

[132] Hong Sook-ja, "Government Agency for Women's Affairs Needed," *The Woman* 13, no. 1 (November 1977), 12.

[133] Kim Young-woo, "Korean's Total Security Endeavor," *The Woman* 13, no. 1 (November 1977), 13.

[134] See Suh, "State and Women's Organizations"; Kim, "Making of International Discourse."

[135] Yoo Kyung-young, "Women's Role in the Modernization of Korea," *The Woman* 2, no. 2 (April 1966), 4.

women and the state was perceived in this framework. Understanding the KNCW's operation with the state would be insufficient without acknowledging the role the ICW encouraged its national councils to take in their respective countries.

As discussed in the previous section, the ICW was uninterested in commenting on the relations between South and North Korea. As an organization, the ICW never clearly stated that it belonged to any of the political camps of the Cold War; instead, it declared itself apolitical and was unwilling to intervene in the domestic politics of the national councils. The ICW did not further analyze the military coup and its consequences in South Korea in 1961; actually, in the first compilation of the ICW's history, it celebrated the KNCW's strong start.[136] As the previous chapter mentioned, the ICW had held a similar attitude toward a military coup in Turkey the year before, and, despite the internal situation, proceeded with preparations for the Triennial Conference in Istanbul later that year.[137] Nevertheless, the ICW instead openly criticized communism and was suspicious towards communist women and their organizations. The ICW, alongside the other women's organizations of the "free world," participated in demonizing the communist women by claiming their actions towards gender equality and world peace were fake and directed by their governments.

In principle, the ICW followed a guideline not to cooperate with women's organizations that were not independent of the state's control. However, in the Cold War framework, this attitude was primarily signaled towards communist countries and women's organizations within. For instance, Rose Parsons, whose role in establishing the KNCW the previous chapter discussed, was eager to spread such an attitude. After visiting Asia, she was convinced that cooperation was needed among women "in all parts of the free world." Yet, she believed working with the communist women was impossible as long as they could not "work independently of their governments."[138] There is no sign the ICW would have ever questioned the KNCW's ability to work independently from the state, suggesting that the Park Chung-hee regime succeeded in portraying itself as being among the Cold War democracies – in opposition to the totalitarian socialist and communist systems. Thus, it would be more accurate to stress that the ICW did not draw a line between independent and state-registered or state-sponsored organizations but between organizations in communist countries and liberal countries. The ICW encouraged its member organizations to collaborate with the liberal state. Upon returning from the ICW Triennial Conference in Tehran in 1966, the KNCW passed on an important message to the readers of *The Woman*: the desire of the ICW that each national

136 International Council of Women, *Women in a Changing World*, 311.
137 Azak and de Smaele, "National and Transnational Dynamics," 54.
138 Around the world in 70 days, April 6, 1958, folder 1762 AVG-Carhif.

council of women work closely with their government and "cooperate in every way possible."[139]

With this scene in mind, returning to the photo I started the discussion with is relevant. Kim Hwallan evidently reached out to Park Chung-hee for various purposes. As stated in her autobiography, Kim found it important to know the people she operated with – she was famous for her networks, after all. However, within the context of the KNCW, it is important to understand that the relationship of feminists with the state is not a fixed category. Thus, what is perceived today as a portrait of two collaborators can be interpreted as a representation of the state and civil society's relationship in its own time.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter examines how gendered citizens acted as agents of the state, and analyzes the relationship between the state and women's organizing by focusing on the case of the newly established Korean National Council of Women. In retrospect, the Park Chung-hee era has been viewed through its authoritarian politics, obsession with economic growth, and complicated relationship with North Korea. By revisiting the Park Chung-hee era from the KNCW's perspective, the chapter sheds light on the hopes, tensions, and expectations related to the Park Chung-hee regime and how those sentiments changed over time, as can be seen from the cases of organizing the National Convention on Women, operating the Women's Hall, and facing the Yushin Constitution.

As the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter suggests, women in mass dictatorships have utilized the opportunities the state has provided to be members of a nation. This chapter argues that the KNCW women actively participated in making South Korea. Their participation was not without disappointments, but they strongly believed that any regime should be capable of improving women's status. Previous research shows that even patriarchal power systems and ideologies can provide opportunities for empowerment or space for women's agency. The setting is often contradictory: Women are expected to fulfill their roles as mothers and caregivers, yet they are mobilized to be active citizens. Similarly, a certain group of women can

[139] Kim Shin-sil, "International Council of Women," *The Woman* 2, no 3 (August 1966), 3. In due time, the ICW grew self-aware of the fact that many of its affiliates worked closely with their governments just like the WIDF members; thus, by the end of the 1960s, it had worked on a new definition of organizations it could collaborate with: Those organizations' actions needed to be independent and have the right to refuse activities (given by the state), and the organizations' funds needed to be controlled by an executive body inside the organization, even when the money came from the government. See Kinnear, *Woman of the World*, 223–224.

be mobilized to teach or control others. In such cases, experiences of emancipation and empowerment can differ and should not be dismissed.

Conforming to the order evidently imposed by the Park Chung-hee regime was the only option available for the KNCW to continue its existence and operations. Registration with the state after being dissolved also provided the KNCW opportunities, such as possibility raising issues on state-sponsored women's conferences. Enjoying the ICW's support, the KNCW became engaged in state-sanctioned social reforms, trying to locate itself amidst a national strive for development and women's hopes for gender equality. I argue that what has been perceived as anti-feminist state policies afterwards in scholarship did not appear as such to the KNCW women. For women whose lives and families had been upended by a recent war, the importance of domesticity, active participation in mobilization, such as in the case of the Vietnam War, or the manipulation of the state's rhetoric on active citizenship were ways to construct the everyday Cold War. As anthropologist Heonik Kwon states, the Cold War was not cold for everyone; thus, it is important to reconstruct its meanings for ordinary people.[140]

From the late 1960s to the end of the 1970s, many of the KNCW's public statements were framed by national security issues, such as the Blue House raid in 1968, Yuk Young-soo's death in 1974, the victory of communism in Indo-China, and the discovery of underground tunnels in the DMZ. The KNCW's effort in supporting the Vietnam War and anti-North Korea activities did not occur in isolation but should be seen as part of a larger nation-building project. Historical actors, such as the KNCW women, viewed issues of national identity and security as daily life issues over the state's empty rallying cries. Fighting communism was important to many Korean feminists because they saw it as a threat to their ability to improve their lives and those of their families. As the next two chapters show, the KNCW sought social change through legislative measures by indicating the seriousness of inequality in Korean culture and pleading with the international demands for women's rights articulated in the UN. Chapter 6 will discuss the International Women's Year in more detail, but it is a worthy notion at this point to consider how advancing women's issues internationally occurred with the harshening of government rule in South Korea. Expressing support for South Vietnam and participating in the Vietnam War had further distanced South Korea from the Third World and its solidarity movements.[141] For the KNCW, this meant the direction of its international cooperation had to be in the anti-communist world.

The long-term approach I have adopted for this dissertation – from the 1950s to the turn of the 1990s – helps me view the transformations of the KNCW and South

140 See Kwon, *Other Cold War*, 6–7.
141 Gills, *Korea versus Korea*, 151.

Korean society. Focusing the investigation of the state-civil society relationship and women's status only to the post-democratization period and gender mainstreaming erases the historicity of the issue. The historical background in this chapter shall serve the rest of the dissertation. As I reveal later, the 1980s brought significant changes to the work of the KNCW, which signals how the initially mobilized citizens became forces for democratization. Whereas this chapter has discussed the forms and implications of the mobilization and acquiescence to Park Chung-hee's political goals, the next chapter will illustrate the other facet of what the concept of mass dictatorship tries to approach: that the authoritarian regime needed to maintain some degree of popular support, which provided the leeway for the civic sector to advance its own goals. In the case of the KNCW, the primary goal was to advance women's appreciation as economic and legal actors.

5 Women as Housewives, Consumers, Mothers, and Leaders

"Two things that became strong recently are women and stockings."[1] In 1969, Mr. Song Keum-ho, editorial writer for the newspaper *Dong-A Ilbo*, started a discussion in a panel on family life at a symposium organized by the Women's Research Centre. He stated that after Korean women started enjoying as much freedom as men did, housewives forgot how to take care of the kitchen. Present in the same panel were Lee Chung-sook, the vice president of the KNCW; Chung Hee-kyung, an educational psychology professor from Sunkyungkwan University; Chung Chin-ki from the newspaper *Maeil Kyungje Daily*; and two female students from Sungkyungkwan and Sookmyung women's universities.

The symposium presented a conflicting image of the role and place of the housewife and the future of the Korean family. *Dong-A Ilbo*'s Song Keum-ho condemned the housewives who left their homes only to gather somewhere to gossip and "develop their interests in extravagance, waste and vanity" instead of tending to their responsibilities in the kitchen where only the maid was working. Another journalist, Chung Chin-ki, blamed the "emancipated women" for breaking down families and homes. Lee Sook-chong took the middle path and declared it was the KNCW's interest to solve how the housewives could "spend their leisure time profitably." However, the college students pointed out that the times were changing and that the older generation should realize that young people were not seeking the same life their parents had lived.[2]

The discussion, summarized in the pages of *The Woman* – the KNCW's English-language bulletin – is a typical example of a debate on the status of women in which the KNCW constantly participated. The debate is not simply framed by a conflict between the sexes but between older and younger generations; different professional groups; their expectations and desires on women's legal, social, and political status; women's right to exist outside the home and participate in society; and the ideals of womanhood. The KNCW sought to frame women's position to benefit the individual

[1] "A Symposium on Family Life," *The Woman* 5, no. 3 (September 1969), 3–4.
[2] "A Symposium on Family Life," 3–4.

and surrounding society. In this chapter, largely based on the two bulletins of the KNCW, *Yeoseong*, and *The Woman*, which had been published since the mid-1960s, I analyze the organization's yearly activities to uncover the themes and discourses that shaped the organization's agenda. The chapter continues exploring the nature of mass dictatorship from the previous chapter, along with the historical timeline of the authoritarian era, and considers the objectives the KNCW proposed for women's liberation.

The KNCW's Korean language bulletin, *Yeoseong*, first appeared in September 1964. It was launched as a publication on women's issues with the task to "get the public opinion right."[3] Six months later, in March 1965, the KNCW started to publish an English-language bulletin *The Woman* to "share our experiences with the women of the world."[4] These KNCW publications are the arenas where the interplay between modernization, development, and militarization – the key themes of the Park Chung-hee regime – was closely linked with the KNCW's daily activities.[5] The publications were more information letters on the activities and agendas of the organization than women's magazines. They did not include recipes or beauty tips, although the back covers were occasionally used to advertise ramen noodles or lipstick to finance the publications. Both bulletins shared similar sections, such as the editorial in the beginning and a glimpse into the activities of member organizations at the back, coverage of the National Convention on Women, seminars and workshops arranged by the KNCW, and many other events the local women's groups or the ICW organized.[6] The following chapter will discuss the international sphere of the publications in more detail. Most importantly, the bulletins reproduced many of the speeches and talks at KNCW events, featuring KNCW officers and many intellectuals, journalists, and government representatives.

Previous research has largely viewed the authoritarian era, nation-building, and women's role in it as top-down development that confined women's role to reproducers and household managers. Ruth Barraclough claims that in South Korea,

3 Kim Hwallan, "Olbareun yeoron joseonggwa yudaereul gudgehaja – yeoseong changganhoreul nemyeonseo –" [Let's establish a correct opinion and strengthen unity – on the occasion of the first issue of Yeoseong], *Yeoseong* 9 (September 1964), 3.

4 Helen Kim, "The Woman," *The Woman* 1, no. 1 (March 1965), 1.

5 See also Lee, *Service Economies*, 3.

6 I choose not to discuss the activities of the KNCW's member organizations separately to keep the focus on the public image of the main organization. The principles of the ICW outlined that the national councils were umbrella organizations that coordinated the activities of their various affiliated societies and their local branches and worked as mediators between the public and decision-making levels. See International Council of Women, *Report on the Triennial Conference, Helsinki, Finland 8 to 18 June 1954* (Paris: International Council of Women, 1954), 102. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [April 19, 2018].

early aspirations for a greater political and social role for women were thwarted during the conservative 1950s and suffered a setback after the military coup in 1961. She believes organized feminism took on a defensive pose, focusing upon revising the patriarchal Family Law and retreating from industrial reform, equal pay, and sexual harassment issues.[7] According to Nicola Anne Jones, "[w]hereas the role of men lay first and foremost in their capacities as breadwinners and patriotic soldiers, women's primary responsibility was to be loyal wives and wise mothers, who raised a limited number of highly educated children."[8] The previous feminist analysis presented about the authoritarian era, such as Seungsook Moon's *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (2005), manages to shed light on how public policies related to private and family life were used to consolidate the masculine developmental state and male-centrism.[9] However, as Chung-kang Kim argues, the assumption of the regime's omnipotence and focus on the state-led actions in the previous literature has reinforced the gender binary and heteronormativity and silenced the voices of people who operated within the regime's favored structures.[10] Here, I join Kim's argument and shed light on how the state's intentions resonated with women and how the KNCW as a women's organization utilized the state's interest on women as reproducers to widen women's status.

Indeed, in Cold War South Korean family life, the regime controlled sex and reproduction in many ways. Normative gender roles and the nuclear family were enforced to regulate sexuality and strengthen morality – the country during the war did not want any licentious conduct to demoralize its citizens. This chapter examines how and why the KNCW focused so heavily on home and family, what other issues the organization introduced, and how the issues related to the Cold War. In addition to the issue of all-out national security presented in the previous chapter, the KNCW actively utilized in its own work the central themes of the Park Chung-hee's regime: modernization of the fatherland and population problem. Kyounghee Kim and Seung-kyung Kim's research on the relationship between the women's movement and the state has pointed out that during the authoritarian era, women's groups could link their agenda to some aspects of the regime's development aims, especially family planning and reduction of family size.[11] Here, I intend to bring to the discussion the viewpoint of the KNCW women instead of that of the state and analyze how female activists acted upon the premise that the change in women's status can start from home. I argue

7 Barraclough, "Red Love in Korea," 33–34.

8 Jones, *Gender and Political Opportunities*, 36.

9 Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, esp. Chapter 3.

10 Chung-kang Kim, "A female-dressed man sings a national epic: the film Male Kisaeng and the politics of gender and sexuality in 1960s South Korea," in *Queer Korea*, 176.

11 Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 72.

that the women's organization formulated its feminism according to the state's main policies and adopted the language of the state to articulate its goals in achieving gender equality and frame the national questions as ones demanding women's active participation and citizenship. The tension between private and public domains and the notion that women belong to the domestic sphere allowed KNCW's engagement on national and even global levels. Contrary to the commonly held view on the return of traditional gender roles during the Cold War, the KNCW not only cherished the role of women as mothers and wives but as citizens with rights.

Besides the state-sanctioned tasks where the state's interests were clearly visible as the previous chapter presented, here, I identify and focus on two occasionally overlapping themes that marked most of the KNCW activities: first, rational citizenship and scientific domesticity, and second, family and women's legal role within it. These activities reflected policy-making and the state's nation-building agenda. However, these themes were clearly targeted to increase women's influence in their own everyday lives. The following subchapters shall clarify these themes by discussing how the KNCW framed scientific domesticity as an ideology of modern housewives and how the organization defined women's legal and social role in relation to family in questions related to revising the Family Law and dealing with the population problem.

Bazaars and Widow's Mites: Funding of the KNCW

Before moving forward, I wish to briefly discuss the funding the KNCW operated with. Given my scope of sources, I have only been able to gather some general ideas on how the KNCW's operations were funded and what kind of limitations the constant lack of funds posed for the organization. The issue clearly asks for further investigation.

The KNCW was affiliated with the government; however, that was the only option for a social organization's existence; since their action was based on voluntary work, organizations needed to secure every source of funding possible. However, as the constant fundraising campaigns show, the state made the KNCW neither rich nor totally dependent.

The materials I used for this research do not exhaustively explain where the KNCW's finances came from. The publications and correspondence between Seoul and the ICW headquarters in Paris suggest the organization's work was significantly based on donations from members, member organizations, and other national councils, providing money and goods. The reports from the KNCW to the ICW indicate that the KNCW occasionally received funding from the state, as was the case for financing the consumer movement-related activities, which I shall discuss later in this chapter.

Figure 3 The opening ceremony of KNCW's new headquarters in Yongsan on May 3, 1975. President Lee Sook-chong in the middle. Kyunghyang Shinmun, Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe Yongsan sojae bonhoe hoegan gaegwan ginyeom jachuk moim-eseo tteogeul jareumyeo gippeohaneun hoeweon-deul [Members celebrating and cutting rice cakes at the gathering for the opening of the headquarters of Korean National Council of Women located in Yongsan], 1975, the Korea Democracy Foundation's Open Archives, https://archives.kdemo.or.kr/isad/view/00726779. Korea Open Government License Type 4 [BY, NC, ND].

A significant amount of the KNCW's funding came from its own members, especially from the leadership. That the national councils rested on some wealthy women was typical for the ICW since the early years when for example Lady Aberdeen, the ICW President for almost 40 years, largely kept the organization going with her personal possessions.[12] It is certain that also for the KNCW's case, long-term President Kim Hwallan channeled her own funds for the organization's needs and utilized her role in Ewha to the organization's benefit. For instance, when the organization was established, its first office was in Ewha. The need for new headquarters in the 1970s is a good example of how membership donations were crucial. As the previous chapter discussed, the KNCW lost its headquarters in the Women's Hall in 1966 and had to spend several years fundraising to build a new

[12] Flour, "Survey of a Century," 18, 26–27.

one.[13] In 1975, President Lee Sook-chong donated five million won to remodel the new headquarters for the organization.[14] The headquarters in Yongsan-gu was bought with money donated by the members and the profits received from selling music records in the first half of the 1970s.[15]

The KNCW's financial difficulties are also evident from several letters it received from Paris requesting the membership payment. For instance, in July 1987, the KNCW received an irritated reminder from the ICW to pay its membership fees. Acknowledging the heated political situation in South Korea, the ICW's treasurer did not consider it an excuse not to fulfill the membership duties. The ICW's financial situation was poor due to the fall of the US dollar and weak interest rates; non-paying members were making the situation even worse.[16] Unlike many other councils, however, the KNCW eventually seems to have always been able to pay the fees.

The KNCW also actively sought support from abroad. Occasionally, the organization received funding from its sister national councils abroad. In 1965, the KNCW set up children's libraries and playgrounds for Mother and Child Homes in Busan and Seoul with a donation from the National Council of Women of England.[17] It organized international bazaars to create a sense of belonging between Korean and non-Korean women. One such bazaar was organized in September 1964 to "make our constituency realize the worldwide scope of our organization" and to raise the money needed.[18] To raise funds for the KNCW, the organization had asked for help from over 50 ICW organizations and received money and native products from 15 countries, such as the UK, US, Australia, some African countries, Denmark, and Finland. The bazaar managed to raise $3,725 with the donations and selling homemade cookies and cakes made by wives of diplomatic missions in Korea, representatives of the United States Operations Mission to Korea, and members of the International Women's Association in Korea. The KNCW also sold Korean products provided by Korean firms.[19]

The financial difficulties of social organizations were well-known among the activists. In 1965, an editorial in *Yeoseong* was trying to inspire women to work for

13 See *The Woman* 5, no. 1–2 (June 1969), 7.
14 "Donation," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), 18.
15 "New Headquarters Building of KNCW," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), 6.
16 Jeannine de Boccard to Hong Sook-ja, July 7, 1987, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.
17 *The Woman* 1, no. 2 (June 1965), 6.
18 Chung Choong-ryang and Park Kumsun-song, to the ICW headquarters, June 23, 1964, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.
19 "The International Bazaar," *The Woman* 1, no. 1 (March 1965), 6. See also the inquiry to send the goods to be sold in the bazaar, Chung Choong-ryang and Park Kumsun-song to ICW headquarters, June 23, 1964, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

the women's movement despite the lack of funding. The publication was very straightforward in expressing that lamenting the difficulties was not useful when hard work was needed.[20] In 1970, the Social Welfare Institution Law required institutes and organizations to meet the state's criteria to receive state subsidies. This created a symbiosis of the state as a funder and the institution as a deliverer, minimizing public spending on welfare but creating a situation in which the recipients of funding did not want to irritate the state.[21] In the case of the KNCW, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs was the closest governmental organ to support the organization. For example, there are mentions that the Ministry often supported the National Conventions on Women.[22] However, the KNCW also negotiated with the ministry; for example, in 1975, when the Minister of Health and Social Affairs Kho Jae-pil visited the KNCW officials and urged women's active participation for the country, the KNCW leadership asked for financial support from the ministry to overcome the difficulties related to women's activities.[23] When the KNCW asked for financial support from governmental agencies, it seemed the organization saw no conflict of interest on being financed by the state. However, government funding and the assumed obedience that followed have been why the critiques of the authoritarian system held this type of organization in contempt.

5.1 Scientific Domesticity – Ideology of the Cold War Housewives

A New Year's editorial in *Yeoseong* in 1965 declared that "women are neither victims or [sic] men's dolls." It assured that women's problems were waiting to be solved by women. The bulletin urged women not to make outdated excuses such as family obligations or a lack of time. If women managed their households efficiently, they could use the remaining energy with society and build a better society since "it is women we can expect to eliminate poverty, ignorance and social evil."[24] One can easily find the continuous presence of such modernization fever in *Yeoseong* and *The Woman*. Both magazines featured articles and surveys on topics such as economic growth, female labor, domestic production, rational home management, the meaning

[20] "Yuhyu noryeogeul bongmug geonseole hwayonghaja" [Let's use effort to build a service], *Yeoseong* 2 (February 1965), 3.

[21] Suyoung Kim, "The Politics of Struggle in a State–Civil Society Partnership: A Case Study of a South Korean Workfare Partnership Programme" PhD diss. (London School of Economics, 2011), 38–39.

[22] See "National Convention of KNCW," *The Woman* 12 (December 1976), 20.

[23] *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 23.

[24] "Urisseuro jasiniui ileul haegyeolhaja" [Let's solve our problems], *Yeoseong* 1 (January 1965), 3.

of consumers' everyday choices, and the Saemaul Undong, the New Village Movement. These issues were related to the rapidly transforming Korean society and to the changes Park Chung-hee expedited under the label of the "modernization of the fatherland." In the KNCW's bulletins, the KNCW officials and academics, government representatives, and journalists brought up their visions for the future and the prosperity of Korean society. Although many problems were recognized, and the KNCW's own representatives especially wrote about the lack of recognition for women's role in modernization, a belief in a better tomorrow characterized the activities and campaigns of the women's organization. The following discusses how the KNCW viewed the role of housewives as transformative for Korean society. The KNCW articulated scientific domesticity as Cold War ideology for the housewives and supported the New Village Movement sponsored by the government and the consumer movement. Ultimately, the KNCW took the task so seriously that it openly criticized the government's fever for economic growth.

Seungsook Moon argues that the authoritarian state mobilized South Korean women to be domestic. According to Moon, rational management of the household was the only national policy directed at women besides family planning. The policy was not promoted or funded as much as men's industrial mobilization, highlighting women's confinement to the home and the lack of recognition for their economic contribution to nation-building.[25] For the KNCW, rational management of the household, scientific domesticity, and the role of housewives in the national economy were indeed important questions to raise. However, my analysis in this chapter differs from that of Moon's; instead of comparing the state's efforts to mobilize both sexes, I focus on how women utilized the state's modernization fever. Moreover, these issues were not new during the period of authoritarian rule; thus, it is important to acknowledge the background of women's participation in the national economy through household management.

During the colonial era, the influence of Christianity, especially Protestantism and its Victorian virtues on women's domesticity, guided discussion on the home. Missionary work familiarized Koreans with Western thoughts and women's involvement in fields such as education, medicine, and social work. Still, the home remained a woman's place. The predecessor of a modern Korean home was a missionary home introduced to Koreans via missionary work and open house visits. Paradoxically, the introduction of the Christian home by female missionaries working far away from their homes suggested that gender roles could be contested.[26]

25 Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 69.

26 Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters*, 2; Hyaweol Choi and Margaret Jolly, "Paradoxes of Domesticity: Missionary Encounters in the Making of Christian Homes

In Korea and other localities that were a target of missionary work, Christianity was linked to a discussion on modernity. Unlike in China and Japan, Christianity was not seen as an imperial threat in Korea, making its role more significant in molding the modern future. The leadership of the KNCW, familiar with Protestant work and female missionaries, found ways for women to participate in the community based on the ideals of domesticity. Koreans during the colonial era had molded, transformed, and interacted with the Christian and Western ideas of domesticity and continued doing so during the Cold War – an era of a new emergence of domestic ideals. Even if the home was an idealized place for women to stay in, women continued moving into the public domain. Kim Hwallan had already declared in the 1930s that "keeping house should be elevated to the level of keeping society or social affairs."[27]

Because the housewives were the most prominent group among the KNCW members, a significant part of the organization's work was targeted at them. A housewife's role was already widely discussed among the New Women during the Japanese rule. The women's magazines during the colonial era were not short of articles on housewives, childcare, consumption, and scientific and hygienic home management, along with interviews with elite women advising women on rationality.[28] The Japanese sponsored the ideology of "a good wife and wise mother" in Korea. Yet, as Hanmee Kim and Hyaeweol Choi state, the ideology was not directly delivered to Korea from the Japanese version of *ryōsai kenbo*. While the Japanese mediation was also important, Kim and Choi point to American influence, especially that of female missionaries, in shaping the new female ideal.[29] Choi argues that the wise mother and good wife ideology should not solely be seen as a continuation of patriarchal gender ideology. Instead, it was a transculturally constructed and contested ideology by several actors: intellectuals in Korea, colonial authorities, and American missionaries.[30] During the colonial era, Korean writings on the American civilization corresponded with the gender ideology where women were to take care of *seuwiteu hom* (sweet home) where a nuclear family lived. While

in Asia and the Pacific," in *Divine Domesticities*, 4; Choi, "Transpacific Aspiration toward Modern Domesticity," 64.

27 Kwon, "Feminists Navigating the Shoals," 49, 63n47.

28 Kwon Shinyoung, "From Colonial Patriots to Post-Colonial Citizens: Neighborhood Politics in Korea, 1931–1964," PhD diss. (University of Chicago, 2013), 72n112; Hyaeweol Choi, "The Missionary Home as a Pulpit: Domestic Paradoxes in Early Twentieth-Century Korea," in *Divine Domesticities*, 47.

29 Choi, "'Wise Mother, Good Wife,'" 3, 7; Hanmee Kim, "The Meanings of America in Modern Korea: A Study of Korean Diplomatic, Cultural, and Intellectual Engagements with America, 1852–1945" PhD diss. (University of California, Los Angeles, 2014), 159.

30 Choi, "'Wise Mother, Good Wife.'" 4.

women's focus on the home has been considered traditional and conservative behavior, transforming from an extended family, where the mother-in-law was constantly present, to a nuclear family actually provided a novel space for women to control the house.[31]

In colonial Korea and later in the Republic of Korea, home economics combined scientific knowledge of industrialization and technology with rationalism, pragmatism, and positivism. With the association of discipline of home economics, taking care of the home in a scientific manner paralleled with professionality, further providing women the skills to operate in public roles.[32] Several women who during the colonial era had received education in domestic schools and abroad, especially in the United States, were "armed with modern scientific knowledge" and formed a group of experts articulating what modern family meant.[33] First, classes in home economics were offered in the early 1920s and included not only housekeeping and cooking or nutrition skills but biology, physics, and chemistry. The students were driven by the will to "become *true housewives*."[34] These women continued to influence the discourse on domesticity during the authoritarian era, many as founding members of the KNCW and leading professionals in home economics. These women include people such as Hwang Sin-dok (1898–1983), who came to be known as the mother of Korean women's sports for her dedication to physical education; Choi E-soon (1910–1987), whose work focused primarily on child rearing who modified home economics to fit Korean needs by utilizing her foreign education; Koh Hwang-kyoung, who led the Ewha Department of Home Economics in 1940–1945 and became the director of the Women's Bureau in the American military government as Chapter 3 discussed. Koh also founded the Seoul Women's University in 1961 "to raise women leaders who can contribute to creating a wealthy community beyond egotistical success."[35] This transpacific flow of people and ideas that continued from colonial to post-colonial era, as Hyaeweol Choi states, provides insight on how gender roles and the expectations related to them were formed in the

31 Choi, "Missionary Home as a Pulpit," 29; Kim, "Meanings of America in Modern Korea," 159.

32 Moon Sook Jae, "Historical Study of Home Economics in Korea," *Journal of Home Economics Japan* 49, no. 3 (1998): 89–90; Choi, "Missionary Home as a Pulpit," 49–50, 54.

33 Choi, "'Wise Mother, Good Wife,'" 14.

34 Emphasis in original. Choi, "Missionary Home as a Pulpit," 52. See also Choi, "Transpacific Aspiration toward Modern Domesticity," 69–70, 72.

35 Kim Sooyoung and Kim Eun-Jee, "Educational Opportunities for Developing Korean Women Leaders," in *Korean Women in Leadership*, ed. Yonjoo Cho and Gary N. McLean (Cham: Springer, 2018), 105. See also Choi, "Missionary Home as a Pulpit," 53.

transnational sphere of modernity.[36] Furthermore, Charles R. Kim views the scientific management of the home that was given as the women's task in the larger framework of modernization. In the modernization process, old and "feudal" practices needed to be eliminated while "beautiful customs" needed to be preserved. The heritage of the colonial era professional wife thus also served the national development in postwar Korea.[37]

Park Chung-hee coined the rhetoric of 'the modernization of the fatherland' (*joguk geundaehwa*).[38] In Park's mission, the modernization required economic reforms the previous governments had failed to push forward along with people's contributions. Implementing Park's economic vision was based on the five-year plans, four of which were started during Park's lifetime, planned and conducted by the Economic Planning Board.[39] The first Five-Year Economic Plan that Park launched in 1961 presented hope for the Koreans who had benefited little from Syngman Rhee's presidency.[40] At the time of the military coup in 1961, South Korea was among the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income of $87.[41] Although the first plan was not an initial success and the regime had to soon revise it, it focused on developing energy security, increasing farming income, and promoting the textile industry. Eventually, the export promotion started yielding results, and the expected economic growth rate was exceeded, largely because of cheap labor.[42] The following five-year plans led the South Korean economy to focus increasingly on export orientation, allowing mainly the import of substituting industries; in 1972, the Third Plan was built upon heavy and chemical industries. The fourth and final plan introduced under Park Chung-hee strengthened South Korea's position as an exporter of steel, iron, machinery, ships, and petrochemicals in the world markets.[43] According to Kim Hyung-a, "Park demanded, and largely succeeded in arousing, a shared sense of 'mission' for national development among the Korean people."[44]

With the idea of modernizing the fatherland, Park Chung-hee showed greater concern for social welfare and improved standard of life than his predecessors. These could be attained with economic development, but further practical implementation

36 Choi, "Transpacific Aspiration toward Modern Domesticity," 73–74.
37 Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 12.
38 Kim, "Introduction: The Case for Political History," 6.
39 Kim and Sorensen, "Introduction," 8.
40 Lee, *Making of Minjung*, 28–30.
41 Kim and Sorensen, "Introduction," 5.
42 Kim, *Role of the Middle Class*, 46, 51; Kim and Sorensen, "Introduction," 5–6; King, *Seoul*, 78–79.
43 King, *Seoul*, 81–82.
44 Kim, *Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee*, 8.

was tasked to social organizations, women's groups included.[45] Park's public speeches emphasized that the work that women did in their homes should be recognized instead of disregarding it: "We should caution here that equality for females does not include the psychological and physiological differences of the softer sex. Home management should be considered, therefore, as professional labor."[46] The KNCW truly cherished this idea and linked women's domestic work to the country's economic success. In 1978, when South Korea had achieved the level of exports worth $10 billion per year – four years sooner than anticipated in the economic plan – the KNCW President Lee Sook-chong, with no sign of modesty, granted the achievement to women. According to Lee, the women's united effort in the jobs visible and invisible for the interest of the state helped the country reach the goal.[47]

Indeed, in its bulletins, the KNCW frequently encouraged women to modernize themselves and eliminate the traditional thinking that women should remain silent. At the 14th National Convention of Women in 1976, Ewha Womans University Professor Baik Jae-bong put it clearly that society needs education on women: "Because in traditional society, social life was thought to be man's monopoly the men were educated and trained while such chances were not given to women. As it was generally agreed that men were social and woman competent only in the home, it was inevitable that there should be many obstructions to women's participation in social activities. Such traditional thoughts about women's roles must be corrected through education."[48] Compared to advanced countries, Baik demanded policies to liberate women from their family lives to take important roles in economic development.

As mentioned, domesticity has been a key theme of studying the Cold War home. The domestic ideal of home as a national icon was greatly attached to the context of the Cold War after atomic weapons had destroyed the image of a safe home front. Home became a central place of ideology; it could spread communism and anti-communism. In the domestic fantasies, home was a safe nest amidst an insecure world.[49] For example, Mire Koikari studies how domesticity operated as an "engine"

45 See Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 189.

46 Park, *Our Nations Path*, 228. The discussion on women's domestic labor was not just a South Korean phenomenon. The question of how to include and account for the worth of women's domestic work has been discussed and disputed in the UN since the 1950s. See Devaki Jain, *Women, Development, and the UN. A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2005), 37–38.

47 Lee Sook-chong, "Workable Society for Women's Organizations Desirable," *The Woman* 14, no. 1 (May 1978), 4.

48 Keynote speech "Industrial Society and Women" by Baik Jae-bong at the 14th National Convention of Women, *The Woman* 12 (December 1976), 22–23.

49 Laville, *Cold War Women*, 1–2.

of the nation-building in the US-occupied Okinawa where American ideals of domesticity formed one site of occupation policies to improve the quality of life.[50] Koikari names women as Cold War agents of grassroots diplomacy who, via domesticity, were "simultaneously invited into *and* excluded from the domain of politics."[51] Even if housewives were implementing the female ideal, they crossed the boundaries set for women by stepping out their homes, participating in social tasks by helping others, and even participating in military training. Moreover, scientific domesticity also became a tool for Korean women to participate in the needs of economic growth and improvement in the quality of life demanded by the state.[52]

However, the "domesticating instructions" provided by the state aimed at teaching household management, womanly etiquette, and domesticating hobbies such as flower arrangement, handicrafts, and calligraphy, were not what the KNCW wanted to spread.[53] As I argue here, the KNCW was utilizing the domestic sphere to expand the space for women's voices in society and decision-making. Given that the KNCW had been considered an organization for housewives, it departed from the traditional image of a housewife. In 1965, the organization declared, "The housewife is a member of society. It is not just women who have entered society. Also, housewives have the duty and responsibility to contribute to society."[54] The KNCW's rule of thumb formed around the idea that instead of being content with life inside the home, the housewife should participate in the community and share social responsibilities with men.

While cherishing the idea of a housewife, the KNCW demanded several things to improve household management in its publications. The KNCW adopted the state's discourse on economic growth, which is well illustrated in how it considered housewives as agents of economic growth at home: "Great are the influences of housewives in the position of wife and mother over both home and community. It is no exaggeration to say that the ups and downs of a country are largely dependent on women [...] To contribute to the modernization of Korea, housewives should lead their home life scientifically."[55] With the language of scientific domesticity, women

50 Koikari, "Cultivating Feminine Affinity," 114–115, 117.

51 Emphasis in original. Koikari, 114.

52 For discussion on housewives and scientific domesticity outside Korea, see, e.g. Chie Ikeya, "The Scientific and Hygienic Housewife-and-Mother: Education, Consumption and the Discourse of Domesticity," *Journal of Burma Studies* 14 (2010); Koikari, "Cultivating Feminine Affinity."

53 Moon, "Militarized Modernity and Gendered Mass Mobilization," 59.

54 "Urisseuro jasiniui ileul haegyeolhaja" [Let's solve our problems], *Yeoseong* 1 (January 1965), 3.

55 Yoo Kyung-young, "Women's Role in the Modernization of Korea," *The Woman* 2, no. 2 (April 1966), 6.

campaigned for better prices, better products, and better opportunities – things to make their everyday lives easier.

Consumerism was not a new theme in national campaigns. Careful consumption and favoring of national products (*guksanpum*) had been present in the colonial era Joseon Products Promotion Campaign (1920s), the Rural Revitalization Movement (1930s), and wartime mobilization campaigns (1940s). Park Kyung-hee shows that food programs developed for war during the last years of Japanese occupation continued to operate as a form of social management in South Korea. Austerity campaigns during the Pacific War and the Korean War spurred frugal practices. The Syngman Rhee regime launched the New Lifestyle Movement in 1954 to improve the quality of life by eliminating bad customs, encouraging the use of domestic products, and rationalizing clothing and nutrition. In the spirit of the April Revolution, the student movement also launched campaigns against consuming foreign cigarettes and other luxury items and services. The National Reconstruction Movement of Park Chung-hee was a follow-up to these measures. During the authoritarian era, food control played a supportive role in economic development.[56]

In September 1965, 400 women gathered at the Woman's Hall to participate in the third National Convention on Women, held under the theme "Home Economy Increases National Resources." The theme was a pressing one, according to KNCW Vice President Chung Choon-yang, for two reasons: The first was that women found it difficult to maintain the home by relying solely on their husband's income. The second reason was that women could not trust that politicians were working towards the common good instead of their personal interests. To overcome these difficulties and make women participate in the national economy, the KNCW wanted to train women to take care of their homes "reasonably and scientifically."[57] In an open letter to President Park Chung-hee, the National Convention on Women asked for moderate and stable prices to encourage housewives to carry out the national saving programs.[58]

The Park Chung-hee government drove an export-oriented economy, seeking to limit the number of imported goods. It mobilized social organizations to support its

[56] Charles R. Kim, "The April 19th Generation and the Start of Postcolonial History in South Korea," *The Review of Korean Studies* 12, no. 3 (2009): 92–93; Park, "State and Food in South Korea," 14–15; Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 180–184; Janice Kim, "Perfecting Maternal Feminism in South Korea, 1953–1992," conference presentation at Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference 2018, Washington DC, March 25, 2018.

[57] Chung Choong-yang, "Home Economy Increases National Resources," *The Woman* 2, no. 1 (January 1966), 4.

[58] "Open letter to the President by the 3rd National Womans Conference," *The Woman* 2, no. 1 (January 1966), 3.

goals. In 1967, the government gave the KNCW funds to participate in a consumer protection campaign to promote savings and the management of household budgets. Again, in 1970, the KNCW reported to the ICW that the Korean government had endowed funds to women's organizations to participate in a nationwide consumer protection campaign and promote better management of household budgets.[59] Correspondence reveals that the ICW shared interest in this matter. For instance, an ICW representative, Convener of the Trades and Professions Committee, Miss Barnard, visited Korea and learned that consumer protection had been adopted as one of the KNCW's projects. The ICW also requested a Korean member of the Standing Committee of Home Economics to submit a special report on consumer problems in Korea to inform the larger ICW community.[60]

Consumer protection had indeed become one of the KNCW's main activities. The organization even highlighted the consumer protection movement as a women's movement, not a state-based initiative.[61] In an interview with a Canadian newspaper in the late 1970s, KNCW President Lee Chul-kyung stated that consumer protection was, besides revising the Family Law, one of the organization's most important tasks.[62] Among the KNCW's member organizations, several focused on consumer protection. The Housewives' Club – currently, the Korean Women's Consumer Union – was established under the KNCW in 1966 to "protect consumers from unscrupulous manufacturers and sellers and help them make use of leisure time and attract their attention to social service work."[63] All women over 25 were welcomed to the Club, which aimed to reach the grassroots level by organizing into units on *dong* and *gu* levels.[64] Another affiliated organ, the Institute of Helping Hands for Homes, was established to bring together housewives with special skills such as dressmaking, nursing, housekeeping, and those who needed helping hands at home, such as during family parties.[65] This kind of activity by housewives actually suggests they were seeking employment. The KNCW also promoted that a new task for the women's movement should help women have professions besides being only housewives to "heighten this sense of self-importance in having a career."[66]

59 International Council of Women, *Report of the Triennial Council Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 22 August – 1 September 1970* (Paris: International Council of Women, 1970), 36. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [April 18, 2018].

60 Brenda Noakes to Wallyoung Joo, January 31, 1968, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

61 Park Hee-sup, "Consumer movement," *The Woman* 13, no. 2 (December 1977), 49.

62 Sam Jameson, "Only working Korean women known by own name," *The Citizen* (Ottawa) October 24, 1979.

63 "Report of Housewives' Club," *The Woman* 3, no. 1 (April 1967), 2.

64 *Dong* refers to a district, *gu* to a borough of a city.

65 "Helping Hands for Homes," *The Woman* 2, no. 2 (April 1966), 2.

66 "The New Task of Woman's Movement," *The Woman* 5, no. 3 (September 1969), 2.

In addition to the consumer protection campaigns, the KNCW also utilized another initiative promoted by the state, the New Village Movement, to connect women to the modernization. The government launched the New Village Movement to modernize the rural villages and economy in 1970. It is probably the most often used example of mass mobilization during the Park Chung-hee era. Covering basically all rural villages in South Korea, eventually the movement was spread to cities and factories as well. According to Hwang Byeoung-ju, what started as a list of orders from above became voluntary participation when people started doing more than they were told. In this way, the New Village Movement exemplifies how coercion and consent coexisted in the mass dictatorship.[67] Hwang believes that for most, the system of productivity, award, and promotion was satisfying enough; and, being an "industrial soldier" – a real citizen – compensated for the possible wrongs in society.[68]

The New Village Movement was also a spiritual movement, cherishing the values of self-help, cooperation, and diligence. The New Village Movement was meaningful to many rural women as it invited them to the public space through campaigns of house renovation, rice saving, and infrastructure improvement.[69] The KNCW's involvement in the New Village Movement relates to the scientific thinking and improvement of living conditions in rural areas. Again, personal connections mattered since, in 1975, KNCW President Lee Sook-chong was selected as the vice president of the Civilian Council of Saemaul Undong.[70] The KNCW bulletins also regularly featured news related to the New Village movement. A prominent example from 1975 is that when the English-language *The Woman* initially featured color photos, the topic of the piece was the New Village Movement.[71] In this manner, the leaps forward that South Korea had been taking on

67 Hwang Byeong-joo, "The Ruling Discourse and Mass Politics of the Park Chung Hee Regime," *The Review of Korean Studies* 12, no. 3 (2009): 21–23. Hwang bases his research on mass dictatorship and the New Village Movement on interviews with participating farmers. On mass mobilization, see also Hwang, "Mass Perception and Mobilization Discourse," 142–186.

68 Hwang, "Ruling Discourse and Mass Politics," 32–33. See also Hwang Byeong-joo, "Bak Jeonghui cheje ui jibae damnon gwa daejung ui gungminhwa" [The Dominant Discourse of the Park Chung-hee Regime and the Nationalization of the Masses] in *Mass Dictatorship 1*, 475–516.

69 Kwon Insook, "How Identities and Movement Cultures Became Deeply Saturated with Militarism: Lessons from the Pro-democracy Movement of South Korea," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 11, no. 2 (2005): 17.

70 Kim Soon-hee, "Civilian Council of Saemaul Undong," *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 16.

71 Soon Hee-kim, "On Saemaul Movement," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), 7–10. See also, e.g. "Pictorials," *The Woman* 13, no. 1 (November 1977) for photos of an event related

the road towards modernization were transmitted to the foreign audiences. In the 1980s, when the New Village Movement had reached the urban areas, the KNCW coordinated activities, such as street cleaning and working in orphanages, provided leadership training, and promoted campaigns on how to behave well in traffic or protect nature.[72]

Participating in these initiatives that were close to the government's interest led the KNCW to openly criticize the government for its fervor toward economic growth at the expense of consumer safety. The KNCW encouraged consumers to unite and pressure the government and enterprises to provide safe and affordable products. While viewing rational and frugal living as something the housewives needed to carry out in accordance with the government policy, the KNCW was also active in pointing out errors made by men. For example, in 1974, the KNCW organized a talk with "selfish and money-hungry businessmen" after discovering that sugar manufacturers had planned to sell glutamine seasoning in the same package with rarely available sugar, forcing consumers to buy both. The plan was stopped as a consequence of the KNCW's intervention.[73] Another case in which the KNCW targeted men's behavior relates to white rice, which the housewives were advised to spare in the name of rational management of household and scientific cooking.[74] When women were advised to consume wisely, to plan and budget consumption, ancestral rituals also became part of the saving campaign. The KNCW noted that high demand of white rice related to prostitution and gisaeng houses where rice wine consumption was significant. In 1969, an editorial of *The Woman* asked, "Why don't Korean men recognize that this type of action weakens the fabric of the nation by wasting time, money, and grain?"[75] Here, the conscious consumption that what women were able to practice was attached to morality and family values. The editorial also targeted its critique towards the Japanese who had "returned to Korea, and with them, the old system of women and wine," referring to the Japanese sex tourism to Korea that re-emerged after the 1965 treaty. Also to blame were the authoritarian measures like the curfew: "Korean men must either enter the house 'by twelve' or stay out all together [sic]. The excuse is always the same, 'for business

to the New Village Movement featuring Park Chung-hee's eldest daughter Park Geun-hye, acting as the First Lady of the country after her mother's death (see Chapter 4).

72 "Activity KNCW (First half of Women's Decade)," *The Woman* 17, no. 1 (July 1980), 23.

73 "The Consumer Protection Committee Report," *The Woman* 9 (December 1974), 16.

74 See Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 90–91.

75 "A Strange Wind," *The Woman* 5, no. 1–2 (June 1969), 1.

purposes' or 'had to work late', and the result is frequently the same too, when No 1 wife finds out there is a No. 2, all bonds of affection and family ties are weakened."[76]

From early on the KNCW also paid attention to the environmental impact of modernization, technological development, and growth of the world economy and, among other tasks, organized education programs on themes such as opinion raising, environmental pollution, and reasonable living.[77] In 1973, the KNCW launched a leaflet campaign to help to solve the global energy crisis and stop inflation. The organization introduced four points: not to buy luxury items for the sake of showing one's position, not to be tempted by foreign goods, not to hoard because of lack of capital and resources in South Korea, and not to waste time in entertainment places but spend time with family "to make a brighter home life."[78] Everyday frugality that the KNCW promoted in the mid-1970s was in accordance with the government's official goals. Yet, expressing concern over the use of atomic power, shortage of national resources, and pollution problems corresponded with the UN and its promotion of 1973 as the Environmental Year rather than the South Korean government's goals.

Given the above examples on how the KNCW adopted the language of the state to justify its actions and link women's status to the welfare and development of the nation, I argue that the KNCW actively worked towards changing women's status as society and family changed due to urbanization and industrialization. Instead of confining themselves to the home and the limits of the nuclear family, alienated from the ongoing changes, the KNCW believed women should exercise their given socioeconomic rights and participate in the community and society.

Indeed, by the mid-1980s, KNCW President Hong Sook-ja believed the image of women had been transformed: "The image of women in Korea is no longer confined to the outdated image set for the good house wife but instead has been

[76] "A Strange Wind," 1. On the gisaeng tourism, see, e.g. Chunghee Sarah Soh, "Military prostitution and women's sexual labour in Japan and Korea," in *Gender and Labour in Korea and Japan*, 45–46. According to Soh, sex tourism among Japanese men became increasingly popular in the late 1960s, giving the context for the outburst in *The Woman*. For saving campaigns, see Moon, "Militarized Modernity and Gendered Mass Mobilization," 60.

[77] See Lee Sook-chong, "Frugal living," *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 2; "National Convention of the KNCW," *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 8; Yun Soon-duk, "Women and Population," *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 12; Lee Sook-chong, "On the occasion of holding the first national consumers' convention," *The Woman* 14, no. 2 (November 1978), 14–15; "The KNCW activities 1983" attached to a letter Oh Kyung-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 14, 1984, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif.

[78] Lee Sook-chong, "Frugal living," *The Woman* 11 (November 1975), 6.

replaced with the image of the intelligent women."[79] Besides highlighting women's economic role, especially as the responsible consumer of the household, the KNCW fought for the legal rights for women to help half the population reach its full potential in service of society. The next part will discuss how the KNCW articulated women's political role, for example, as voters, and fought to revise the Family Law to correspond with the promise of equality in the constitution. I also treat the organization's involvement in the family planning campaigns.

5.2 Legal Rights for Women

The Constitution of the Republic of Korea promulgated in 1948 granted all citizens equal rights before the law regardless of gender, wealth, and social class; it also granted all citizens equal rights to vote and be elected. However, it was imminently clear that these rights and the reality of women's lives hardly met. Preserving the family head system was a striking example of how little the gender equality promised in the constitution meant in practice.[80] Professor of Korea University, Lee In-ho, summarized the feelings of disillusionment following the new constitution in her article series published in two parts in *The Woman* in 1975: "But like all other principles of democracy, the concept of equality between the sexes was food on a silver platter which remained indigestible."[81] However, the conflict between the promises and the practice became fuel for Korean women's movement for decades.

The KNCW and other women's groups continued the long fight to recognize women's legal rights and sought an attitude change that would allow a new definition of women's roles. The rights for women the KNCW demanded were related not only to legislation but to the practices and expectations of South Korean society. Attempts to revise the Family Law with other women's groups was one of the KNCW's core activities for decades; the organization also participated in the broader discussion of women's rights within the family and community to demand a greater role of women in society as political leaders and voters. The KNCW participated in the government's family planning campaigns since the early 1960s to advance its own goals: women's rights to decide on questions of reproduction and abortion. While acknowledging that the home and family need women, the KNCW still defended women's right to work outside the home, and proposed that housework be considered just as valuable work as paid employment for society. This section approaches these campaigns as the KNCW's attempts to articulate women's rights in relation to the

[79] Hong Sook-ja, "Presidential Message: 'Women' to Be Free," *The Woman* 22, no. 2 (December 1985), 13.

[80] Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 44.

[81] Lee In-ho, "Women's Liberation in Korea," *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 4.

surrounding society. The KNCW paid keen attention to the transformations of society and demanded that a change in women's status, legally and at the level of attitudes, need to be part of that transformation.

5.2.1 Activating Female Voters, Opposing Gisaeng House Politics

The KNCW strongly promoted the idea of female leadership. Seeing itself as the leader of the women's movement, the KNCW tirelessly advocated women's greater participation so that the voices of women, comprising half the population, could not be ignored in the decision-making. In the political sphere, one of its core tasks was to spread knowledge on what suffrage meant and how it was in women's power to use their votes. In Korea, equal suffrage granted in the constitution in 1948 was a novelty. During the Japanese colonial era, Korean women, along with a majority of the Korean male population and Japanese women, were not allowed to vote or participate in political decision-making. Assimilating Koreans into the Japanese Empire did not include political participation.[82] Due to the limited opportunities for both sexes, a proper suffrage movement never developed in Korea. Nevertheless, during the colonial period, Korean women started defending their rights for freedom, their social role, and economic independence.[83]

In the decades after the Republic of Korea was established, it was widely recognized that the promise of equal suffrage in the constitution remained empty if women were not using their votes for their benefit. Raising political consciousness and making women vote for "good" candidates became one of the KNCW's central tasks as it sought "to make politicians realize the strength of women's vote."[84] The belief in development was strong, and the KNCW addressed women's political activity on many occasions. For instance, in 1974, the KNCW declared that after gaining suffrage in 1948, "Women are learning to make intelligent decisions based on their new and intelligent awareness and involvement with society."[85] In her speech to the KNCW in 1975, to commemorate the Women's Year, assemblywoman

82 Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies*, 138. A limited number of Korean men were invited to vote at a local government level after 1919; however, few did so because of their limited ability to influence anything important. See Wells, "Expanding their realm," 153.

83 See Kwon, '"The New Women's Movement,'" 390; Wells, "Expanding their realm," 154. Wells also highlights that women gained experience in voting from the work of women's organizations, such as Geunuhoe.

84 "Campaign to Abolish Kisaeng-House Politics," *The Woman* 3, no. 1 (April 1967), 6–7.

85 Korean National Council of Women, *Women and Population* (Seoul: Korean National Council of Women, 1974), 10.

Suh Young-hee urged women to pay attention to politics, no matter how deeply the field was seen as belonging to men:

> Under the circumstances in which government policy affected the family life in various ways, the woman of today can't be indifferent to politics. Women should continue paying their attention to the government policy and if necessary, women should lift their voices and utter their opinions. To women there are viral arms, the Suffrage. If united, it would form a mighty power consisted of half of all the voters.[86]

These comments clearly attempt to unite women as one political force. They also reflect the Cold War framework, as women's voices were even compared to weapons.

The need to educate women on their political rights and how to use suffrage was indeed urgent. Initially, women's possession of political rights was partly handicapped due to limitations in their ability to fully exercise those rights. According to historian Yoon Jung-ran, even when women were granted political rights, they were illiterate and too ignorant to fully enjoy those rights as they tended to follow the will of their fathers, husbands, and sons. Under Japanese colonial rule, the possibilities for women to get even a basic education were limited. The women's organizations had started campaigning for the idea of 'women voting women' right after the liberation when the constitution was not even formed yet; however, any progress was slow.[87] In the mid-1970s, Professor Lee In-ho wrote in *The Women* that "although women have votes, in the majority of instances, they cast their ballots in accordance with their husband's wishes. Even highly educated female professional worker places herself at the whim of her husband fearful lest she be criticized by the public at large as a failure as a woman."[88] Moving ahead, a survey from the mid-1980s shows that 84% of women considered men more capable politicians than women, and 59% said they would vote for a man even if a female candidate was equally capable.[89]

The female voters obviously lacked good examples of how their votes mattered. Although since 1948, female members had served in every National Assembly of the Republic of Korea until the 1990s, the assemblywomen were most often appointed

86 Suh Young-hee, "Korean Women and Politics," gist of the speech delivered at the Korean National Council of Women in Commemoration of Women's Year, March 25, 1975. Published in *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), 4–5.

87 Yoon, "Women's Movement for the Entry," 236–239, passim.

88 Lee, "Women's Liberation in Korea," 4.

89 Survey cited in Oh, "A woman's history," 173.

rather than elected. During the authoritarian era, women's share in policy-making remained under 2%, and women's political participation in South Korea was still strikingly lower than that of other developed countries. No female ministers served under Park Chung-hee's rule, which has been viewed as a sign of Park's hostile attitude towards women and lack of respect for women's social and political participation.[90] On the contrary, to cover his failing political legitimacy and public image, Chun Doo-hwan invited Kim Chong-rye, a long-time female politician who had resisted Park Chung-hee, to join his Democratic Justice Party; he put her into his cabinet and appointed also other women to join the legislation.[91]

The KNCW regularly criticized the double standards among those holding political power and authority. The organization referred to such phenomena with a common term at the time: "gisaeng house politics." The gisaeng figure emerged from a female entertainer of premodern times to a hostess of a bar and a prostitute in the late 1960s.[92] Opposition against gisaeng house politics was one of the main themes for the KNCW when involving women in voting practices; it advised women not vote for people who visited gisaeng houses and had concubines because such men obviously lacked the moral values a good politician needed.[93] Women's organizations had already organized a national campaign against politicians with concubines in the 1950s.[94] When launching a campaign against the gisaeng house politics before the National Assembly elections in 1967, the KNCW argued that "there is a connection between concubinage and politics and also it is a fact that many important political conferences take place in kisaeng-houses [sic]. These indications prove that there is a direct relationship between political life and social problems, that is marital infidelity."[95] Appealing to female voters was thus done in the words of true love – the KNCW emphasized that it was a woman's right to have a faithful husband: "Each wife deserves one husband and vice versa, because wives

90 Soh, *Women in Korean Politics*, 63, 72, 81.
91 Oh, "A woman's history," 157. For more on Kim Chong-rye, see Soh, *Women in Korean Politics*, 69–71.
92 During the Joseon dynasty, the gisaeng (or kisaeng) system was run by the state, and the gisaeng was given duties to perform for ruling-class men on different occasions. Many of the gisaeng ended up as concubines. For scholarship regarding the gisaeng system, see Chunghee Sarah Soh, "Women's Sexual Labor and State in Korean History," *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 170–177; Lee Insuk, "Convention and Innovation: The Lives and Cultural Legacy of the Kisaeng in Colonial Korea (1910–1945)," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 23, iss. 1 (June 2010): 71–93; Christine Mok, "Memoirs of a Kisaeng: Choreographing Performance Historiography," *Theatre Survey* 54, no.1 (January 2013): 107–130.
93 "Campaign to Abolish Kisaeng-House Politics," 6–7; "A Strange Wind," 1.
94 Kwon, "From Colonial Patriots to Post-Colonial Citizens," 254.
95 "Campaign to Abolish Kisaeng-House Politics," 6–7.

too are persons, and are supposed to be respected as such."[96] The KNCW proposed that if gisaeng house politics could be rooted out from society, Korean women would have a happier married life.[97]

The KNCW's interest towards gisaeng houses and prostitution signals the central role of such institutions in the economic realm of the Park Chung-hee era. Previous research has shown that prostitution in South Korea was promoted and marketed in the name of economic and political interest.[98] The American military rule abolished licensed prostitution in 1947. To serve the needs of male soldiers, however, Americans wanted to establish a regulated prostitution system to avoid the harms of an unregulated system, especially the spread of venereal diseases. Basically, the system criminalized prostitution in law yet enabled it for Korean and American soldiers. Park's regime declared the Prostitution Prevention Law in 1961 and shut down potential places for private prostitution. A year later, the regime established special zones for prostitution to serve, especially Americans stationed in South Korea. In these districts, prostitution was not only allowed but strictly monitored. The Tourism Promotion Law, also from 1961, turned camptown clubs into special tourism businesses, which contributed to economic development as they were ordered to make monthly savings to accumulate capital.[99]

After the Japan-South Korea Normalization Treaty in 1965, camptown prostitution was accompanied by services offered to Japanese businessmen and (sex) tourists. Besides rallying against prostitution in South Korea, the KNCW also made the ICW community aware of the shady politics practiced under the tourism promotion law, which encouraged prostitution in camptowns despite the prostitution prevention law. The ICW Triennial Conference report from Bangkok in 1970 separately mentions "the courageous fight being waged by the NCW of Korea against state-licensed prostitution."[100] Eventually, one reason Japanese sex tourism

[96] "A Strange Wind," 1.

[97] Also, Eunjoo Cho emphasizes how Western concepts of love in marriage and women's sexual pleasure were adopted by Koreans through the family planning campaign; see Eunjoo Cho, "Making the 'modern' family: The discourse of sexuality in the Family Planning Program in South Korea," *Sexualities* 19, no. 7 (October 2016): 802–818.

[98] See, e.g. John Lie, "The Transformation of Sexual Work in 20th-Century Korea," *Gender and Society* 9, no. 3 (1995): 310–327; Moon, *Sex Among Allies*; Soh, "Military prostitution," 45–46; Seungsook Moon, "Regulating Desire, Managing the Empire: U.S. Military Prostitution in South Korea, 1945–1970," in *Over There*, 58, 61. For prostitution politics and gender, see Jeong-Mi Park, "Paradoxes of gendering strategy in prostitution policies: South Korea's 'toleration-regulation regime,' 1961–1979," *Women's Studies International Forum* 37 (2013): 73–84.

[99] Soh, "Military prostitution," 44; Moon, "Regulating Desire," 41–44, 63; Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 40–42.

[100] International Council of Women, *Report of the 19th Triennial Meeting of the International Council of Women, Bangkok, Thailand* (Paris: International Council of

to South Korea declined by the 1980s was public opposition. Women's groups, the KNCW included, organized protests and campaigns against prostitution and sex tourism and advocated protection for women in the camptowns around US military bases.[101]

As the case of activating female voters and opposing gisaeng house politics illustrate, the KNCW did not hesitate to seize a chance to participate in issues the majority still viewed as belonging only to men. The organization was keen to debate society's double standards; by pointing out the wrongs, the KNCW tried to convince women to take control of their own lives. Defending women's political rights supported the organization's other goals. As I will discuss next, in the case of the Family Law, women's organizations as a united force could push through changes in the legislation and expand women's legal status.

5.2.2 Revising the Family Law

Given the importance of family in the imaginary of the Cold War South Korea, rights and legislation related to family were among the nation's central building blocks during the authoritarian era. Indeed, South Korean society experienced a drastic change following the Korean War: industrialization and urbanization. As Eunkyung Kim describes it, in South Korea, institutionalizing democracy began before the country could complete post-colonialization.[102] This created a conflicted atmosphere in which women's rights were cherished in the name of democratization while women were promoted as keepers of tradition by those who wished to protect the Korean heritage. Gender equality and increasing opportunities for sexual autonomy in the form of the availability of contraceptives, the ideal of monogamous marriage, and a happy family life were prevalently public themes to discuss in postwar and authoritarian era South Korea. This section examines how the KNCW presented these changes in gender relations and the issue of gender equality in the family, especially regarding the Family Law. After briefly presenting the history of Family

Women, 1970), 97. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [April 18, 2018].

101 Another reason for the decline was the rising living standards in South Korea that made it a more expensive tourist destination than before; thus, the sex tourists were moving to Southeast Asia; see Chung Chin Sung, "The Internationalization and Information of Women's Movement in Korea," *Asian Women* 10 (June 2000): 115; Kim and Kim, *The Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 43–44.

102 Kim, "'Equal' Second-Class Citizens," 77.

Law, which has exhaustively been covered elsewhere, I focus on the actions towards revising the legislation which the KNCW directed or participated in.[103]

The Family Law, which preserved the family head system (*hojuje*) in South Korea, originated from the Japanese colonial era Civil Code. The central institutions to regulate Korean families created during the colonial era were the succession of family head to oldest male heir, the family register (*hojok*), and the family head system that made the male the legal head of the family and defined the relations of the rest of the family. In traditional Korea, family ties were based on male-centered control of women, children, and property; in northern Korea this hierarchy was transformed in legislation right after Korea's liberation; but in southern Korea, the American military government decided to maintain most of the Japanese colonial legal system.[104] In the process, the family head system, which could have been removed as an "unconstitutional legacy of colonial rule," remained in place in South Korea.[105] Although the new constitution was introduced in 1948, the previous legislation remained in effect until revisions were made. Given the internal situation of South Korea and the Korean War, revisions were slow. After the Korean War, the family was considered a crucial element in nation-building and national identity and was not to be harmed.[106] When formulating the Korean Civil Code, the conservative forces that sought to restore the Korean tradition in the legislation of the new country were actually repeating "rigidified definitions of Korean custom that had been formulated and imposed by colonialist bureaucrats and scholars."[107] Significantly, the discussion on the Family Law reform was a contest between different moral standards. Among the women's groups and their leadership, many women were Christians who saw equality as the ultimate moral goal. In the meantime, the Confucian traditionalists who occupied important seats in the National Assembly and law commissions believed that divorce rights, equal inheritance, and equal

103 On the history of the Family Law and its revision, especially from the feminist perspective, see Oh, "A Woman's History."

104 Clark W. Sorensen, "The Korean Family in Colonial Space—Caught between Modernization and Assimilation" in *Colonial Rule and Social Change in Korea 1940–1945*, ed. Hong Yung Lee et al. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 314. Despite the new legislation, practices in North Korea were slow to change. See Park, "Women and Revolution in North Korea," esp. 540–543.

105 Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 68.

106 Shin, "Politics of the Family Law Reform Movement," 96–101; Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 68–69.

107 Kim, *Youth for Nation*, 44.

treatment of children would destroy the Korean tradition and culture through immoral practices.[108]

The fight to revise the Family Law predates the establishment of the KNCW. In fact, discussion on the issue started right after the liberation among female activists, not only from the women's emancipatory perspective but as part of the overall process of defining the legislation in liberated Korea. According to Oh Ji-young, the Family Law – instead of being "a remote and technical subject" – has been one of the most central issues for Korean feminism since the 1950s as a demonstration of women's rights or lack thereof.[109] In 1953, female activists Whang Sin-duk and Lee Tai-young, who had graduated as the country's first female lawyer a year before, established the Federation of Korean Women's Groups (*Daehan Yeosong Danche Hyeobuihoe*) to achieve equal rights for women in the Family Law in issues related to marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance. The group called for respect for the constitution and paid attention to the colonial origins of the old civil code and its discriminatory elements in women's lives.[110]

Four major rounds of revision occurred before abolishing the family head system in 2005 after over 50 years of campaigning against the law by different women's groups. These occurred in 1958 (the revision that legitimized the old Civil Code), 1962, 1977, and 1989 – all under different presidencies and constitutions. The women's groups protested the first revision in 1958 because it brought no change to women's status. This was an important step; after the first revision, women expanded their campaigning to add knowledge on the inequality of legislation. The women's groups, including the KNCW, demanded the revisions by joint petitions directed to the National Assembly, the government, and the Law Commission. Slowly and gradually, these revisions extended women's role in the family regarding inheritance, marriage, divorce, and custody rights.[111] Since the beginning, the women's groups also demanded removing the ban on marriages between women and men sharing the same male ancestor (*dong-seong-dong-bon* system), but the practice was removed at the same time as the family head system.[112]

At the time of the 1962 revision, the KNCW could not operate fully as the military regime had disbanded it in the early 1960s. However, this did not prevent

108 For arguments the Confucian side presented, see Oh, "A woman's history," 135–137; James Huntley Grayson, "A Quarter-Millenium of Christianity in Korea," in *Christianity in Korea*, 21.

109 Oh, "A woman's history," 2.

110 Shin, "Politics of the Family Law Reform Movement," 99–100; Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 69.

111 See a summary of the major reforms in Shin, "Politics of the Family Law Reform Movement," 115–116.

112 Shin, 93–94.

those affiliated with the KNCW and other women's groups from taking action. Lee Tai-young became the key person and expert within the KNCW to advocate for the Family Law reform. Lee established the Korea Legal Aid Center for Family Relations in Seoul in 1956 to assist women in legal affairs.[113] Almost 30 years later, on the occasion of the ICW Triennial Conference in Seoul, Lee recalled the opening of the Center: "It was these women, then, who seemed to have been just waiting for 5000 years for a woman lawyer to appear. They lined up outside my law office and from the moment I first opened the door, they began to push their way in. Can you imagine this queue of women, this line of long-repressed hurt and grievances waiting there for me?"[114]

To get the Family Law revisions through, Lee put her expertise on women's legal affairs into use. Due to the limited political influence of anyone other than Park Chung-hee, Lee thought persuading one man against hundreds of conservative members of the parliament was easier. To do so, she adopted the language of Park himself and portrayed women's emancipation as a necessary step towards social justice. Shin Ki-young argues that for Lee Tai-young, the authoritarian regime of South Korea was actually an opportunity; the appeal to the state discourses was a strategy to participate in the discussion rather than a sign of approval.[115] Lee then, in the summer of 1962, made a direct proposal to Park to revise the Family Law. Lee made her way to the Commission on Civil Law, which was founded to discuss the revision. Drawing from her experiences in legal counseling, she could convey the feelings of Korean women. Although the Commission rejected most of the reforms Lee suggested, some progress occurred; the Family Court to solve domestic conflicts was established in 1963 while new divorce legislation came into effect.[116] In 1962, only one article of the Family Law was revised, making it possible for a family member to establish his own family unit upon marriage. That article signaled a step closer to the nuclear family and, as such, was an effort to modernize the Korean family.[117]

113 Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 21.

114 Lee Tai-young, "One Woman Lawyer's Way," speech given at the ICW Seminar Women in the Concept of Leadership, September 25, 1982. Booklet in folder 249 AVG-Carhif.

115 Oh, "A woman's history," 124; Shin, "Politics of the Family Law Reform Movement," 103–104. See also Lee Tai-young, *Gajokbeop gaejeong undong 37-nyonsa* [A 37-Year History of the Family Law Revision Movement] (Seoul: Korea Legal Aid Center for Family Relations, 1992), 133–153, passim.

116 Oh, "A woman's history," 124–125.

117 Hyunah Yang, "A Journey of Family Law Reform in Korea: Tradition, Equality, and Social Change," *Journal of Korean Law* 8 (December 2008): 80; Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 70.

After the KNCW was officially allowed to operate again in 1963, the Family Law was among the first issues it raised in its publications. Notably, however, while the Family Law was among the most visible initiatives of the KNCW in its bulletins, the issue was not regularly raised in the National Convention on Women. In an article dealing with women's culture represented via *Yeoseong*, Heo Yun explains that omitting the Family Law from the agenda of National Conventions signals the role of the events in disseminating women's issues promoted by the state. Heo argues that the conventions reflected the government's agenda on women's issues.[118] Thus, the KNCW had to use other platforms to push forward the comprehensive legal reforms directly related to women's rights and status.

However, the Family Law was not completely outside the agenda of the National Conventions on Women, as the KNCW often acknowledged certain issues stemming from the Family Law. For instance, in 1970, the National Convention on Women suggested abolishing gender discrimination based on the Family Law. After the event, the KNCW initiated a campaign to revise the law.[119] Moreover, the bulletin *The Women* was particularly used to communicate the backwardness of the Korean Family Law to the ICW. For example, in the aftermath of UN Women's Year, Lee Sook-chong pointed out that the Family Law discriminated against women and maintained old values and prejudices while noting that with better welfare of women, they could help make a prosperous country capable of checking "potential communist invasions," thus highlighting the common Cold War threat that the ICW as an organization and South Korean society recognized.[120]

Between the revisions of 1962 and 1977, 15 years of campaigning on behalf of women's equal status was required. During the 1970s, Lee Sook-chong took a prominent role in raising the issue of the Family Law revision. From 1973 until 1978, Lee was an appointed member of the 9th National Assembly, among 73 members appointed by Park Chung-hee, thus representing the ruling party. However, when Lee started as a lawmaker, the KNCW regarded that a group of ten female members of the National Assembly led by Lee was "beginning to be an accepted feature" in

118 Heo, "Development and alteration of women's culture," 60–61, 66–67.

119 Choi Keum-sook, "Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe 60nyeon Yeoseong Undongsa: Gajokbeop Gaejeongundong Oraen Kkeute Hojue Pyejidwida" [Korean National Council of Women, 60 years of women's movement's history: After a long struggle by the family law revision movement, the hojuje system was abolished], *Yeoseong Shinmun*, October 21, 2019, http://www.womennews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=193736 [accessed July 18, 2020].

120 Lee Sook-chong, "Now Is the High Time to Cultivate Our Ability," *The Woman* 12 (December 1976), 2.

women's political participation.[121] In this manner, the KNCW still believed the regime was willing to make women equal participants of society.

Following the organization of the 9th National Assembly, a coalition called the All Women's Association for Urging the Revision of the Family Law (*Gajokbeop Gaejeong Chokjinhoe*) was established. The group formed after a meeting the KNCW arranged in July 1973 with several women's organizations and groups and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, sponsored by the Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs supported the revision to enhance the operation of population control. Lee Sook-chong was chosen to lead the coalition. The coalition aimed to show broad public support for the revision, collect funds, and spread knowledge on women's issues. Most of the work focused on lobbying different interest groups through personal contacts, visits, and petitions.[122] The coalition declared a ten-point agenda for the next revision of the Family Law, which was then actively used for the revision demands by the KNCW. The agenda included issues related to abolishing the family head system, dividing property at the time of divorce, abolishing a law prohibiting marriage between parties with an identical surname and origin, issuing equal parental rights, and revising the law of inheritance.[123]

However, Lee Sook-chong aroused controversy concerning her leadership of the coalition. In 1974, she presented the coalition's proposal on the Family Law revision to the National Assembly but left out certain items. The rest of the coalition criticized Lee's decision to act independently; eventually, the original proposal was submitted to the National Assembly in 1975 but without success.[124] At the time, the KNCW's Women's Status Promotion Committee reported that the prospects for revising the Family Law were "rather dim" because "the strong opposition of the Confucians and men in general across the nation."[125] To overcome the opposition, the committee prepared to write letters of persuasion to the members of the National Assembly and promote the campaign in mass media.[126]

This time, the campaigns for the Family Law's revision intensified and received help from the outside; the declarations of the International Year of Women in 1975

121 Koo Ja-young, "Women in the News," *The Woman* 8 (December 1973), 4–5.

122 See, e.g. Huojai Lee, "Revision of Family Laws," *The Woman* 8 (December 1973), 2; Keynote speech "Women and Population" at the seminar Women and Population in May 1975, published in *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 12–14. See also Nam, "Women's Movement and the Transformation of the Family Law," 76. The translation for the group's name in English is from Nam.

123 Oh, "A woman's history," 129–131.

124 Oh, 132–133.

125 "Woman's Status Promotion Committee Report," *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 21.

126 "Woman's Status Promotion Committee Report," 21.

and the Decade for Women, along with the South Korean state's desire for international recognition, helped Korean women's agenda. Most importantly, the regime was concerned about the population issue and needed women's help – I shall return to this later in this chapter. In 1977, the National Assembly passed revisions to several provisions in the Family Law, including an increase in the share of inheritance that wives and daughters could receive, as well as other improvements regarding women's status in the family as decision-makers and property owners. Also, the *dong-seong-dong-bon* law was lifted for one year, during which couples with the same surname and origin could legalize their marriage and register their children.[127] In the last issue of *The Woman* that year, Hong Sook-ja, the Chair of KNCW's Standing Committee on International Affairs at the time, celebrated the revisions as a significant step for the women's movement and its unity, despite forming only a small part of the national plan of action.[128] The family head system remained untouched. In the following year's National Convention on Women, the KNCW made a resolution that urged people to vote against assemblymen who opposed the revisions.[129]

The All Women's Association for Urging the Revision of the Family Law was dissolved in 1979, but the struggle for further revisions continued in the 1980s. However, the early 1980s were difficult times for any revisions. After Park Chung-hee's assassination and the military coup led by Chun Doo-hwan in late 1979, influencing policy-making in the National Assembly continued to be difficult due to martial laws and the dismissed legislature. Suppression of the Gwangju Uprising, a democracy movement against Chun in the city of Gwangju in May 1980, the abolishment of political parties, and eventually Chun's election as the president in a single-candidate vote defined the political atmosphere. However, new leadership also meant drafting a new constitution. The KNCW recognized an opportunity to include the Family Law revisions on the new regime's agenda right after the military coup. However, taking action also revealed certain weaknesses in the organization's operation.

The Board of the KNCW, with the lead of Honorary President Lee Sook-chung, convened three times to discuss the KNCW's opinion on the new constitution. The organization demanded that the constitution express gender equality more firmly, revise the Family Law, and establish provisions for people's rights for health and environmental rights. The board decided to send its proposal for amending the law, although the Steering Committee had no time to check it. Resisting this, Secretary-

[127] Oh, "A woman's history," 76, 142–143.

[128] Hong Sook-ja, "Family Law Revised," *The Woman* 13, no. 2 (December 1977), 14.

[129] "Resolution, the 16th National Convention on Women, September 23, 1978," published in *The Woman* 14, no. 3 (December 1978), 28.

General Lee Yo-sik resigned in March 1980. In May, President Lee Chul-kyung announced her intention to resign; thus, the KNCW was without an actual leader for several months. Only in September was Lee's resignation accepted for health reasons, and Lee Sook-chung returned to serve the remaining term. According to the KNCW's history (1993), this incident showed that the KNCW had relied for 20 years on strong leadership, and problems in leadership caused problems in many ways.[130] Ultimately, attempts for legislative revisions at the time were unsuccessful. In the early 1980s, the National Assembly failed to revise the Family Law because even the female members of the ruling party voted against it despite personally supporting the case. These appointed female members of the National Assembly had little space to move beyond the party line.[131]

Although Chun Doo-hwan's regime relied on the power of one political party, just like Park Chung-hee's regime, certain political progress and opening occurred during the 1980s. Chun reformed the governance and economy into certain parts; for example, in July 1981, the government announced plans to revise the Family Law to support the economy.[132] More progress on women's affairs occurred when the Korea Women's Development Institute was founded in 1983 to provide research-based information on the status of women. Behind the initiative was successful cooperation between the new president of the KNCW, Sohn In-sil, and the Minister of Health and Welfare, Kim Jeong-rye. In 1984, South Korea ratified the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in relation to UN Decade for Women policies. Also, the Women's Policy Deliberation Committee (predecessor of the Ministry of Gender Equality) was established under the Prime Minister's office.[133] Following the declaration on eliminating discrimination against women, yet another coalition headed by Lee Tai-young to revise the Family Law was founded. The Women's Association for the Revision of Family Law (*Gajokbeop Gaejeongeul Wihan Yeoseong Yeonhaphoe*) collected signatures and tried to introduce a bill in the National Assembly but failed to get enough members behind it.[134]

At the National Convention on Women in September 1984, the KNCW declared that as the representative of Korean women, the Convention urged the National

[130] *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 184–186.
[131] Soh, *Women in Korean Politics*, 110.
[132] Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 72.
[133] Choi, "After a long struggle by the family law revision movement."
[134] Oh, "A woman's history," 166–167; Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 72–73. See also "Activities, KNCW, 1984," attached to a letter Oh Kyung-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 28, 1985, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif; *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 219–221; Choi, "After a long struggle by the family law revision movement."

Assembly to revise the Family Law and promised to continue its efforts until successful. Furthermore, the KNCW stated that "we, the women," received the right to adjust their voting behavior in the upcoming elections regarding the result of the revision.[135] Here, we can recognize that compared to the 1960s and 1970s, when the KNCW mostly kept the Family Law away from the central agenda of the National Conventions on Women, in the second half of the UN Decade for Women, the revisions of the Family Law gained a greater role on the agenda of national conventions, signaling a shift from a state-sanctioned organization under the Park Chung-hee regime towards a civil society organization. At that time, South Korea ratified UN declarations on women and developed institutions for women's issues.

In 1986, the Chun regime proposed plans for a new constitution, including plans to revise the Family Law to remove gender inequality in marriage and family life.[136] However, the regime ended before any legal changes occurred. As Chapter 7 will discuss, the successful democratization movement in 1987 ended South Korean dictatorships, although Chun's successor still won the presidential election in 1988. Nevertheless, when the opposition parties gained a majority in the National Assembly in 1988, they cooperated on the issues related to women- and children-friendly laws. Finally, in December 1989, a significant revision of the Family Law was made under a favorable environment for such policies under the climate of democratization. The revised law reflected gender equality in the kinship and included reforms in issues related to inheritance and custody rights, the definition of relatives, and the right to claim property division during divorce.[137]

The KNCW's participation in the Family Law revision campaigns reveal several layers of the organization's work. It combined domestic and international spheres and lobbied for decision-making in the National Assembly and at the grassroots level. Before the 1980s, the organization appeared to hold back its initiatives at the National Conventions on Women to avoid going too far, while its key figures, such as Lee Tai-young, were ready to march to meet Park Chung-hee to convince the ultimate leader of the importance of the issue. After Park, the KNCW utilized the liberalizing atmosphere and took more steps towards becoming a civil society organization than in previous decades. The following chapters shall return to discuss the role of democratization and UN policies, including the International Women's Year and Women's Decade, in the work of the KNCW. The last section of this

[135] "Gajokbeop gaejeongeul wihan teukbyeol gyeolui mit geonui" [Special Resolution and Proposal for the Amendment of the Family Law], *Yeoseong* 10 (October 1984), 38; "Women's Federation for Revision of Family Law," *The Woman* 20, no. 2 (November 1984), 40.

[136] Choi, "After a long struggle by the family law revision movement."

[137] Oh, "A woman's history," 72–73; Choi, "After a long struggle by the family law revision movement."

chapter turns its gaze to another central topic related to changes in Korean families: family planning.

5.2.3 Population Problem as an Issue of Gender Equality

The various posters the Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea (*Daehan Gajok Gyehoek Hyeophoe*) and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs produced over the years are familiar features of the visual culture of the Park Chung-hee era. Initially, they promoted the idea of two children, then turned to favor having only one child, and eventually started to warn about the risks of overpopulation, even if all Korean couples would not have even one child. The posters not only signaled the favorable number of babies for families but introduced contraceptive methods and showcased how fewer children would help South Korea achieve greater per capita income. Importantly, the posters did not seek to favor boys but included children of both sexes and often even pointed out that one girl was better than ten boys. An important slogan among family planning campaigns indeed was "No distinction between son and daughter."[138]

Among the visual memories of the authoritarian era that can today be reached through museums and online collections, particularly interesting is a poster featuring a worried-looking woman in a *hanbok* dress and a Confucian man wearing a *gat* (traditional black hat) that says "head of the household" on it. The man is holding signs that say 'property,' 'children,' 'inheritance,' and 'parental right,' referring to the various rights that men in families had. The All Women's Association for Urging the Revision of the Family Law, led by Lee Sook-chong and Lee Tai-young, introduced in the previous section, created the poster. This women's coalition called for revising the Family Law and promoting gender equality within the family. In this manner, the themes closely related to women's lives, such as family, the number of children, family rights, etc., were also intertwined in the work of women's organizations seeking answers to social problems. This section examines the KNCW's involvement in the Park Chung-hee regime's family planning policies in the 1960s and 1970s. Through family planning, reproduction became part of public policy, and family intimacy became an aspect of modernization. The following analyzes how the KNCW presented family planning and gender equality as the solution to the population problem.

The South Korean government launched family planning campaigns since the early 1960s.[139] The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs administered family

[138] Lee, "Gender Division of Labor and the Authoritarian Developmental State," 319.
[139] See, e.g. John P. DiMoia, "'Let's Have the Proper Number of Children and Raise Them Well!' Family Planning and Nation-Building in South Korea, 1961–1968," *East Asian*

planning. The most visible partners of the campaigns were the Family Planning Mother's Clubs, which the state directly operated and were later integrated with the Saemaul Women's Clubs.[140] In family planning, the government and women's groups could find a common tone in the need to modernize gender relations. Family planning was subordinate to the developmental discourse of nation-building.[141] Women were the target and the instrument of family planning, making the policy a sphere of interest for the KNCW. The KNCW women negotiated the family planning policies vis-á-vis women's status in society and argued that overpopulation would not be a risk in an equal society.

The family planning programs, targeted at decreasing the number of children in Korean families to increase economic growth, remain highly disputed because of the means they used and their consequences.[142] Often, the scholarly opinions regarding the family planning campaign are divided between two extremes; those seeing that rural women adopted family planning ideals to overcome poverty by reducing family size and those seeing family planning as a brutal method to control the female body and sexuality and as a case example on how the authoritarian state intervened in the lives of its citizens. According to Kim Myung-suk, family planning in South Korea combined a micro level of persuasion with a macro level of national mobilization. Although people were the targets of the mobilization, they were also active participants. Kim argues that the state had a dual role: forming a desire to participate and acting as an engine to exploit those desires.[143] Seungsook Moon views family planning as intrusive and coercive without the possibility for women's empowerment; instead, women were mere "passive recipients or instruments of patriarchal control."[144] Eunjoo Cho presents a totally opposing image, viewing that

Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal 2, no. 3 (2008): 361–379; DiMoia, *Reconstructing Bodies*; Aya Homei and John P. DiMoia, "Integrating Parasite Eradication with Family Planning: The Colonial Legacy in Post-War Medical Cooperation in East Asia," *Social History of Medicine* 34, no. 4 (November 2021): 1094–1115.

140 Lisa Kim Davis, "Korean Women's Groups Organize for Change," in *Women of Japan and Korea*, 228; Lee, "Gender Division of Labor and the Authoritarian Developmental State," 304–307.

141 Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 70.

142 See Cho, "Making the 'modern' family," for a positive approach to modern love and sexuality, DiMoia, "'Let's Have the Proper Number of Children'" and *Reconstructing Bodies* for a neutral approach, Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, and Lee, "Gender Division of Labor and the Authoritarian Developmental State," for a critical approach.

143 Kim Myung-suk, "Gukga Dongwon-gwa 'Gajok Gyehoek,'" [National Mobilization and Family Planning] in *State and Everyday Life*, esp. 325–326.

144 Seungsook Moon, "Overcome by Globalization: The Rise of a Women's Policy in South Korea," in *Korea's Globalization*, ed. Samuel S. Kim. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 134–135.

the idea of sexuality in South Korea was transformed because of the family planning and contraceptive methods it provided. According to Cho, it was thanks to family planning that sexuality was disconnected from procreation and instead connected to love and the marital relationship, thus modifying the concept of family in South Korea.[145] Nicola Anne Jones argues that family planning and the availability of contraceptives eased women's burden from childbearing, yet improving the quality of women's lives was not the primary object of the Park Chung-hee regime.[146]

Indeed, the Park Chung-hee regime's interest in family planning was economic. Reduced childbirth and population growth were believed to support economic growth.[147] In the 1960s and 1970s, the problems of an aging society were not on the horizon; instead, figures predicting a population of 53 million by the year 2000 were considered worrisome. The KNCW operated under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, but the motives for family planning differed from those of the government. Although the organization adopted the language of the state and called the situation in the 1960s "the population crisis," it sought to solve the crisis by abolishing the preference of sons over daughters. The KNCW offered gender equality as a solution to the population problem since "the problem of overpopulation is inseparably linked with the problem of woman achieving her rightful status."[148] The KNCW articulated male preference as an issue of gender equality, which linked the population issue directly to the women's movement. The organization believed an answer to the issue could easily be found if only the woman's position in society was improved.[149] The organization argued that, had gender equality been achieved and the preference of sons removed from the Family Law, no population problem would exist. In other words, the KNCW was saying that the law protecting gender equality would make state-led family planning unnecessary.[150]

In 1966, *Yeoseong* published an advertisement for the family planning counseling services offered at the Women's Hall. A consultation, medical equipment, loops, and vasectomies were offered for free with the foreword: "Family

145 Cho, "Making the 'modern' family," 816.
146 Jones, *Gender and Political Opportunities*, 28–29.
147 Kim Davis, "Korean Women's Groups of Organize for Change," 228.
148 Yun Soon-duk, "Women and Population" keynote speech at the seminar Women and Population in May 1975, published in *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 12–13. For the fertility rate figures in the 1970s, see Lee Hyo-jae and Cho Hyoung, "Fertility and Women's Labor Force Participation in Korea," *Korea Journal* (July 1977): 27 (Table 1).
149 Yun, "Women and Population," 13.
150 Hong Sook-ja, "Family Law Revised," *The Woman* 13, no. 2 (December 1977), 14.

planning is not birth control; it is a new life movement (*sinsaenghwal undong*)."[151] A picture of two families – an unhappy one with eight children and the ninth coming and a happy one with three children – accompanied the advertisement. The big family is dressed in tattered clothes, while the small family is wearing clean clothes, with the son holding a diploma. The image linked family planning with a family's success and directly with the economic situation; fewer people would mean more wealth as the family's income did not need to be shared with so many.[152]

Sociologist Sanghui Nam has analyzed KNCW's participation in the family planning programs and suggests that participation worked as an opportunity structure for the KNCW, which had difficulties reaching the grassroots level. By going to the field, KNCW could get support for revising the Family Law by raising awareness of women's issues, especially in rural areas. Family planning was a state-led campaign, and the state launched nationwide machinery of people and stations distributing information and the practicalities of family planning – a platform the KNCW could also use when seeking support.[153] Besides funding from the state, the KNCW utilized the international context in which developing countries were helped reduce childbirth rates.[154] In the early 1970s, the KNCW received financial support from the US Population Council to enter the field, organize a seminar "The Population Problem and Women's Groups," and start projects related to family planning. These projects included women's classes on the importance of family planning, house visits, and other fieldwork to introduce family planning and survey attitudes on male preference. A report on these projects was published in August 1974, documenting the results and the KNCW's perceptions of the obstacles related to family planning policies.[155]

According to the report, the KNCW gave lectures on family planning and male preference to factory girls and university students in the summer of 1973. The KNCW reported that only short training was "insufficient to overcome the attitude of male preference." In the spring of 1973, the KNCW members visited around 3000 women in Seoul and the surrounding areas to introduce family planning and contraceptive methods. The organization distributed oral pills and condoms and

151 "Yeoseonghoegwan gajokgyehoeg sangdamsil" [Women's Hall Family Planning Consultation Room], *Yeoseong* 2 (February 1966), back matter.

152 "Women's Hall Family Planning," back matter.

153 Nam, "Women's Movement and the Transformation of the Family Law," 74–76.

154 For global context on the family planning initiatives and population control, see Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

155 Korean National Council of Women, *Ingumunjee isseoseo yeoseongdancheui yeokhal. Ingumunje choejongbogoseo* [Role of Women's Organizations in Population Problem. Population Problem Final Report] (Seoul: Korean National Council of Women, 1974).

provided IUD insertion on site; according to the report, almost half the women met during the visits accepted some of the contraceptive methods during the first visit. The second visit increased the participation rate to almost 67%. The pressing question from the fieldwork was still how to stop families from having more children if they did not yet have a son. In the spring of 1974, the KNCW surveyed attitudes on male preference and possibilities of change among 2000 women in Seoul. During the survey, oral pills and condoms were again distributed. The report declares that more coupons were distributed than were used. Finally, the KNCW thought the latest fieldwork was less successful than the previous home visits because it had been conducted in an affluent area of Seoul. Almost half the women there said they already used contraceptives, used local pharmacies to get contraceptives, and did not trust government-made condoms. Some said they preferred abortion over oral pills because of the side effects; others were not willing to use the services of health centers because they have "some bad purpose." Many did not consider family planning necessary because others were practicing it, and several children did not pose an economic burden for them.[156]

The results of the US-supported projects and the report the KNCW published on them reveal certain insights into the KNCW's involvement in family planning. First, male preference was still certainly prominent, and families had more children to have a son, despite efforts to control the population. For the KNCW, this was an issue of gender equality. It declared a need for a new social attitude to favor small families. Second, the KNCW viewed that the kinds of contraceptive methods targeted to women were unfair. Illegal abortion was dangerous, and oral pills caused harmful side effects. Thus, the KNCW encouraged finding ways to share the burden of family planning with men and suggested that in future campaigns, condoms and vasectomies should be promoted. Third, the KNCW sought better ways to explain to women how they would benefit from the time saved from childbearing. For lower classes, the benefit would be mainly economic; for the middle class, leisure time meant more time for self-development. In concluding the report, the KNCW suggested there should be more control of family planning agencies, which were more interested in profits than helping solve a social problem. Furthermore, the KNCW demanded governmental support for organizations that promoted gender equality through family planning.[157] These measures support the already presented argument: for the KNCW, participation in family planning campaigns was a matter of gender equality. They also show that the KNCW wanted both sexes to share the

[156] Korean National Council of Women, *Role of Women's Organizations in Population Problem*.

[157] Korean National Council of Women, *Role of Women's Organizations in Population Problem*.

solutions to the population problem and insisted that family planning campaigns must be carried out to solve the social problem, not to gain economic profit.

In 1974, which marked the UN International Population Year, the KNCW published reports on women and population both in Korean and English. In fact, the publications were made in preparation for the International Women's Year to be celebrated the year after.[158] The publications were based on a seminar, "Women and Population," hosted by the KNCW's Population Problem Committee. The seminar aimed to discuss women's role in population control, women's legal status, the issue of male preference, and the future of Korean families. Professor of Ewha Womans University Yun Soon-duk's keynote speech presented a solution to the population problem, which would have also solved the women's issue:

> The sooner that woman is granted an equal position without discrimination, the sooner that she is acknowledged as a complete human being, the sooner her role as an equal partner with man is acknowledged, the sooner Korean social development and national economic progress will be accelerated. Herein lies the solution both to the problem of woman's status and the population explosion.[159]

Writings in the KNCW's publications again suggested that family planning would become unnecessary if legislation was changed: "When the family law is revised, urgent slogans such as "Bear only two, rear them well," etc... will not be needed."[160] In South Korea, 1974 was proclaimed as "No Pregnancy Year," which the KNCW received positively. The organization declared that women's ability to control their own bodies – meaning limiting the number of pregnancies – provides them equality with men.[161] The KNCW believed that a theme year succeeded in breaking taboos on discussing pregnancy and contraceptives when even "ordinary housewives in spite of disapproval from the omnipotent male" could discuss such issues.[162] Still, in the 1960s, the contraceptive practices had been a social taboo.[163]

The ICW was also interested in family planning not only as an issue of controlling population growth but as an issue of women's health and families' well-being. The UN had adopted family planning as "a new human right."[164] During the

158 Korean National Council of Women, *Role of Women's Organizations in Population Problem*; Korean National Council of Women, *Women and Population*.

159 Yun, "Women and Population," 13.

160 Kim Yong-han, "Irrationality of the Present Family Law and Increase of Population," *The Woman* 13, no. 2 (December 1977), 39.

161 Korean National Council of Women, *Women and Population*, 8.

162 Korean National Council of Women, *Women and Population*, 11.

163 See Kim Davis, "Korean Women's Groups Organize for Change," 228.

164 Pietilä, *Unfinished Story*, 22.

1974 UN International Population Year, the effects of family planning on the family's well-being were one of the ICW's prime concerns.[165] The KNCW linked legalizing abortion to family planning. While the ICW still maintained a neutral position regarding abortion in the late 1960s, the KNCW demanded legitimizing abortion for the sake of the mother's health since "a whole family needs her, and although she is only a woman, she is a citizen and her life is at stake."[166] Abortion, despite being illegal in South Korea, was used as birth control.[167]

The organization appealed to the law to protect citizens' lives since the methods to terminate unwanted pregnancies often proved fatal or dangerous to women. "If by making abortion legal we can also guarantee some element of safety, either more skilled doctors, more reasonable fees or less tension within the patient herself, it is reasonable to ask the government to change the law."[168] The abortion law originated from the early 20th century and its regulations were enforced following the Korean War when due to the war casualties there was a demand to increase population. An amendment to the law was made in 1973 to allow abortion in cases when the mother or fetus has or faces a risk of detrimental diseases.[169]

The KNCW took the stand that the family planning program would be unsuccessful if the Family Law that bound families to traditional values was not removed. The cherished idea in Korean families that many sons brought great happiness was related to male preference and dependence on offspring in old age. According to the KNCW, this needed to be changed by establishing a social security system and real equality between the sexes.[170] The KNCW viewed a shift in attitude as crucial in resolving the population problem and suggested a radical change in thinking: "There are too many people, too many. In this age of over-population, the population policy can not make its way over the wall without a revolution in thinking and conscious restructuring that do not regard male and female as equal beings individually and socially."[171]

165 See Catherine Jacques and Sylvie Lefebvre, "From Philanthropy to Social Commitment," in *Women Changing the World*, 149–169.

166 "Whose Life?" *The Woman* 3, no. 1 (April 1967), 1. For the ICW's perception of abortion, see Catherine Jacques and Sylvie Lefebvre, "Adapting to the Modern World and Globalization: the Challenge at the End of the 20th Century," in *Women Changing the World*, 204.

167 Shin, "Politics of the Family Law Reform Movement," 119n30.

168 "Whose Life?" 1.

169 Hyosin Kim and Hyun-A Bae, "A critical assessment of abortion law and its implementation in South Korea," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 24, no. 1 (2018): 73, 78.

170 Kim Yong-han, "Irrationality of the Present Family Law and Increase of Population," *The Woman* 13, no. 2 (December 1977), 36.

171 Kim, "Irrationality of the Present Family Law," 39.

The issues that have later been criticized in family planning programs run by the authoritarian state were not problematic for the KNCW at the time. For the KNCW, family planning was part of women's rights and not a form of oppression; thus, women could control their family size via family planning methods. However, Seungsook Moon calls it ironic that women's interest in reducing family size corresponded with the state's interest in controlling population size.[172] My reading on the KNCW's motivations to participate in family planning, combined with Sanghui Nam's observations, suggests that aspirations regarding family and its size did not correspond with the interest of the state but were related to achieving gender equality. Previous critical research on family planning has largely focused on women and how their bodies were controlled. However, soon after the opening of the family planning service at the Women's Hall (discussed in Chapter 4), the KNCW noticed that actually more men than women sought advice, suggesting that a focus solely on women's bodies might be flawed.[173] The analysis on the reforms on women's rights advocated by the KNCW confirms that family was indeed an important element in Cold War women's activism. Many of the reforms were intended to create a greater role for women outside the walls of the home so they could be something other than only mothers.

5.3 Conclusion

The KNCW's regular activities and campaigns were rooted in a firm belief that revising the Family Law, fulfilling suffrage, and increasing women's participation in the economy would bring gender equality to South Korean society. Only over time have we witnessed that even the country's democratization from the late 1980s onwards has not fulfilled these dreams. In the KNCW's case, promoting women's social participation under government agendas exhibited a nuanced balance between advocating for women's issues and aligning with state policies. It also demonstrates the limitations that women's policies and movements faced in navigating the political terrain of the authoritarian era.

The KNCW proposed some of the most radical policies of its time; most are still relevant today. The organization promoted women's issues in *Yeoseong* and *The Woman*, the two publications that piqued my interest in this chapter to discuss the KNCW's most central campaigns. From pursuing the revision to the Family Law, supporting family planning, legalizing abortion, criticizing state-sponsored prostitution and male-centered politics, and utilizing the Cold War discourse on the importance of the home and family as a consumer unit to argue on behalf of

172 Moon, "Militarized Modernity and Gendered Mass Mobilization," 60.
173 See "Activities of the Women's Center," *The Woman* 1, no. 1 (March 1965), 7.

consumer protection and environmental concerns, the KNCW, in many ways, advocated for the centrality of the housewife in the imaginary of the authoritarian era to highlight the need for women's participation in nation-building, modernization, and economic growth. However, it can be acknowledged that progress was often slow. Since the 1960s, the KNCW has joined forces with other representatives of women to oppose the family head system. When *hojuje* was finally abolished in 2005, only a few women from the KNCW who had campaigned against the unequal and unfair legislation since the 1950s were still alive.

Even if the KNCW leadership was naïve in their belief that the Park Chung-hee regime would advance women's liberation, the women still kept the gender equality discussion alive. As Chapter 4 shows, the KNCW participated in the state's national anti-communist campaigns; national security and nation-building projects were also closely related to women's role and legal status in the work of the KNCW. This chapter shows how women's own agenda was shaped and how the consumers' protection movement, initiated by the state, took its own direction in the hands of women and was used to express frustration towards the state's economy-driven policies that were potentially harmful to consumers and the environment. The KNCW accepted the biological differences between the sexes but argued that men and women should have the same legal and practical rights to contribute to society.

It was much due to a successful frame bridging, as Sanghui Nam describes it, between government policies and the goals of the KNCW that made the women's organization reach a wider audience – to mobilize urban and rural women behind gender issues. This eventually contributed to creating a new generation of women activists that we know of as part of the pro-democracy movement.[174] As the following two chapters shall discuss, the KNCW significantly transformed over the years from an organization fulfilling state-sanctioned tasks to challenging the state. Over time, the organization also adopted democracy on its agenda.

Given the organization's dire financial situation, as its funding was largely based on donations, the KNCW managed to be part of a surprisingly large number of projects. Participation in state-promoted issues, such as the family planning campaign and the rational management of the household, also secured the KNCW with funds to operate. Even if funded by the state, the KNCW articulated the population problem as an issue related to women's status rather than the economy and demanded that economic growth should not be promoted at the cost of consumer safety. With the findings from the previous chapter, the analysis of the KNCW's activities shows that the organization agreed with the state's anti-communist,

[174] Nam, "Women's Movement and the Transformation of the Family Law," 76.

security-focused policies but diverged from the exploitative, economy-focused orientation, especially when the state did not give credit to women's participation.

Family planning, the New Village Movement, and other forms of community development resemble the aims and activities in other developing countries during the Cold War. Although the KNCW spoke on behalf of overarching development – that of nation and women – it rarely sought support in the Third World framework. Instead, a more important framework was the activities inspired and sponsored by the UN, which the ICW also supported. Thus, several campaigns of the KNCW resonated not only with the needs of South Korean society but with topical matters that were, at the time, discussed in the UN and ICW. The next chapter will more closely examine this exact framework and the transnational networks in which the KNCW operated, the participation of the KNCW officials in events outside South Korea, and the organizing of the ICW's most important event: the Triennial Conference in Seoul in 1982.

6 The Sphere of Events, the Flow of Networks: The Korean National Council of Women and Transnational Feminism in the Making

In September 1979, on the 20th anniversary of the Korean National Council of Women, the former president of the International Council of Women and its representative in the UN, a Canadian Mary Craig Schuller-McGeachy, visited Seoul. Schuller-McGeachy's keynote speech delivered at the KNCW's anniversary ceremony held at the King Sejong Culture Center memorialized the Korean founding president, the late Kim Hwallan, whom she had met several times in Europe and the United States and "who was held in such affection by the whole Council family."[1]

The KNCW had invited Schuller-McGeachy to Seoul as early as 1964 after she had followed Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux in the leadership of the ICW in 1963. Like her predecessor, she was committed to advancing relations with national councils in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and organizing regional meetings for women in the Third World to show them the relevancy of the ICW.[2] Turning down the invitation in 1964, Schuller-McGeachy assured, "Please believe that the I.C.W. family is very near to you in your spirit."[3] When Schuller-McGeachy eventually made it to South Korea 15 years later, in her speech to the audience, she admired the steps Korean women had taken in the past two decades since an ICW-affiliated organization in South Korea was established. Schuller-McGeachy declared how "every officer of the ICW is conscious of the steadfast and creative work of the National Council of Korea. Your periodical publication, 'The Woman', keeps us in touch with your

1 Mary Craig Schuller-McGeachy, "Future Society and Women," manuscript of a keynote speech for the 20th Anniversary Ceremony of the Korean National Council of Women in 1979, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif.

2 Kinnear, *Woman of the World*, 217.

3 Mary Craig Schuller-McGeachy to Helen Kim, August 31, 1964, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

multi-faceted activity and also reflects international events and action which touch upon the life of Councils."[4]

Indeed, since the early 1960s, the KNCW had become integral to the ICW's work. Women from South Korea were frequently seen at ICW and UN meetings as representatives of the KNCW, despite South Korea not yet being a member of the UN. Korean women also welcomed international visitors to Seoul to give lectures about the achievements and challenges women faced in many areas of the world. Koreans were eager to introduce their native land and the ongoing transformation of Korean society to wider audiences. A month before Schuller-McGeachy's visit and the celebration of the KNCW's 20th anniversary, when the ICW community had convened for the Triennial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, it was agreed that the next Triennial Conference would be held in Seoul in 1982. Hosting a major international conference in South Korea in the early 1980s highlighted the transnational work of the KNCW. This chapter paints a picture of an internationally active organization that not only participated in the transnational sphere provided by others but actively contributed to creating such an environment by offering to organize major events.

As the previous chapter described, although women had been granted suffrage and equal rights with men in the Constitution of the Republic of Korea in 1948, serious actions were not taken to actually change the society's patriarchal structures. Politics continued to be male-dominated, and women found it hard to make their voices heard via parliamentary channels.[5] According to historian Marilyn Lake, in situations like this, women felt their voices could be more easily heard in international forums where women combined their forces and discussed the inequalities together. In other words, women who had a trivial impact on national policies could still find empowerment via inclusion in transnational politics.[6] This view is supported by several scholars who have argued that affiliations in international organizations were sought to gain more strength in the national context, to influence the government, and to have credibility in the eyes of the domestic audience and membership of the organization.[7]

4 Schuller-McGeachy, "Future Society and Women."

5 The number of female members of the National Assembly remained under 2 %.

6 Marilyn Lake, "Nationalist Historiography, Feminist Scholarship, and the Promise and Problems of New Transnational Histories: The Australian Case," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 181–183.

7 See Cova, "Feminisms and Associativism," 21; Julie Carlier, "A Forgotten Instance of Women's International Organising The Transnational Feminist Networks of the Women's Progressive Society (1890) and the International Women's Union (1893–1898)," in *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective*, 77–100; Patricia Grimshaw and Hannah Loney, "The local and the global in women's organizing in the Pacific region, 1950s–1990s," in *Women in Transnational History,* 204.

The KNCW's participation in South Korea's nation-building also required building an international reputation and recognition, especially in contrast to North Korea. Previous scholarship on South Korea's Cold War policies widely acknowledges that the South Korean government was eager to improve the country's international image and establish itself as an international actor.[8] However, attention has only occasionally been paid to women's role in this framework.[9] Quite the contrary, the globalization of South Korean women's movement is often associated with the 'comfort women' movement for redress, which emerged in the early 1990s and continues still.[10] Previous research has sometimes acknowledged that the awareness towards women's policies in South Korea increased after the International Women's Year, but ignored the KNCW's role in spreading such awareness.[11] Many transnational features in the work of the KNCW remain unrecognized. Consider, for example, claims by Chung Chin-sung and Anne Nicole Jones, who suggest the KNCW was lacking "a full international coalition" or that the KNCW was "comparatively isolated" from international as well as regional networks despite relying on international examples and conventions.[12] This chapter argues that by making publications in English, frequenting meetings abroad, and hosting women's movement leaders in Seoul, the KNCW practiced transnational feminism and participated in forming South Korea's international relations. In addition to being a member of the ICW, the KNCW also joined regional projects, such as the Pan-Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA) and the Federation of Asia-Pacific Women's Association (FAWA).[13]

8 See Gills, *Korea versus Korea*; Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea*.

9 See Jones, "Mainstreaming Gender," 455; Nam, "Women's Movement and the Transformation of the Family Law," 71–72; Kim and Kim, *Korean Women's Movement and the State*, 20, 25.

10 Soh, "Korean 'Comfort Women'"; Kern and Nam, "Korean Comfort Women Movement." See also *Gender in Modern East Asia,* in which transnational feminism is treated only in the post-Cold War framework.

11 See, e.g. Lee On-jook and Seo Seung Hee, "Hanguk Yeoseongjeongchaekjeondamgigu-ui Byeoncheongwa Yeoseongjeongchaek" [Change in the Form of State Apparatus Specializing in Women's Affairs and Government Policies toward Women in Korea], *Seoul Daehakgyo Sadae Nonchong* [Journal of Seoul National University College of Education] 65 (2002): 101–134.

12 Chung, "Internationalization and Information of Women's Movement," 115; Jones, "Mainstreaming Gender," 118.

13 The KNCW became a member of the Federation of Asia-Pacific Women's Association (FAWA) in 1968 after the FAWA president and vice president visited South Korea. FAWA had been established in June 1959 – just before the KNCW – to raise awareness of women's issues and gender equality in the Asia-Pacific region. In the limits of this work, KNCW's connections and cooperation with the FAWA cannot be examined, except for the part of the FAWA conference the KNCW hosted in Seoul in 1976, an

Besides *The Woman*, the KNCW's English-language bulletin, the KNCW published several booklets and reports in English on different occasions. These materials were distributed to the international counterparts of the KNCW, normally through the channels of the ICW; as such, they provide a valuable collection of traces of practicing transnational feminism. Korean women in the KNCW were not interested only in solving women's issues in their country; they also wanted to share the issues with others. English-language publications provided a medium to deliver information on Korean women's status to foreign audiences, compare their situation with other countries, and introduce Korean history and culture to people abroad. In a report to the ICW ahead of the Triennial Conference in Tehran in 1966, the KNCW described its relationship with the themes proposed by the ICW: "Korea edits a magazine every three months to relate the news and activities of the ICW, the NC [national councils] affiliated associations and other women's organizations. ICW themes are frequently selected for seminars and symposia."[14] For example, following participation in the ICW seminar in Brisbane, Australia, in 1964 under the theme "Decade of Development," the KNCW organized a seminar with a similar theme back at home.[15] Along with close correspondence between Seoul and the ICW headquarters in Paris, such publications targeted larger audiences along with events, meetings, and conferences, providing a basis for networks discussed in this chapter. Back home, the Korean-language bulletin *Yeoseong* had a different task: to educate Korean women on what was going on in different countries and on the global level of women's policies.

In recent scholarship, the work of international women's organizations, their spread to different areas and countries, recruitment processes, and networking have been described as transnational feminism – a turn influenced by First and Third world feminism, globalization, and post-colonial feminist critique. According Breny Mendoza, transnational feminism refers to "the multiplicity of the world's feminisms and to the increasing tendency of national feminisms to politicize women's issues beyond the borders of the nation state, for instance, in United Nations (UN) women's world conferences or on the Internet."[16] Transnational feminism in this study is used

important rehearsal before the ICW Conference. See "FAWA officials visit Korea," *The Woman* 4, no. 2 (September 1968), 3.

14 International Council of Women, *Report of the 18th Triennial Meeting of the International Council of Women, 14th to 26th May, 1966, Teheran, Iran* (Paris: International Council of Women, 1966). Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [April 19, 2018].

15 International Council of Women*, Report of the 18th Triennial Meeting of the International Council of Women, Teheran, Iran*.

16 Breny Mendoza, "Transnational feminisms in question," *Feminist Theory* 3, no. 3 (2002): 296.

to approach the formative period of connections between women who came together in the events related to the International Women's Year in 1975 and Decade for Women (1975–1985).[17] The UN World Conferences on Women, along with other meetings among women and their organizations, which gathered different nationalities to the same location, provide prototypes of global interaction and networks as they present "concrete experiences of transnational organizing of women across the globe."[18] This chapter examines how transnational feminism was in the making and how women from South Korea participated in formulating the future of women along with their counterparts in other countries. I analyze how the transnational cooperation between the KNCW and ICW developed over the years and how the KNCW transmitted gender politics from global arenas to South Korea, culminating in the ICW Conference in Seoul in 1982 and the election of Korean Hong Sook-ja as the president of the ICW in 1986. In addition to the KNCW's publications, I utilize the correspondence between the two organizations and their headquarters in Seoul and Paris. Besides the flow of networks and sphere of events, I discuss the challenges the ICW and its Korean affiliate faced when operating in a transnational environment, such as cultural differences, obstacles of interaction and travel, and the meaning of personal relationships.

6.1 The World Is Calling: Establishing a Transnational Network

The KNCW General Secretary Yun Sook-in summed up the reality of women's issues upon her visit at the ICW Conference in Paris in 1975: "It seems to me that every country has similar problem as far as women's problems are concerned but the prescription is different for each in consideration of each nation's unique circumstances."[19] In the case of South Korea, she emphasized the importance of working through channels of mass media to spread the message on the urgency of Family Law reform and the need to keep the KNCW current with the international trends. By the eve of the International Women's Year, the KNCW had established

17 For a discussion of how transnational feminism has sometimes been disassociated from its historical roots, see Ellen DuBois and Katie Oliviero, "Circling the globe: International feminism reconsidered, 1920 to 1975," *Women's Studies International Forum* 32 (2009): 1–3.

18 Mendoza, "Transnational feminisms," 296.

19 "An Interview with KNCW Secretary General," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), 16. For a full report on Yun's visit to Paris, see Yun Sook-in, "5gae gukseo 5baegyeo munjejeghi gyeongjejeok donglibman-i yeogwon bojang" [Raising over 500 issues in five countries, only economic independence guarantees women's rights] *Yeoseong* 4 (April 1975), 16–19.

itself as a stable member of the transnational network of the ICW; however, reaching that position was not always easy. The first section of this chapter looks at the processes that framed the KNCW's participation in the transnational networks. What opportunities and challenges did the operation in the transnational sphere offer? How did the KNCW overcome the challenges?

The KNCW's founding president, Kim Hwallan, held a formative role in the early years of the KNCW in creating and consolidating connections between South Korea and foreign countries. Kim, often a representative of South Korea in the UN General Assembly meetings in which the Korea Question was discussed in the late 1940s, had wide personal relations with important figures in the education, women's affairs, and foreign relations fields. She had even been the first Korean woman to attend an international conference when she participated in a conference of the World Student Christian Federation in Beijing in 1922.[20] In the 1960s, the ICW frequently asked Kim to participate in events, especially those organized in close association with the UN events. Often, the ICW organized events and seminars where the UN meetings were about to be held. For example, in 1964, the UN was preparing a seminar on human rights in Kabul; the ICW hoped to take advantage of this occasion by organizing a meeting among national council representatives in the area and asked also Kim to attend the meeting. The ICW recognized the potential in Afghanistan and believed women's work there would "profit enormously from knowing how women in other Asian countries have organized in order to meet the needs in their communities."[21]

Besides being a person whose presence was valued in different events, Kim Hwallan served in various positions of trust. She was elected as the vice-convener in the ICW Standing Committee of Education in 1963, serving until 1966.[22] The Standing Committee of Education had close contacts to the UNESCO, which enquired the ICW as a consultative status NGO to provide information on themes such as discrimination in education and the problems women and girls face in education, especially in rural areas.[23] Kim had been a member of the South Korean delegation to the UNESCO's NGO General Conference in Paris in 1962 and was an expert of education and rural areas, having written her doctoral dissertation on rural education and its potential for reform in Korea.[24] Thanks to Kim's effort to maintain

20 Lee, *Women in Korean History*, 250–251.
21 Mary Craig Schuller-McGeachy to Helen Kim, January 15, 1964, folder 1863 AVG-Carhif.
22 Catherine Pomonti to Helen Kim, July 31, 1963, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.
23 International Council of Women, "Standing Committees of the International Council of Women. Sequel. 1957–1963" (Paris: International Council of Women, 1963), 3.
24 Catherine Pomonti to Helen Kim, November 29, 1962, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. See also Wells, "The price of legitimacy," 211.

close relations to the ICW's work, all the Standing Committees of KNCW since its founding were equivalent to the international level, which was not the case with all national councils.[25] By contributing to the work of the standing committees, the KNCW regularly attached itself to the ICW's work between the Triennial Conferences. Through the standing committees, the KNCW informed the larger international community on South Korean affairs.

One of Kim Hwallan's achievements was establishing an English-language bulletin for the KNCW. Kim founded a newspaper, *The Korea Times,* during the Korean War to share information on Korean affairs for a broader audience.[26] *The Woman* carried a similar purpose. As the previous chapter mentioned, the KNCW started publishing *The Woman* in March 1965, which became an important channel for communicating with the transnational community of the ICW and other national councils in addition to foreigners in South Korea. An English-language publication was not a sudden whim but had been prepared for a long time as a sign of gratitude towards the other members of the ICW. Kim wrote in the opening of the first issue of *The Woman*: "We hope our Sister Councils in other parts of the world and their members will take it as our 'Thank you' for what they have been sending us during the past years."[27] Kim described that the publications the KNCW received from other women's organizations were inspiration and stimulation for Korean women: "We read [...] we were stimulated, uplifted, and encouraged in our vision for life."[28] Kim believed women abroad would like reading about Korean women because Korean women "are jumping centuries overnight" and wanted to show the many transitions going on in Korean society. Despite the development, Kim also wanted to share with others the "problems and dangers" Korean women face in their homes and public life. Moreover, Kim noticed that Koreans tend to think what they do does not matter in the world, but she was confident that Korean women could contribute to the world; thus, the English language magazine was needed to share this.[29] On the twelfth year of the bulletin, KNCW president Lee Sook-chong declared the purpose of *The Woman* to be "the voice of Korean women" and to share knowledge among women, going as far as hoping the journal would contribute toward "accomplishment of

[25] See a report, The First General Conference Korean Council of Women, attached to a letter from Helen Kim to Marie-Helene Lefauchaux, March 20, 1960, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif. However, it appears that not all of the Standing Committees continued to operate constantly, as they were no longer listed in the KNCW journals.

[26] Lee, *Women in Korean History*, 257.

[27] Helen Kim, "The Woman," *The Woman* 1, no. 1 (March 1965), 1.

[28] Kim, "The Woman," 1.

[29] Kim, "The Woman," 1.

world peace."[30] The ICW records show that the secretariat and leaders of the national councils read the magazine regularly.[31]

During Kim Hwallan's leadership, a Korean delegation traveled to all ICW Triennial Conferences held in Washington (1963), Tehran (1966), and Bangkok (1970). Kim did not participate, but the KNCW was represented by the vice presidents and leaders of its member organizations. On the last day of the Bangkok conference, news of Kim's passing reached the participants. The ICW commemorated the late women's movement leader and later recalled the Bangkok conference as "our service of remembrance and thanksgiving for the life of Helen Kim [Kim Hwallan]."[32] Still, a year later, in her letter to newly elected KNCW President Lee Sook-chong, ICW President Mary Craig Schuller-McGeachy felt the sorrow surrounding the council in South Korea: "Indeed you may be sure that I and all of your colleagues in ICW are well aware of the sorrow and difficulty you have had and sympathize sincerely in your loss."[33]

After Kim's passing, much of the international cooperation fell on Lee Sook-chong and a rising name, Hong Sook-ja, who took great responsibility for international affairs after a short career in diplomacy. Of the two, Hong was more fluent in English. Hong, born in Seoul in 1933, had studied political science at Dongguk University, graduated from Ewha with a master's degree in politics and diplomacy, and finished her second master's degree in political science at Boston University in 1958. While in Boston, she married another Korean student. When the couple returned to Seoul, Hong pursued a diplomatic career, participated in a diplomat training program for people from developing countries in the United States in 1962, and eventually divorced her husband – a "playboy," as she recalled him in many interviews. Living in the United States during the 1960s, the women's movement made her a feminist, and she could no longer tolerate the traditional behavior of Korean men. In an interview in 1987, Hong recalled that "[in] Korea I am looked on as a radical feminist, whereas my approach would seem quite mild in

30 Lee, "Put Our Ideals into Practice," 11.

31 See, e.g. Israeli Pnina Herzog (ICW President 1997–2003) thanking Hong for an interesting issue of *The Woman*, Pnina Herzog to Hong Sook-ja, June 24, 1987, folder 1044 AVG-Carhif. According to Kim Young-sun, who interviewed Lee Yeon-suk, the KNCW president in the 1990s (1994–1997), the KNCW used international mail to send *The Woman* to the ICW and its national councils in each country. See Kim, "Making of International Discourse," 168.

32 Schuller-McGeachy, "Future Society and Women."

33 Mary Craig Schuller-McGeachy to Lee Sook-chong, January 12, 1971, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif. Also, Brenda Noakes to Kim Shin-sil, March 26, 1970, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.

the United States."[34] Eventually, Hong was appointed as the first Korean female diplomat as vice-consul in Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in New York in 1965, but not before tireless lobbying to prove that a woman was as qualified for the post as any man. After six years, she quit her job to focus on women's affairs, returned to South Korea, and joined the KNCW.[35]

Lee Sook-chong and Hong Sook-ja traveled around the world together as representatives of South Korea, including three ICW Triennial Conferences in Vienna (1973), Vancouver (1976), and Nairobi (1979). The two women represented different generations and held different attitudes towards the regime in South Korea. Hong became increasingly critical towards the government over the years and spoke in favor of democratization. Lee, however, was more pro-governmental, as she was used to cooperating with the government and knew those in power. As the previous chapters show, Lee was often instrumental in balancing the state initiatives and the KNCW's goals. In the 1970s, she also served as the appointed member of the National Assembly as a member of the ruling party. With her anti-communist rhetoric, Lee also managed to address sentiments within the ICW on their common adversary – the communist world. For example, in her talk at the ICW Triennial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, Lee Sook-chong raised awareness of the necessity of national security and anti-communist spirit as the KNCW's number one task.[36]

Creating a global network of national councils was not an insistent value for the ICW; nevertheless, it was keenly interested in making connections to countries at some level without their own national council of women. Without any other foothold in East Asia, the ICW frequently used Korean women as their representatives in the UN meetings held in Japan, where it was more convenient and inexpensive for Koreans to participate than to send someone from Europe or North America. Japan was an especially important place for the ICW to create connections since it recognized Japan's emerging role in world politics and economics. The ICW had been eager to establish a Japanese affiliation to prevent communist ideas from

[34] "Political Power Is the First Step," *The New Zealand Herald*, May 27, 1987. News clipping in folder 1044 AVG-Carhif.

[35] Kim Younghwa, "Hong Suk Ja: Pursuing Women's Rights in South Korea," *Boston Korean Diaspore Project*, [accessed February 14, 2019]. See also Clyde Haberman, "The Woman in the Race Gives Korea a Jolt," *New York Times*, November 26, 1987, https://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/26/world/the-woman-in-the-race-gives-korea-a-jolt.html [accessed July 27, 2016]; Sam Jameson, "Korean Candidate Battles a Male-Dominated Society," *Los Angeles Times*, November 27, 1987, http://articles.latimes.com/1987-11-27/news/mn-16665_1_party-chairman [accessed July 27, 2016]; "Political Power Is the First Step," *The New Zealand Herald*, May 27, 1987. News clipping in folder 1044 AVG-Carhif; Philippa Stevenson, "Grace, tact her style," *Waikato Times*, May 30, 1987. News clipping in folder 1044 AVG-Carhif.

[36] Lee Sook-chong, "Special Message," *The Woman* 15, no. 1 (July 1979), 10.

spreading among women, as Chapter 3 discussed. In Japan, the Western origin international women's organizations failed to provide Japanese women real subjectivity and recognize the oppression Japanese women faced and, therefore, at least partially failed to create a transnational feminist front where Japanese women could have collaborated.[37]

After several failures to create an affiliation in Japan, the ICW still attempted to connect with Japanese women's organizations in the 1980s. By then, Hong Sook-ja had become a member of the ICW Board, and the ICW believed another woman from the region could help convince the Japanese. Hong was asked several times to connect with the Japanese women.[38] After representing the ICW in meetings in Japan that were not always even useful for the ICW to make contacts, Hong got frustrated with the obsession with Japan and told the ICW they should more carefully consider which meetings to attend amidst busy schedules and focus on meetings where its presence was proper and worthwhile. Furthermore, Hong emphasized that if the ICW was participating, the organization should strive to familiarize itself with the hosting organization and other participants to "make satisfactory information on the participants, to make satisfactory contacts to build international network for ICW & for world cooperation."[39]

Korean women being frequently asked to represent the ICW in Japan was not a unique way of action but a general principle of how the ICW worked. Being represented in relevant inter-governmental conferences, meetings and seminars was in the ICW's interest, so the organization used its worldwide network of women and asked presidents or other members of local or neighboring national councils to participate. For example, in the 1962 Tokyo Seminar on the Status of Women in Family Law, ICW representative Mary Craig Schuller-McGeachy was accompanied by members from national councils in South Korea, Australia, India, and Thailand.[40] Ironically enough when, in 1966, the KNCW suggested hosting ICW's Triennial Conference in Seoul, hope was dashed because South Korea was too far away from

37 Sandra Bucley, "A Short History of the Feminist Movement in Japan," in *Women of Japan and Korea*, 152. Unlike the ICW, the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) succeeded in Japan. The leftist alternative managed to challenge the women's role that the American occupation forces promoted. The connection between Japanese leftist women and the WIDF occurred, according to Mire Koikari, in "explicit opposition to the U.S. occupiers' gender reform." See Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*, 152.

38 Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, March 15, 1984, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

39 Such a case was Hong's attendance at the International Conference on Social Welfare in the summer of 1986 in Tokyo, where, according to Hong, mainly welfare and social service workers instead of NGO representatives were present, who Hong would have appreciated meeting. See President's report, undated, folder 1043 AVG-Carhif.

40 International Council of Women, *Women in a Changing World*, 109.

the other Councils.[41] When the presence of the ICW was needed in "the East," however, the KNCW was in a correct location. Since the ICW could not afford to fund their representatives' trips to such meetings, inviting the Koreans to participate was financially wise as they were already in the region. Being present at the UN meetings was equally important for Korean women as they could utilize the international platform to support their national campaign. In this sense, the place – a geopolitical location – opened up opportunities.

Before the internet and speedy means of communication, traveling and meeting people in person was essential for creating networks. As discussed, sometimes South Korea's faraway location from the ICW's Paris headquarters was an asset through which Koreans secured their presence as representatives of the ICW in important meetings organized in Asia. The international conferences were a platform for dialogue that connected women across the globe. For Korean women, traveling to conferences was an opportunity to participate in the dialogue and present the South Korean case. Sometimes, financial issues restricted travel, and unpaid membership fees caused concern. Participation, travel, and mobility were not self-evident privileges.

In the early days of women's movements, those who embraced internationalism and traveled widely to meet women from other countries were members of the upper class. They had the financial means and leisure time to travel. For anyone else, that was difficult. When women's salary work became more common, after arduous savings, they could have afforded to travel but no longer had the leisure. Even a prolific career did not guarantee the means to travel. The ICW invited Kim Hwallan to join the ICW Executive Meeting in Rome in 1961, but she had to reject the invitation due to a lack of funds. By the time she had retired from the office of president of Ewha Womans University and would have had the time to travel, Kim expressed, "It takes more than time to wander around the world," hinting at the shortage of financial means.[42] The KNCW did not receive governmental support for its travel needs and collected the money itself, as the previous chapter discussed.[43]

Amidst the Cold War, historian Andre Schmid points out that the mobility in South Korea, as the opposite of captivity in North Korea, became the essential way to build South Korea's image. By 1953, movement across the Korean border and from North Korea largely stopped, and mobility and captivity remained the way to define the difference between Koreans. This idea of mobility was used in South Korea as the marker of freedom that linked the country to the other democracies, while it was assumed that North Koreans could not move or travel without permission. However, as everyone hoping to travel abroad noticed, mobility in and

[41] Rose Parsons to Helen Kim, October 16, 1966, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.
[42] Helen Kim to Rose Parsons, December 17, 1961, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.
[43] Kim also confirmed this in "Making of International Discourse," 171.

out of South Korea was not unrestricted either.[44] Until the early 1980s, when travel regulations started to loosen, South Koreans had to apply for permission to travel; they could buy airline tickets only in Korean currency, and the amount of foreign currency in one's possession was limited.[45]

These restrictions also impacted the KNCW's mobility. The ICW could not cover travel expenses for Koreans, even when it had requested the KNCW to present the leading organization for example in Japan. To counter the travel regulations, the KNCW often had to ask the ICW to formulate their invitation letters as if the ICW were paying for the travel to get the passports for the travelers.[46] Requesting the invitations from the ICW to attend the ICW Executive Committee meeting in Amsterdam in September 1971, KNCW President Lee Sook-chong wrote to ICW headquarters:

> Here by your favour we would like to ask you to include the following words in our invitations that the I.C.W. is sponsoring our round trip and other expenses for attending the meeting. But of course it is just for the procedure and we are not asking you to actually pay for us. Without the sponsorship comes [sic] from the outside of the country, we can not get the pass-port from the government. This is the regulation here because there is still the restriction of using the foreign money in Korea.[47]

When the first such inquiry came, the ICW General Secretary had to turn to the Treasurer to ask if the procedure was possible.[48] The fake invitation letters by the ICW officers were then sent to the South Korean consulate in Paris to be confirmed and legalized.[49] The trick worked since the KNCW asked the ICW to formulate the invitation letters in a similar manner in the future, apologizing for the harm caused.[50]

44 Schmid, "Historizing North Korea," 440, 443.

45 Hong Ijin, "Overseas Koreans and Dedicated Diaspora and Emigration Policies," in *Emigration and Diaspora Policies in the Age of Mobility*, ed. Agnieszka Weinar (Cham: Springer, 2017), 175.

46 See Lee Sook-chong to Jean Raguideau, June 4, 1971; Jean Raguideau to Lee Sook-chong, June 17, 1971; Lee Sook-chong to Bridget Naylor, May 27, 1972; Bridget Naylor to Lee Sook-chong, June 2, 1972, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.

47 Lee Sook-chong to Jean Raguideau, June 4, 1971, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.

48 Jean Reguideau to Edith Zimmermann, June 17, 1971, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.

49 Bridget Naylor to Kim Moon-kyoung, June 2, 1972; Kim Moon-kyoung to Bridget Naylor, June 8, 1972, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif. In 1973, when the KNCW was invited to join the ICW Triennial Conference in Vienna and the invitation was once again sent to the consulate, the archival record shows a note signaling that the legalization was not actually necessary. See copy of a letter, Bridget Naylor to Kim Moon-kyoung, May 22, 1973, a note added on June 1, 1973, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif

50 See, e.g. Lee Sook-chong to Bridget Naylor, May 27, 1972, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.

Restrictions on travel imposed by the South Korean government were not the only obstacle the KNCW faced in its endeavor to participate in the transnational feminist networks. Participation was not free of charge. The ICW funded its operation by collecting membership fees and receiving donations from its leadership. Neither provided secure and steady means of income, and the organization was also vulnerable to the changes in the world economy as the national councils had to change their local currencies into Swiss francs to pay the membership fees.[51]

Finances were a serious issue for the ICW. All affiliated councils did not pay their membership fees, or the payments were delayed. The Triennial Conferences and correspondence to the national councils clearly indicated the concern over this.[52] The ICW also had to remind the KNCW to answer the circulars and pay the membership fees since only the paid fees allowed one to participate in the ICW meetings according to the ICW Constitution.[53] For example, in 1973, the ICW Deputy General Secretary had to remind the KNCW about an unpaid membership fee in October; the invoice had been sent in January.[54] Eventually, the KNCW paid the fee in January 1974.[55] Because of the ICW's financial difficulties, the return letter to the KNCW already included the invoice for 1974 along with a request to pay it during the first quarter of the year while acknowledging the difficulties that Korea and other countries had with strict policies regarding foreign currency.[56]

Despite the delays in payments, the ICW assured that the KNCW had been one of the most alert and active national councils.[57] At times, the KNCW could also benefit from South Korea's status as a developing country and secure funds through the UN institutions. For example, in 1985, the ICW thanked the South Korean delegation for successfully participating in a seminar in Indonesia, where Koreans had been able to travel when the UN Development Programme and UNICEF paid for the tickets.[58] The examples show that due to the restrictions on mobility and

51 See, e.g. concern over the fall of US dollars in the mid-1980s, Jeanne-Marie de Boccard to Hong Sook-ja, September 15, 1986, folder 1043 AVG-Carhif.

52 See International Council of Women, *Report of the Triennial Council Meeting, Istanbul, Turkey*, 154. By the 1970s, the fee was already 500 Swiss francs. On the financial problems of the ICW in the 1960s and 1970s, see Kinnear, *Woman of the World*, 229–230.

53 Francoise Dissard to the KNCW headquarters, October 9, 1980, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif.

54 Chantal Pestre to the President, National Council of Women of the Republic of Korea, October 1973, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.

55 Lee Sook-chong to Jean Raquidean, January 8, 1974, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.

56 Jean Raguideau to Lee Sook-chong, January 11, 1974, folder 1684 AVG-Carhif.

57 Francoise Dissard to M.S. Cho, November 26, 1980, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif.

58 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, December 11, 1985, folder 718 AVG-Carhif; Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, December 27, 1985, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

limited finances, the leadership of the KNCW had to mobilize its means and connections to secure the presence of South Koreans in many important occasions.

Figure 4 Hong Sook-ja's report on the ICW Triennial Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya to the KNCW members on September 13, 1979. President Lee Chul-kyung sitting at the back. Kyunghyang Shinmun, Kenya-eseo Yeolrin Segye Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe gwanryeon bogoreul hago itneun I.C.W Je22Cha 3nyeoncha chonghoe bogohoe-ui Hong Sook-ja [Hong Sook-ja delivering a report related to the International Council of Women's (ICW) 22nd Triennial General Assembly held in Kenya], 1979, the Korea Democracy Foundation's Open Archives, https://archives.kdemo.or.kr/isad/view/00726803. Korea Open Government License Type 4 [BY, NC, ND].

6.2 Localizing the Global: The KNCW on the International Women's Year and the Decade for Women

This section briefly reviews the origins of International Women's Year (IWY), especially the ICW's role in it, and then focuses on the KNCW's views on the meaning of the UN-sponsored events on women's affairs and how the results of the UN Decade for Women (1975–1985) and the UN World Conferences on Women in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), and Nairobi (1985) were transmitted to South Korea.

"The International Women's Year was born of the Cold War, fostered by feminism, and adopted somewhat reluctantly by the United Nations," Jocelyn Olcott argues in her book discussing the events and meaning of the International Women's Year.[59] Despite the conflicted background of the event, the IWY and the following Decade for Women carried important meanings for feminist activism and organizing around the globe. Equality, Development and Peace – the theme of the Decade for Women – are often seen as reflecting the interests of the three power blocks of the Cold War: Western democracies wanted to discuss equality, while development was an important issue for the Third World. The Soviet bloc advocated peace. However, all these themes reflected, in particular, the UN's expansion and the interests of the new independent members, especially in Asia, Africa, and South America. Socioeconomic development, including the status of women, was a major concern for many regimes interested in improving the quality of life in their countries.[60]

The origins of the IWY are in a meeting of the UN Committee on the Status of Women in 1972. In the meeting, the WIDF President, Finnish Hertta Kuusinen[61], who participated as an observer, brought along a proposal from the WIDF to set 1975 as the International Women's Year. The Romanian delegation officially presented the proposal to the committee, which another Finnish woman, Helvi Sipilä, seconded. She participated in the meeting as a representative of Finland but also belonged to the leadership of the ICW. Following a discussion, the Committee on the Status of Women proposed the declaration of 1975 as the International Women's Year to the UN General Assembly, which accepted the proposal in December 1972. Enthusiasm spread among the women's organizations. However, the UN initially took up a reluctant and skeptical attitude towards the IWY, even though the earlier thematic years on health, human rights, and population had been successful.[62]

59 Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 19.

60 Antrobus, *Global Women's Movement*, 29.

61 Hertta Kuusinen (1904–1974) was a Finnish communist politician and a Member of Parliament from 1945 to 1972. After years spent in Soviet Russia working for the Komintern, imprisonment in Finland in the 1930s and during the Second World War, Kuusinen entered politics during the Cold War when communist politics became acceptable again. She served as the WIDF President from 1969 to 1974, during which she lived for a long time in East Berlin. She was the daughter of Otto Wille Kuusinen, another famous Finnish communist who served in high positions in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Politburo. See Venla Sainio, "Hertta Kuusinen 1904–1974," National Biography of Finland (Finnish Literature Society, 2015) https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/778 [accessed May 15, 2019].

62 Pietilä, *Unfinished Story*, 39; Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 19; Pieper Mooney, "Fighting fascism and forging new political activism," 65; Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 140–141.

It was no coincidence that the WIDF proposed the IWY in accordance with its own 30th anniversary to be celebrated in 1975. Initially, the WIDF planned to celebrate the IWY in the World Congress of Women in East Berlin, but American women petitioned their own male leaders to have the UN conference in a non-communist country.[63] Helvi Sipilä eventually took a major role in organizing the IWY when the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim appointed her as the Assistant Secretary-General in 1972 – the first female in such a high UN position.[64] The IWY conference was originally planned to occur in Bogota, Columbia, along with several side events for NGOs in different locations. As the arrangements did not proceed with Columbia, the UN switched the location to Mexico, which also agreed to host the NGO Tribune.[65]

ICW President Schuller-McGeachy was unhappy to learn that the IWY proposal had originated from the communist-leaning WIDF and that Sipilä had seconded it, even though Sipilä's support reflected her position as a representative of neutral Finland. By then, Schuller-McGeachy's suspicion towards the WIDF "had chilled into Cold War frostiness."[66] The tension between Schuller-McGeachy and Sipilä originated from the presidential election of the ICW in 1969 when Sipilä challenged Schuller-McGeachy. Sipilä advocated cooperation with the WIDF and also accused the ICW of bad budgeting, which had caused serious economic problems for the organization. Schuller-McGeachy won the election after upgrading the consultative status of the ICW in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to category I. The WIDF, which had regained its status in the UN in 1967 after a 13-year exclusion, had already secured the same status level. Schuller-McGeachy led the ICW until 1973, and relations with the WIDF remained distant.[67] According to Mary Kinnear, author of Schuller-McGeachy's biography, Schuller-McGeachy was cautious about forming relations with socialists. Meanwhile, she was still very aware of the WIDF publications produced in East Berlin. She promoted the usefulness of the West-based ICW to women in non-aligned countries. Schuller-McGeachy's work emphasized cooperation with the UN – she believed the advancement of women's status would be more likely achieved with ladylike behavior instead of burning bras, which the radical feminists of the time were rumored to be doing. Kinnear views that the ICW's failure to utilize the energy of the new women's

63 Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 6–7.
64 Garner, *Shaping A Global Women's Agenda*, 203.
65 Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 53; Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex,* 140.
66 Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 20.
67 According to Mary Kinnear, the representatives of the USSR prevented the ECOSOC members from seeing the ICW's application for the upper category. Only after Schuller-McGeachy lobbied the members did she manage to make ICW's affair known. See Kinnear, *Woman of the World*, 224–226, 231; Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 20.

liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s eventually sidelined the organization. However, at the time, it was not yet clear that the sexual revolution that was proposed would actually succeed.[68]

Meanwhile, in South Korea, the KNCW petitioned the government to declare 1975 as the Korean Women's Year.[69] In 1974, at a seminar on women and population, Lee Sook-chong declared that the IWY aimed to provide a space for new civilization based on male-female equality over a male-dominated society.[70] In March of 1975, the Year of Korean Women was proclaimed by the minister of Social and Health Affairs, Kho Jae-pil, in a ceremony organized on the occasion of IWY. Minister Kho's remarks on the meaning of the Women's Year reflected the prevalent views on gender equality at the time. He said:

> Women should prove themselves to be worthy of enjoying the equality of men by adopting a creative and logical way of thinking. Considering the development of human beings depends much on the cooperation of constituent members for the purpose of keeping our freedom and life and pursuing national unification, each woman should complete her given tasks and responsibilities.[71]

Lee Sook-chong's opening address seemingly agreed with the minister on developing women's potential and participation in the national development. Yet, she also challenged the decision-makers and men to "systematically guarantee the enhancement of women's status."[72] She stressed the importance of a mental change that would free women "from our inferiority complex." She also used the occasion to remind people that the women's year should be when the Family Law is revised, and a women's status promotion committee under the president's office is established in South Korea.[73]

[68] Kinnear, *Woman of the World*, 217–218, 231. For the myth on bra-burning feminists, see "100 Women: The truth behind the 'bra-burning' feminists," *BBC* September 7, 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-45303069 [accessed October 28, 2024].

[69] *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 121; Kim and Kim, *Bargaining for Change*, 71.

[70] Korean National Council of Women, *Women and Population*, 4.

[71] Kho Jae-pil, "Seoneonmun – 1975-nyeon Hanguk yeoseong-ui ha" [Declaration – 1975 Year of Korean Women], *Yeoseong* 3 (March 1975), 8–9. See also, "Proclamation of the Korean Women's Year," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), 12.

[72] Lee Sook-chong, "Daehoesa. Seonpoginyeomsik Hanguk yeoseong-ui hae" [Opening Address. Proclamation Ceremony Year of Korean Women], *Yeoseong* 3 (March 1975), 10. See also Lee Sook-chong, "Opening Address," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), 13.

[73] Lee, "Opening Address," 10. These two projects, along with educational seminars and strengthening international ties, were listed as the KNCW's main projects for 1975. See "KNCW's Projects in 1975," *The Woman* 10 (June 1975), 17.

Throughout 1975, the IWY was visible in *Yeoseong*. Several articles explained the meaning of IWY and the UN's role in shaping women's futures. The bulletin published Korean translations from texts and speeches by world leaders like Richard Nixon and Kurt Waldheim, the UN Secretary-General.[74] The purpose was to educate Korean readers on the value of transnational cooperation and involvement in the UN activities, even though South Korea was not yet a member. However, cooperating with the UN in South Korea did not work as the KNCW had anticipated. A couple of months before the IWY conference in Mexico, Hong Sook-ja complained about the lack of coordination between the Korean government and the UN. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim had sent a request to countries all over the world to appoint a liaison officer supportive of the cause of IWY and to operate as a contact between the UN and national level. There was also supposed to be a special committee for women in each country to share information and propose special projects on a national level; however, neither was established in South Korea, and female leaders were not even informed of the opportunity. Against the wishes of female leaders, the South Korean government was about to send a delegation to Mexico City consisting of a male majority.[75]

South Korea prepared delegations to Mexico City for the official conference and the NGO Tribune, which was organized as a side event for the female activists. The official delegation included, among others, Mary S. Lee, vice president of the South Korean National Red Cross and a KNCW member; Chung Tai Kim, director of the Korean Institute for Family Planning; and Lee Hyo-jae, professor of sociology and pioneer of women's studies.[76] Hong Sook-ja, who also led the South Korean delegations in the Decade for Women follow-up meetings in Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985, headed the NGO delegation of five. The NGO Tribune was not representative and did not have the right to participate in crafting official policies or reports. Many of the NGO participants were feminist activists who had arrived in Mexico by chance of receiving an invitation, through mutual connections or if they had the means to travel and participate in the global gathering of women's affairs.[77]

[74] See Richard Nixon, "Miguk daetongnyeong seonpomun. Segye yeoseong-ui hae 1975-nyeon" [U.S. President's Proclamation. International Women's Year 1975], *Yeoseong* 1–2 (January–February 1975), 18–19; Kurt Waldheim, "Segye yeoseong-ui hae. Yuen samuchongjang Kureuteu Baldeuhaim-ui messeji" [International Women's Year. Message from UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim], *Yeoseong* 1–2 (January–February 1975), 20.

[75] Hong Sook-ja, "Yuen yeollakgwan eopseo hyeopjo andwae" [No cooperation possible due to the absence of a UN liaison officer], *Yeoseong* 4 (April 1975), 15.

[76] Kim, *Among Women Across the Worlds*, 225–226.

[77] Antrobus, *Global Women's Movement*, 44; Jocelyn Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 165.

Between June 19 and July 2, 1975, over 2000 representatives of national delegations gathered in Mexico City for the first time to discuss the status of women and how to improve it worldwide. Twice as many participated in the parallel NGO Tribune. Since the official delegations represented the voice of their governments back home, the participants in the NGO Tribune held much more diverse opinions. In both events, the ideological division lines were present, and the agenda and goals of the conference were debated. In general, liberal feminists advocated a focus on the restraints on women's lives: discrimination, inequality, and legal affairs. However, the leftist women and many Third World women called for a broader political agenda: Women should discuss the same political affairs, such as peace, nuclear threats, and racial issues, as men do in their arenas.[78]

As the conference proceeded, participants in the NGO Tribune grew frustrated because they could not participate in the decision-making of the conference. According to Jocelyn Olcott, many participants of the side event had learned to work around the governments instead of through them and negotiate and collaborate with the NGOs and the UN. Post-colonial politics and growing authoritarian structures around the world did not offer solutions for feminists of the 1970s. While the World Plan of Action was formulated at the official conference, even those who trusted their government representatives found it difficult to reach out to them to exchange ideas. The difficulties in communication between the official conference and the NGO Tribune frustrated the feminist activists.[79] With the lead of Betty Friedan, renowned US feminist and author of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), some of the NGO Tribune participants had gathered to discuss and debate the same issues the conference handled. The group, known as the Feminist Caucus, renamed itself during the conference to the United Women of the Tribune, organized meetings, and eventually made a public statement against the NGO meeting's initial purpose. The statement, supported by over 2000 people, introduced amendments to the World Plan of Action. Hong Sook-ja co-chaired the meeting with Friedan, Japanese journalist Yayori Matsui, and Nigerian Minister of Health Victoria Mojekwu. According to Friedan, the statement was not a product of organized action but the voice of those not heard at the official conference.[80]

Although the way the World Plan of Action was formulated in Mexico City in 1975 can be criticized for not being very inclusive, for the KNCW, it still provided a clear roadmap to reflect its achievements and situation in South Korea. As the UN

[78] Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 146–148.

[79] Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 166.

[80] Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 169. Hong worked as the foreign advisor for the International Women Tribune Center since 1975. See Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, January 14, 1984, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

General Assembly voted to extend the IWY into the Decade for Women; in the coming years, the KNCW regularly referred to the status of the World Plan of Action and the legacy of the IWY in its publications and conference proceedings. The mid-decade conference in Copenhagen and the final conference in Nairobi were especially important mileposts for the KNCW and ICW.

The dust had barely settled in Mexico City when UN Assistant Secretary-General Helvi Sipilä headed to South Korea.[81] She visited Seoul in July 1975 for one day to attend a conference of the Pan-Pacific and Southeast Asian Women's Association. Her address at the conference recalled the past meeting in Mexico City, its various recommendations, and why the International Women's Year had been needed. She asked:

> Who is responsible for the negligence, who should be accused? My answer is: men and women – Men, who still form the large majority among the decision-makers at local, national, regional and global level. Women, who by now have political rights and, therefore, at least theoretically, ability to become decision-makers and holders of public offices, in all but nine countries in the world, but who have until now done little in order to really act in these capacities, in order to improve their own status and the status of other women.[82]

While Sipilä blamed men for minimizing "women's issues" under the "real issues," she also demanded much more dynamism and focus from women to join their efforts.[83] In the coming years, the KNCW carried out Sipilä's request and continued to pressure the decision-makers to include women in policy-making and activate women's participation. A year later, the KNCW President Lee Sook-chung regarded the IWY as "an articulate proof that the cultivation and mobilization of women's ability has become a worldwide concern."[84] In the ICW Triennial Conference in Vancouver in 1976, Lee gave a speech on the topic, "Women as economic factors in communities," discussing for instance the modernization and the New Village Movement in Korea. She believed that after a long wait, 1975 had

81 *Yeoseong* featured a profile of and interview with Helvi Sipilä in 1975, see "Yuen samuchajang 'Segye Yeoseong-ui Hae' samuchongjang – Helbi Sipilla [UN Assistant Secretary-General and Secretary-General of "International Women's Year" – Helvi Sipilä] *Yeoseong* 7–8 (Jul–August 1975), 30–31.

82 "International Women's Year, Beginning of a New Era?" Address of Helvi Sipilä at the conference of the Pan-Pacific and Southeast Asian Women's Association, held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, July 16, 1975, published in *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 17–18.

83 "International Women's Year, Beginning of a New Era," 18.

84 Lee, "Now Is the High Time to Cultivate Our Ability," 2.

brought many changes in Asian countries and that the World Plan of Action was in use in the region. Despite Asian countries having different cultures, she believed the goal of the women's movement was unchanged.[85]

Contrary to the optimism of KNCW president, Hong Sook-ja wrote two years after the Mexico Conference about the lack of advancement on the World Plan of Action in South Korea due to government inactivity. To fulfill the World Plan of Action, the KNCW advocated establishing a governmental agency solely for women's issues but received no response from the government. Hong justified the urgency of such a governmental organ with the need to involve women in modernization and national development. The KNCW organized with other women's and social organizations a Committee on the Korean Plan of Action, chaired by Hong to advance the issue on its own.[86] The committee's goals were to carry out the Korean Plan of Action programs and continue to pressure decision-makers on the importance of an independent government agency to oversee women's affairs.[87] Also, the ICW advised the national councils to pressure their governments to implement the promises that were made in Mexico City.[88] To share awareness on the goals of the Decade for Women and promises the governments had made and draft their own recommendations and strategies for the future, the KNCW organized several seminars with themes related to women and development.[89]

In 1980, five years after the IWY, Hong Sook-ja recalled that the major achievements of the Decade for Women in South Korea were related to rising levels of awareness and social consciousness on women's issues. On the eve of the UN World Conference on Women in Copenhagen in 1980, she hoped that during the next five years, women's participation in all spheres of life would be considered natural development, which women and men could achieve cooperatively.[90] Lee Sook-chong believed the member organizations of the KNCW had done everything

85 Kim, "Internationalization of Women's Movement," 181.

86 Hong Sook-ja, "Government Agency for Women's Affairs Needed," *The Woman* 13, no. 1 (November 1977), 12.

87 Hong Sook-ja, "Korean Commission for the IWY Plan of Action," *The Woman* 14, no. 2 (November 1978), 20.

88 The ICW organized a seminar under the theme "Women and Development" in Oslo in 1978 to discuss how to better integrate women in development. The discussion was led by Helvi Sipilä, Gloria Scott, and Mary Craig Schuller-McGeachy. See International Council of Women, "Highlights of the Decade" (Paris: International Council of Women, 1985), 6.

89 See KNCW Business report 1982, attached to a letter Oh Kyung-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 16, 1983, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif; report The KNCW activities 1983 attached to a letter Oh Kyung-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 14, 1984, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif.

90 Hong Sook-ja, "U.N. Women's Conference on Mid-Decade," *The Woman* 17, no. 1 (July 1980), 10.

in their power to fulfill the goals of the World Plan of Action.[91] Kim Mo-im, the KNCW vice president and president of Korean Nurses Association, was much more pessimistic about the situation. She believed the goal was still far away; one reason for that was the lack of independence of Korean women. In her own words, Kim shared Simone de Beauvoir's fear in *The Second Sex* (1949): that marriage still bound women's lives to keep them from reaching their full potential. However, the potential was needed to meet the goals of the Decade for Women: equality, development, and peace.[92] In one thing, the KNCW had truly succeeded; the government delegation to the Copenhagen meeting included representatives of the KNCW.[93]

The World Plan of Action recommended establishing a national machinery within the government to help integrate women into national life and provide equal opportunities. The conference in Copenhagen in 1980 reconfirmed this goal.[94] Still, when the situation of these governmental machineries for women's status was discussed at the ICW Triennial Conference in Seoul in 1982, it was revealed that along with Hong Kong, South Korea was the only Asia-Pacific country in the meeting that had not yet established a committee or advisory commission on the status of women.[95] Finally, such organs were established in 1983 in South Korea. The Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) and the National Committee on Women's Policies started to operate under the Office of the Prime Minister, while the South Korean government officially started using the term women's policy (*yeoseong jeongchaek*). The National Committee on Women's Policies aimed to review and coordinate policies related to women. In addition to the prime minister, the Council included members from the Economic Planning Board; people from the Ministry of Social and Health Affairs with responsibilities in legal, domestic, and educational affairs; the head of the KWDI; and ten experts of women's affairs, including women from KNCW's member organizations.[96] Establishing these two

91 Lee Sook-chong, "Women and Security," *The Woman* 17, no. 1 (July 1980), 9.

92 Kim Mo-im, "Our Target for The Next Half Decade," *The Woman* 17, no. 1 (July 1980), 11.

93 Hong Sook-ja, "U.N. Women's Conference on Mid-Decade," *The Woman* 17, no. 1 (July 1980), 10.

94 Bae, "Reviewing United Nations," 33–34.

95 International Council of Women, *Report on the 23rd Triennial Meeting, 21st–30th September 1982, Seoul, Korea* (Paris: International Council of Women, 1982), 99. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [April 19, 2018].

96 "Yeoseonggye. Dongseonambuk" [Women's circle. East, West, South, North], *Yeoseong* 1–2 (January–February 1984), 36–37. See also Moon, "Overcome by Globalization," 132; Jung, *Practicing Feminism in South Korea*, 84.

organs outside the framework of welfare policy, in which women's issues previously belonged, made promoting the status of women a national policy.[97]

Establishing the Korean Women's Development Institute was a major achievement for the women's movement.[98] The KWDI outlined the Basic Plan for Women's Development and the Guidelines for Improving Sexual Discrimination, which the National Committee on Women's Policies adopted and used as the basis for women's development plan in the Sixth Five-Year Economic Development Plan (1987–1991). Establishing these organs was South Korea's response to the UN recommendations of conducting research on women's issues and to the promise that the South Korean government made during the World Conference on Women in Copenhagen in 1980.[99] Yet, the role of these two organs as a research center and platform for meetings has also been criticized for being too limited and not quite matching with the UN's recommendations.[100] The KNCW's fight to establish these organs and its eagerness to follow the roadmap set by the UN show that, like many NGOs and the Committee on the Status of Women, the KNCW believed in a gradual and almost technical-like improvement of women's status guided by declarations, resolutions, and legal change.[101] The UN's guidelines provided a similar argument for the KNCW as did the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, which the KNCW used in its campaign to revise the Family Law, as the previous chapter shows.

The Decade for Women ended in 1985 amidst uncertainties in the face of a global economic crisis and the ongoing Cold War. The IWY was initially born out of geopolitical and organizational rivalries. Although the UN conferences had brought liberal and socialist feminists closer, or at least under the same roof, to discuss and debate the direction of women's affairs, the Cold War tensions still manifested themselves. The position of South Korea provides a good example. In 1984, Hong Sook-ja was once again representing the ICW in Japan to "ensure a wide perspective of the situation in Asia and the Pacific" at a conference of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which reviewed the achievements of the Decade for Women in preparation for the Nairobi conference in 1985.[102] The regional meeting was open to women from all countries, and China and the Soviet

97 Bae, "Reviewing United Nations," 34.
98 Han Jung-ja, "Hankugui Yeoseong Danche Hwaldong" [Activities of Korean women's organizations] in Korean National Council of Women, *UN Yeoseong 10nyon pyonga – Hanguk Yeoseong Undongui Kwajae* [UN Decade for Women – The Challenges of the Korean Women's Movement] (Seoul: Korean National Council of Women, 1985), 325–326.
99 Moon, "Overcome by Globalization," 132, 142–143.
100 Bae, "Reviewing United Nations," 34–35.
101 Olcott, *International Women's Year*, 21–22.
102 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, January 5, 1984, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

Union were included in the Asia meetings. Hong's report from the meetings published in *The Woman* complained of the presence of communist countries: "Delegates of communist nations such as the USSR, Mongolia, Afghanistan and Vietnam had the tendency of taking the opportunity for political propaganda instead of focusing on women's issues. Whenever concern on poor women, women refugees were raised, they argued that the causes hindering the world peace, must be cleared."[103]

Hong's commentary reflects the ICW's well-established attitude towards communist women, whose perspectives on women's issues are considered politicized. Here, Hong's distrust of communists also reflects the situation in South Korea. The previous year, in 1983, South Korea had faced what it perceived as severe communist aggression: first, in September, Korean Airline flight number 007 from New York to Seoul was shot down by a Soviet fighter aircraft, killing 269 passengers and crew members.[104] The following month, North Koreans tried to assassinate President Chun Doo-hwan in Rangoon, Burma. Chun avoided the bombing, but 21 people died, and dozens were injured. Hong Sook-ja's son belonged to the delegation with his superior Joint Chief of Staff, who was injured in the incident.[105] Hong thus held personal reasons to distrust communists.

The third UN World Conference on Women was organized in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985. The NGO Forum, similar to the ones organized in Mexico City and Copenhagen, where the ICW was also supposed to participate, experienced difficulties less than six months before the event. Kenya's President Daniel Toroitich arap Moi was about to cancel the event to prevent lesbian and radical feminists from speaking freely in his country.[106] The ICW had held its own Triennial Conference in anti-communist Kenya among the socialist-leaning African countries the previous year without problems. Amidst uncertainty, the ICW still invited Hong Sook-ja to prepare a workshop on NGO–Government cooperation for Nairobi, assuming the workshop would be accepted to the program.[107] Although Hong was supposed to be part of South Korea's official government delegation, she decided to lead the NGO delegation instead to help the ICW and participate in the NGO activities.[108] After the meeting, Hong received warm thanks from the ICW: "Thank you too for co-operating

103 Hong Sook-ja, "Regional Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for the 1985 World Conference, 26 to 30 March, 1984, Tokyo," *The Woman* 20, no.1 (July 1984), 18–19.

104 For more on the KAL 007 incident, see Jurgen Kleiner, *Korea, A Century of Change* (River Edge: World Scientific, 2001), 191–199.

105 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, October 13, 1983, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

106 Garner, *Shaping A Global Women's Agenda*, 274.

107 Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, March 5, 1985, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif.

108 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 7, 1985, folder 718 AVG-Carhif; Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, May 15, 1985, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

in the work of delegation as you did – especially for sitting in the Plenary sessions so conscientiously. As a result of the way we all worked together ICW was able to maintain an appropriate presence at all the meetings and to contribute, through lobbying, to the work of the committees."[109]

The ICW believed the Decade for Women, in general, had provided greater opportunities for national councils to participate in national machineries for women's advancement. It recognized, though, that inner national affairs could be a hindrance:

> Naturally, we are all aware that certain Councils go through difficult phases due to unfavourable political circumstances for some of them which entail the suppression of subsidies, or for others, a demobilization of women who, believing their goals attained, become disinterested in women's issues.[110]
>
> [...] Many councils still suffer from the political conflicts in their own countries and regions. A number have to adapt their names and activities to comply with changing political situations. All, however, have maintained the independence of their objectives for women and their programmes.[111]

South Korea was one of the countries with major political upheavals in the 1980s. The ICW did not pay attention to the tensions in South Korea's political climate because the KNCW, despite some difficulties, managed to pay its membership fees, sent delegates to the meetings, and took an active role in proposing a women's conference in Seoul. The following section deals with the organizing and aftermath of the ICW Triennial Conference in Seoul in 1982. By examining the South Korean case, I demonstrate how the local and global events influenced its politics and how South Korea entered a situation, in Mendoza's words, "where governments find themselves forced to protect their political images in the international community" and agree to follow the international conventions to advance women's status.[112]

[109] Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, August 23, 1985, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

[110] Report of the treasurer (Jeanne-Marie de Boccard), June 15, 1988, folder 3494 AVG-Carhif.

[111] Report of the Board of the International Council of Women to the 25th Plenary Conference. Washington, D.C., U.S.A., 25th June – 4th July 1988, June 6, 1988, folder 3494 AVG-Carhif.

[112] Mendoza, "Transnational feminisms," 308.

6.3 Women of the World Meet South Korea: The ICW Triennial Conference in Seoul, 1982

The Gwangju Uprising on May 18–27, 1980 – a few months after Chun Doo-hwan's first military coup and right after the declaration of martial law and dissolution of the National Assembly on May 17 – is among the darkest moments in Korean contemporary history. The events in Gwangju started from a popular uprising led by citizens of Gwangju in the southeastern part of South Korea against Chun's regime, a continuation of the Yushin Constitution and lack of freedom, which turned into bloodshed when the army was ordered to put down the demonstrations. Oppressive measures occurred as censorship flourished, and members of the opposition were imprisoned. Three months after the events in Gwangju, Chun was inaugurated as the 5th President of the Republic of Korea. The 1980 Seoul Spring full of hope was soon turned into another period of military dictatorship.[113]

Only two years after the Gwangju Uprising, the women of the world gathered in Seoul for ten days to participate in the ICW Triennial Conference in September 1982, organized by the Korean National Council of Women.[114] The event brought delegates from 29 countries, together with representatives from NGOs and intergovernmental organizations, to South Korea, most of them visiting the country and East Asia for the first time. Before the closing of the conference, President Chun Doo-hwan and his wife, Rhee Soon-ja, greeted them at a reception hosted at Blue House. Chun welcomed the delegates by saying, "To help enhance the spirit of the equality of the sexes, we should, first of all, exert every effort to conquer the deeply-rooted traditional prejudice against women."[115] The memory of Gwangju did not haunt the success of the event, yet the challenges came from international

[113] The events in the city of Gwangju in May 1980 have received different names over time. The government at that time, as well as many American authorities in South Korea, saw it as a riot threatening national security. The title Gwangju Massacre emphasizes the number of civilian victims, the estimates of which range from the official figure of 200 to 2000. The Gwangju democratization movement highlights the events of Gwangju as part of the democratization struggle, as one step among many others. The Gwangju People's Righteous Uprising praises the role of the citizens and their courageous resistance against government troops and violence, and Gwangju is a symbol of popular resistance. See Don Baker, "Exacerbated Politics: The Legacy of Political Trauma in South Korea," in *Northeast Asia's Difficult Past: Essays in Collective Memory*, ed. Barry Schwartz and Mikyoung Kim (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 204–205. For the events in Gwangju and its aftermath, see Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea*, 236–240; Kim, *Role of the Middle Class,* 151–152; Sunyoung Park, "Introduction," in *Revisiting Minjung*, 2.

[114] The conference ran from September 20 to September 30, 1982.

[115] "Chun, first Lady reception for women delegates," *Korea Herald*, September 29, 1982. News clipping in folder 250 AVG-Carhif.

cooperation. This section discusses how the Seoul Triennial Conference was organized and intersected with the emergence of South Korea's international reputation. Lastly, I introduce the rise of Korean Hong Sook-ja to the leadership of the ICW.

The national councils organized the ICW Triennial conference around a certain theme. Distinguished speakers were invited to the conferences to develop the theme with the audience. Normally, the speakers were members and outside experts from national governments, the UN, or academics. Discussion followed the keynote speeches and presentations, resulting in conference recommendations.[116] As mentioned, Korean women had wished to organize the ICW's Triennial Conference in South Korea already in the 1960s, but the ICW rejected the offer.[117] The desire to bring the international women's conference to South Korea so soon after the affiliation to the ICW in 1960 indicates the deep devotion to internationalism as one of the KNCW's core values.

Before the dream of hosting an ICW conference in South Korea was realized, Koreans got a chance to practice with smaller, regional conferences. Women in Asia established their own regional platforms for solidarity and support in specific issues alongside the ongoing international conferences and meetings. After the conference of the Pan-Pacific and Southeast Asian Women's Association, which Helvi Sipilä also visited in 1975, the KNCW hosted a Federation of Asia-Pacific Women's Association (FAWA) conference in Seoul in August 1976 and welcomed over 200 delegates from 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, Taiwan ("Free China"), Guam, Indonesia, Israel, Iran, New Zealand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Singapore, and Thailand.[118] FAWA's motto was "Asian women, let us be united to serve others." Lee Sook-chong's welcoming address at the FAWA conference called for unity among Asian women's organizations and discussed the urgency of harnessing women's resources for social development, a better future, and removing sexism in Asia in the spirit of UN Women's Year. Lee understood that Asia faced major challenges because it still treated its traditions with pride – traditions that included inequality between men and women. She named the resolution of this dilemma as the convention's goal: to combine the need for human power in

116 Kinnear, *Woman of the World*, 219–220.

117 Rose Parsons to Helen Kim, October 16, 1966, folder 1683 AVG-Carhif.

118 Federation of Asian Women's Associations, "The Seventh Convention. Federation of Asian Women's Associations. Proceedings. Women: A Power for Change – Women's Decade in Asia. Seoul, Republic of Korea, August 24–31, 1976," (Seoul: Organizing Committee of the 7th FAWA Convention, 1976), 7. See also Kim, "Making of International Discourse," 175n23.

developing Asian countries with battling the tendencies that hamper the development of women's potential.[119]

The FAWA conference occurred under a looming North Korean threat, right after the so-called axe murder incident in Panmunjom, where North Koreans killed two American officers; the event soon turned into an anti-communist manifesto.[120] The addresses Koreans gave were strongly anti-communist. Lee Sook-chong praised the selection of Seoul as the host city by reminding people how much it had developed in less than 25 years since the Korean War ruined the city and how the city lives daily "under a constant threat of political and military aggression from the Communist North Korea."[121] South Korean Prime Minister Choi Kyu-hah address at the conference shared the concern on the threat that "north Korean communists" posed.[122] The anti-North Korean stance was also in the resolutions the convention declared: "FAWA is a gathering of peace-loving Asian women leaders who have relentlessly proceeded with their original plan in spite of the political and military crisis provoked by the North Korean Communists and accomplished their goals here can take this opportunity to reconfirm their firm faith in peace and freedom as the greatest weapon and protection for all human beings."[123]

Besides being an opportunity to introduce South Korea to foreign visitors, the FAVA conference was also used to promote the New Village Movement and its achievements. The delegates were taken to the countryside for a tour. In the opening ceremony, Prime Minister Choi Kyu-hah used the New Village Movement to exemplify how Korean values of diligence, self-help, and cooperation were put into practice successfully. [124]

The apparent politicization of the FAWA event by South Koreans did not seem to bother the ICW because the KNCW was granted the opportunity to organize a major women's conference: the ICW Triennial Conference. The decision was made in 1979 when the KNCW celebrated its 20th anniversary. Although ICW President Miriam Dell could not participate in the festivities in Seoul along with Mary Craig Schuller-McGeachy, she praised the role of the KNCW in her congratulatory letter to the KNCW for having "developed into an effective organization, making a most

[119] Federation of Asian Women's Associations, "Seventh Convention," 47–48.

[120] For the incident, see Keon, *Korean Phoenix*, 201–202; Andrew J. Gawthorpe, "The Ford Administration and Security Policy in the Asia-Pacific after the Fall of Saigon," *The Historical Journal* 52, no 3 (2009): 710–711.

[121] Federation of Asian Women's Associations, "Seventh Convention," 47–48.

[122] Address given by Prime Minister Choi Kuy-hah at the convention of the Federation of Asian Women's Associations, published in *The Woman* 12 (December 1976), 10.

[123] "Recommendations and resolutions," *The Woman* 12 (December 1976), 19.

[124] "The 7th FAWA Convention," *The Woman* 12 (December 1976), 3; Address given by Prime Minister Choi Kuy-hah at the convention of the Federation of Asian Women's Associations, *The Woman* 12 (December 1976), 9.

notable contribution to the work of the International Council of Women, and to the development of Women's participation in Society."[125] In the hands of such an organization, the ICW could trust the operation of its most important event. On the Korean side, Lee Sook-chong had secured governmental support for the event.[126]

However, not all were pleased with the decision to give the conference to South Korea. The visa issues had been acknowledged in advance. Miriam Dell had already brought the issue up with Hong Sook-ja in the summer of 1981, waiting for the KNCW to ensure no visa problems would arise.[127] The ICW warned the KNCW that the conference in Seoul might need to be canceled if South Korea cannot issue visas to certain delegates and if more than two countries could not attend. This limit had been recorded in the ICW Constitution.[128] South Africa was one country with difficulties because South Korea had ceased diplomatic relations with the country in 1978 to protest the apartheid.[129] Although the KNCW tried to solve the issue, and Hong Sook-ja approached the government informally, the visas were not permitted to South Africans.[130] Thus, for example the ICW's South African archivist E.E. Monro could not attend the Seoul Conference, although her presence had been greatly needed to help operate the conference. Monro wrote long letters of complaint to ICW President Miriam Dell and General Secretary Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to share how upset she was that the ICW did not change the location, even though South Korea had not assured that all countries could attend, given the ICW principle on the matter.[131] She complained that as long as there are countries where no visa difficulties emerge, the ICW conferences should be organized in such places. Monro associated the issue with the broader concerns related to the ICW and its national councils; she worried that increasingly more councils were "under the aegis" of their government, meaning they depended on government funding or other assistance or were pressured by the governments for example in issues of international

[125] Miriam Dell to Lee Chul-kyung, September 26, 1979, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif.

[126] Sook-ja Hong, "Be At Rest in Peace and Glory," *The Woman* 22, no. 2 (December 1985), 40.

[127] Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, July 9, 1981, folder 243 AVG-Carhif.

[128] Memorandum regarding the ICW Triennial Conference in Seoul between Miriam Dell and Hong Sook-ja, undated (placed between letters written in August and October 1981), folder 1685 AVG-Carhif. Dell once again brought up the issue in April; see Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, April 27, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif.

[129] Mino Kim, "In Search of a Better Life: A History of Korean Migration to Cape Town," master's thesis (University of Cape Town, 2012), 7, 45.

[130] Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 20, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif.

[131] E.E. Monro to Miriam Dell, March 16, 1982, folder 244 AVG-Carhif.

cooperation.[132] Eventually, the complaints of South Africans were unsuccessful, and the conference remained in South Korea.[133]

The visa issue was one of many that had to be solved before welcoming participants to Seoul. A multinational conference required an army of staff members fluent in English. The KNCW was asked to prepare plenty of English-speaking personnel to assist with the conference – distributing materials, assisting visitors, and making everything run.[134] The cost of translation services came as a surprise for the organizers who tried to secure more funds from the ICW, which again told the KNCW to turn to their own government for additional funding as the previous conference organizers had done.[135] Luckily, the Minister of Health and Social Affairs Kim Chung-rye visited the ICW headquarters in Paris a month before the Seoul Conference.[136] The ICW staff told her about the limited resources the ICW had at its disposal to cover various expenses related to the conference, and the minister promised her help in the matter.[137]

One month before the conference, there was still a list of unsolved matters: whether the KNCW found enough simultaneous translators, when the free tickets that Korean Air promised would be delivered, how to transport documents back and forth from Seoul, and determining the status of additional events to the conference program so that visitors could plan their travel. The closer the conference approached, the more anxious the ICW headquarters became on these matters as they did not receive answers from South Korea.[138] ICW General Secretary Jacqueline Barbet-Massin was "panic-stricken" when she realized Koreans had no idea where to find a proper supplier for duplication equipment that the conference organizers desperately needed to provide copies of the materials the conference produced. A conference like the one in question required massive amounts of duplication paper and ink, and, to Barbet-Massin's horror, the KNCW inquired if the ICW could bring

132 E.E. Monro to Miriam Dell, June 30, 1982, folder 3886 AVG-Carhif. See also E.E. Monro to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, February 13, 1982, folder 3886 AVG-Carhif. South Africa had also been denied access to the previous Triennial in Nairobi in 1979; see E.E. Monro to Miriam Dell, February 12, 1982, folder 244 AVG-Carhif.

133 Besides South Africa, Israel had problems with visa issues, although the KNCW had assured otherwise. See Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, August 10, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif.

134 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, April 13, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif.

135 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, July 9, 1982, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif; Francois Dissard to Hong Sook-ja June 24, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif; Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, August 10, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif.

136 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Kim Chung-rye, August 5, 1982, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif.

137 Francois Dissard to Hong Sook-ja, August 5, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif.

138 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, August 18, 1982, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif; Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, August 26, 1982, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif.

the supplies from Paris.[139] Finally, a week before the ICW staff from Paris headquarters was about to travel to Seoul, most of the issues seemed to have been settled. However, some of the ICW's responsibilities, such as finding speakers from different continents, were still unfinished; thus, the KNCW was also in trouble because it could not finalize the program and get it printed.[140]

Figure 5 The meeting venue of the ICW Triennial Conference in Seoul, 1982. Courtesy of Archive and Research Centre for Women's History – AVG-Carhif, Brussels, Belgium.

On September 21, 1982, everything was ready at the Sejong Cultural Institute in downtown Seoul to welcome guests from all over the world. KNCW President Sohn In-sil's opening speech thanked the audience for the honor of organizing the event in Seoul not only for her council but for the Korean people: "The presence in Seoul

[139] Kim Myung-ja to Jacqueline Berbet-Massin, July 23, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif; Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Kim Myung-ja, August 5, 1982, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif.

[140] Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Kim Myung-ja, September 6, 1982, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif; Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, April 27, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif; Francois Dissard to Hong Sook-ja, June 24, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif; Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, August 29, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif; Kim Myung-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, August 22, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif.

of so many delegates representing so many nations of the world reminds us afresh what an integral part of the international world Korea has now become. We have reason to be congratulated upon and feel proud."[141] The Seoul Conference was the most Eastern conference the ICW had ever organized.[142] Organized six years before the Seoul Olympics that were already granted to South Korea, the ICW Triennial Conference was an introduction of South Korea to the world. In *The Woman,* the KNCW General Secretary Oh Kyung-ja declared, "I am confident that this ICW Conference was an excellent opportunity to portray Korea as country threatened by North Korean belligerence but a country that how succeeded in establishing it self as an industrial nation [sic]."[143] Oh's message explains the urgency of how South Korea did not want to be seen as a mere counterpart to North Korea but as a country that had managed to succeed despite the conflict with its northern neighbor. Hong Sook-ja's interview with *The Korea Times* in the summer of 1982 also declared the importance of having the conference in Seoul as a sign that such an event could be held in the "Far East."[144]

Originally, the theme of the Seoul conference was "Side by side – Sharing in Development," which was re-formulated to "Woman and the International Development Strategy – in the Context of the Present World Economic Crisis."[145] Challenges amidst the early 1980s global recession led to higher energy prices, tighter monetary politics, declines in economic performance, and unemployment, which influenced women around the world and confronted the activities of the ICW and other non-governmental organizations. Miriam Dell's opening address mentioned the many challenges that had been visible in preparing for the conference; international and governmental funding had been tight while costs were on the rise. Consequently, the work of the ICW reproduced global inequality as members from the poorest countries and the countries hit by the economic crisis could not afford to pay their membership fees which, again, were the precondition for the ICW's work. Dell hoped the national councils could influence their governments to pay more attention to a more equal distribution of wealth. She also remarked how the

[141] Opening address by Sohn In-shil, president of the Korean National Council of Women, published in International Council of Women, *Report on the 23rd Triennial Meeting, Seoul, Korea*, 1. Accessed via *Women and Social Movements, International* [April 19, 2018].

[142] International Council of Women, *Report on the 23rd Triennial Meeting, Seoul, Korea*.

[143] Oh Kyung-ja, "ICW Conference: The Curtain Has Fallen. A chance to introduce Korea's Culture & History," *The Woman* 18, no. 2 (November 1982), 50.

[144] Chung Kyung-a, "ICW Confab to Enhance ROK Woman Status. 350 Delegates From 73 Nations to Participate in Seoul Session," *The Korea Times*, July 29, 1982. News clipping in folder 250 AVG-Carhif.

[145] Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, July 9, 1981, folder 243 AVG-Carhif; International Council of Women, *Report on the 23rd Triennial Meeting, Seoul, Korea.*

governments could pressure women's organizations' activities with stricter financial situations and create circumstances in which not all women of the world could meet freely.[146] The last point was obviously a critique of South Korean authorities after excluding South Africans from the conference.

One subtheme of the Seoul meeting was women in leadership. The theme was to give responsibility for female leaders to help other women by advancing the status of women and integrating women in all spheres of national development.[147] To introduce the achievements of female leaders, the ICW invited Helvi Sipilä to give a keynote address in one of the workshops and chair a plenary concerning ICW representatives at the UN. Sipilä had returned to active ICW work as the President of the National Council of Women of Finland after her term as the UN Assistant Secretary-General.[148] When she accepted the invitation, Sipilä stated that it was her responsibility after the years with global affairs to share her experiences with the ICW and other national councils.[149] Koreans rejoiced Helvi Sipilä's announcement to participate in the Seoul conference. Hong Sook-ja wrote to Paris: "We are happy that Sipila is coming. She was here once before as UN assist.-sec.gen. a few years ago but it was for one night trip. This time we will have her longer to share our ideas." [150] To announce Sipilä's participation in the Seoul Conference, Hong Sook-ja published an article on her in *Dong-A Ilbo*. Hong, who had just met Sipilä in Helsinki at the Socialist International Women's Conference, introduced Sipilä as the most prestigious woman in the world today who had proved her capability in the service of the UN and as a presidential candidate. Earlier that year, Sipilä had been appointed as the presidential candidate of the Liberal Party in Finland's presidential elections. Hong cherished Sipilä's idea that women should share the same social status and economic power as men.[151]

Per Hong Sook-ja's wishes, Sipilä's participation was one of the highlights of the conference. Sipilä's keynote speech on the International Development Strategy and its impact on women called after the role of the national councils:

[146] Opening address by Dame Miriam Dell, the President of the International Council of Women, published in International Council of Women, *Report on the 23rd Triennial Meeting, Seoul, Korea*, 5.

[147] See International Council of Women, "Highlights of the Decade," 10.

[148] Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Helvi Sipilä, March 9, 1982, folder 245 AVG-Carhif.

[149] Helvi Sipilä to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, April 7, 1982, folder 245 AVG-Carhif. Despite her early promise to attend, Sipilä only sent her participation confirmation in early September "due to many difficulties in finding it possible to attend the Conference." See Helvi Sipilä to ICW HQ, September 6, 1982, folder 245 AVG-Carhif.

[150] Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, April 22, 1982, folder 243 AVG-Carhif.

[151] Hong Sook-ja, "Yeoseong," *Dong-A Ilbo*, July 5, 1982.

> If the National Councils of Women are acting as an agency for the integration of women in the development effort, should it not then be their particular duty to inform women about their possibilities, to bring their wishes and aspirations to the awareness of the planes, and to encourage women to participate in the planning and in the decision-making. […] Should not the National Councils of Women be the agencies, who speak on behalf of women's role in all fields of development co-operation and who request that women are included in these activities in all sectors and at all levels, according to the provisions of the [International Development] Strategy itself?[152]

Thanks to Sipilä's presence, the cause of the ICW and its national councils received further publicity. South Korean media featured several stories on Sipilä during the conference related to her political career as a woman in the UN and her presidential candidacy. Sipilä told the reporters that after returning to Finland from the UN, she had been just happy to stay home until she realized that was not the right way for a women's movement activist to do things. When an opportunity exists, women should go to improve their condition. Running for president allowed her to discuss important issues publicly and pave the way for more successful future female candidates. Regarding Korea, Sipilä thought the country had developed remarkably and the development owed to peace.[153] In general, the conference received significant media attention throughout the meeting. *Dong-A Ilbo* mentioned that Seoul was visited by "remarkable" women, such as Sipilä, and another UN figure, American Margaret Snyder, senior officer of the Voluntary Fund for the UN Decade for Women, as well as Israeli Tamar Eshel, the ICW vice president, representative of her country in the UN, and previous chairwoman of the Committee on the Status of Women.[154]

The Seoul conference also allowed the ICW to plan the last three years of the Decade for Women. The UN's limited ability to utilize the expertise of local women was mentioned at the Seoul Triennial Conference. The KNCW and other national councils of women in Asian-Pacific countries struggled with the lack of recognition from their governments still in the early 1980s. The UN agencies were bound to deal

[152] Helvi Sipilä, "Global Aspect: Women's Impact on Development Strategy," published in International Council of Women, *Report on the 23rd Triennial Meeting, Seoul, Korea*, 25–26.

[153] Chung Kyung-a, "Woman Dignitary Sipila: UN Pacts Important Within Nat'l Dimension," *The Korea Times*, September 21, 1982; "Finnish delegate finds Korea showcase of speedy development," *Korea Herald*, September 21, 1982. News clippings in folder 250 AVG-Carhif.

[154] "Segye Yeoseong Danchehyeop Seoul Chunghoe" [ICW Seoul Conference], *Dong-A Ilbo* September 20, 1982.

with the governments, and if they did not acknowledge the importance and expertise of social organizations and their projects, women were left voiceless. Looking for governmental recognition even more persistently was the ICW's advice.[155] Miriam Dell addressed that the ICW's goal is to continue integrating women into the development and increasing women's participation in all walks of life: in the workforce, as housewives and farmers, and in political decision-making. The ICW also encouraged the national councils to examine their activities for the future and find priorities in national contexts.[156]

In Seoul, the ICW adopted an emergency resolution regarding the necessity to introduce the second Decade for Women since the goals of the first decade had not been fully achieved, and ten years had not sufficed "to put right centuries of discrimination."[157] Furthermore, one resolution of the Seoul Conference made the national councils enhance the spread of information on the UN Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women introduced in 1979, educate women on the terms of the convention and pressure the governments to ratify it.[158] Indeed, in June 1984, two years after the conference, the KNCW provided the South Korean government a statement to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Six months later, the government approved the ratification, although with reservations on two articles dealing with nationality and marriage.[159]

Per the ICW constitution, new officials were elected for the upcoming three-year term at the Seoul Triennial Conference. Miriam Dell continued as the president without an opponent in the election. Hong Sook-ja was one of 12 candidates running for six positions of vice president and was elected as the youngest woman among the vice presidents.[160] She rejoiced in the opportunity to provide an Asian perspective to

155 International Council of Women, *Report on the 23rd Triennial Meeting, Seoul, Korea*, 99.

156 Katharine Min, "Next 3-year plan set. ICW to cement women's unity," *Korea Herald*, October 1, 1982. News clipping in folder 250 AVG-Carhif.

157 International Council of Women, *Report on the 23rd Triennial Meeting, Seoul, Korea*, corrigendum.

158 *Report on the 23rd Triennial Meeting, Seoul, Korea*, corrigendum.

159 "Korean Women and UN Decade," *The Woman* 22, no. 2 (December 1985), 51.

160 "Dell Re-elected ICW President For 3-Yr Term," *The Korea Times*, September 23, 1982; "Int'l Women's Council reelects Dame Miriam Dell president," *Korea Herald*, September 24, 1982. News clippings in folder 250 AVG-Carhif. According to the constitution, "All elected offices in ICW automatically fall vacant at the end of each triennial period. No office shall be held by the same person for more than two successive triennial periods." For the constitution, see ICW circular letters "Candidates for election 1982," September 15, 1981, and "Nominations for Triennial Elections 1979," undated, folder 239 AVG-Carhif. See also Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, October 14, 1982, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

the ICW's work: "Again may I say that it's great to be on the board so that I can try to contribute something from Asia for the ICW."[161] Hong's selection once again confirmed the KNCW's close connections with the ICW.

Organizing a major conference was a big step for South Korean women. After the conference, Hong Sook-ja stated, "It still seems unreal that finally ICW Seoul meeting is over without a catastrophe!"[162] After all the hassle, the participants left Seoul after a successful conference. The conference received positive feedback from the participants and the ICW leadership. Despite the difficulties in the arrangements, the hospitality of the Korean people and the opportunity to get to know Korean culture and meet many high-profile people impressed the visitors. Miriam Dell did not save her words when applauding the success of the conference with the Korean organizers, authorities, and the press. In an interview with *The Korea Times,* she regarded the event as the best-organized ICW conference so far, saying everyone had felt warmly welcomed by the Korean people. The efficiency of Korean women impressed her.[163] The high number of public officials at the conference had come as a surprise to Dell, and in high-level correspondence with Koreans, she cherished the close relationship between the KNCW, the government, and civic authorities.[164] Dell generously thanked President Doo-hwan for hosting a reception at the conference and welcoming the visitors; she also emphasized that she hopes Chun knows how much the KNCW is appreciated in the ICW and how much hard work the organization had done in arranging the event.[165]

After successfully organizing the ICW Triennial in Seoul and campaigning for the implementation of the World Plan of Action in South Korea, Hong Sook-ja was elected as the president of the KNCW in February 1985. Upon informing the ICW about her election, she assured that her new position would strengthen her contribution to the ICW.[166] The ICW was pleased with her selection. Miriam Dell even wrote to Hong's mentor Lee Sook-chong, applauding Hong's work, telling how the KNCW had become such an important member of the ICW under Lee's

[161] Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, November 7, 1982, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

[162] Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, November 23, 1988, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

[163] "Farewell Party Held For ICW Delegates," *The Korea Times*, October 1, 1982; Min, "Next 3-year plan set." News clippings in folder 250 AVG-Carhif.

[164] See Miriam Dell to Kim Sang-hyup, October 27, 1982, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif; Miriam Dell to Kim Chung-rye, October 27, 1982, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif; Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, October 18, 1982, folder 718 AVG-Carhif; Miram Dell to Lee Sook-chong, October 28, 1982, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif.

[165] Miriam Dell to Chun Doo-hwan, October 27, 1982, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif.

[166] Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, February 14, 1985, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif.

leadership.[167] When Lee Sook-chong passed away in June 1985, in her condolences to the KNCW, Miriam Dell recalled the spirit of Lee who had impressed people around her at many ICW meetings with her wisdom and experience and who "showed the way for women of the ICW community."[168]

Following her election as the ICW vice president and the KNCW president, Hong Sook-ja was elected to lead the ICW in the ICW Triennial in London in April 1986.[169] After serving the KNCW for 15 years, she became well-experienced in the ICW as frequent representative of South Korea in the ICW meetings, convener in the Standing Committee of Peace and International Relations, and regional adviser for the Asia region.[170] In preparation for the ICW election, the KNCW published a special issue of *The Woman* in April – just before the ICW Triennial in London. The issue introduced Hong's achievements at the national and international levels and stated her capability to "mobilize necessary support for the noble work of ICW."[171] The issue also reproduced reports and photos from past KNCW events, including the 1982 Seoul Conference. Hong Sook-ja's election as the ICW President continued the pattern of previous presidents from Asia being selected after hosting a Triennial Conference in their home countries. Iranian Mehrangiz Dolatshahi served as President from 1973 to 1976 after the Triennial Conference in Tehran in 1966 and Thai Ngarmchita Prem Purachatra (Princess Prem) from 1976 to 1979 after the Triennial Conference in Bangkok in 1970. Before taking on the responsibilities of the ICW President, Hong served as the KNCW President for one year. Soon, she realized the workload of the two presidencies was heavy.

Soon after Hong's election, the ICW General Secretary Jacqueline Barbet-Massin reminded her of all the responsibilities the president had to maintain good communication between her office in Seoul and the ICW Secretariat in Paris. These included sending copies of all correspondence that Hong had as the ICW President to Paris, announcing all meetings, traveling well in advance, carefully reading all ICW correspondence, carefully archiving the correspondence to be able to refer back

167 Miriam Dell to Lee Sook-chong, April 15, 1985, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif.

168 Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, August 23, 1985, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif.

169 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, January 14, 1986, folder 718 AVG-Carhif.

170 The Regional Adviser system had been created in 1962, under Marie-Hélène Lefaucheux's term, to provide support to the Standing Committees that dealt increasingly with issues relevant to the developing countries. See International Council of Women, "Standing Committees of the International Council of Women. Sequel. 1957–1963" (Paris: International Council of Women, 1963), 3.

171 *The Woman* (April 1986), 6. I could not locate this special issue in the collections of Korean libraries, yet an issue exists in the ICW archives; thus, it is likely that only a limited number of issues were printed and distributed to the ICW's voting members.

to them, and having weekly correspondence with the General Secretary.[172] In the following months, discussions between Barbet-Massin and Hong were filled with topics like an appropriate style of writing paper, Hong's undecided travel schedules and matching them with European summer holidays, and what events Hong should and should not participate in as head of the ICW. The tone of Barbet-Massin's letters often sounds irritated and frustrated due to slow-moving mail and communication difficulties:

> We received today the first set of envelopes and I am very sorry to say that we cannot use them at all – why did you have your own address printed under International Council of Women instead of 13, rue Caumartin as was printed on the sample envelope I gave you in May? ICW Headquarters are in Paris, with an annexed office in New York (used by the UN team), but not in Seoul.[173]

At the ICW headquarters, Barbet-Massin was left in a difficult position to handle things in a timely manner without always having the leadership's consent. The next chapter will return to Hong's career within the ICW and the end of her career.

6.4 Conclusion

An illustration from *The Woman* in 1987 says, "Think globally, act locally."[174] Since the KNCW's establishment in 1959, the organization has balanced between global and local spheres. This chapter shows the multifaceted background behind the relations between the organizations and how personal connections, events, and shared networks shaped them. South Korea became part of the ICW's propagation towards Asia during the Cold War. Since the 1970s, the world organization has had only three European presidents; the rest originated from the broad Asia-Pacific region.[175]

[172] Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, May 9, 1986, folder 1043 AVG-Carhif; Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, September 5, 1986, folder 1043 AVG-Carhif.

[173] Emphasis in original. Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, August 8, 1986, folder 1043 AVG-Carhif. Underlines in original.

[174] *The Woman* 24, no. 2 (November 1987), 27.

[175] The ICW Presidents since the 1970s were Mehrangiz Dowlatshahi from Iran (1973–1976), Ngarmchit Purachatra from Thailand (1976–1979), Miriam Dell from New Zealand (1979–1986), Hong Sook-ja from South Korea (1986–1988), Lily Boeykens from Belgium (1988–1994), Kuraisin Sumhadi from Indonesia (1994–1997), Pnina Herzog from Israel (1997–2003), Anamah Tan from Singapore (2003–2009), Cosima Schenk from Switzerland (2009–2015), and Jungsook Kim from South Korea (2015–2022), Martine Marendal from France (2022–).

The KNCW's involvement in the UN-led gender policies, long-lasting networks with the ICW, and the KNCW's active presence in the non-Korean sphere of events challenge the previously held image of the international isolation of the KNCW and the Korean women's movement. The KNCW also actively advocated for the International Women's Year and the Decade for Women in South Korea. These activities preceded the better-known campaigns against violence toward women and the transnational solidarity efforts in the "comfort women" issue. This chapter highlights the transnational networks and contacts used as reference points regarding women's affairs in South Korea that date back to the Cold War era. The "comfort women" issue and recognition of violence against women in wars represent a continuum to the transnational advocacy networks established during the Cold War.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, the KNCW learned how to operate within the transnational organizations and the UN and familiarized itself with how women's issues were advocated beyond the national level. After all, the Triennial Conferences of the ICW, its annual board and committee meetings, and all the events organized by the UN and other organizations in which the ICW had a consultative status provided venues for Korean women and the rest of the world to meet. The reports provided by attending countries regarding the status of women and the actions taken for its development were an essential part of the conferences and their policy-making, as they helped the participants identify the common problems women faced internationally.[176] Although the KNCW and ICW faced an unfavorable economic situation, Korean women frequented the meetings to which they were invited by the ICW. Korean women could experience importance in the global arena and network with women facing similar difficulties in their countries, practicing what is known as transnational feminism. By 1995, when the fourth World Conference on Women convened in Beijing, the Korean non-governmental delegation had grown to 36 persons from five present at the first conference in Mexico City in 1975.

Despite its remote location in relation to Europe and North America, women from South Korea were visible in the work of the ICW. Obviously, the distance between Seoul and the rest of the world had not disappeared by 1982, but receiving the main event of the ICW in Seoul signaled that South Korea had stepped up as a credible location to host major international events. The bloody suppression of the Gwangju Uprising in 1980 did not tarnish South Korea's international reputation. Major events like the Asian Games in 1986 and the Seoul Olympics in 1988 followed the women's conference. The Seoul Olympics were a "coming-out party" for South Korea, which, by the end of the 1980s, had established itself as one of the modern,

[176] See, e.g. Ilic, "Soviet women,"166; Shobna Nijhawan, "International Feminism from an Asian Center: The All-Asian Women's Conference (Lahore, 1931) as a Transnational Feminist Moment," *Journal of Women's History* 29, no. 3 (2017): 21.

industrialized countries.[177] That the ICW did not react to the human rights conditions in South Korea in any manner preceding the Seoul conference and even celebrated the event with Chun Doo-hwan himself, once again highlights its apolitical, even ignorant, attitude towards national politics. For the conference to succeed, securing support from the state was important. The Seoul conference was organized during a period that is usually considered a severe time for civil society and when many social activities were restricted. The cooperation between the KNCW and the government, especially with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, secured funds and public visibility for the event. Organizing the event was possible because the KNCW was on good terms with the state.

Hong Sook-ja's star was rising in the ranks of the ICW during the 1980s. After Kim Hwallan's death in 1970, Hong became the key person within the KNCW managing international relations, along with Lee Sook-chong, who was also widely appreciated among the ICW community. Unlike Kim and Lee, Hong represented younger generation women with clear ambitions. As the President of the ICW, Hong gained public visibility by traveling and meeting people on various occasions. She also utilized these opportunities to lead the international women's movement and pursue her political career in South Korea.

The next chapter discusses how Hong Sook-ja's term as the ICW President ended and how her career in the KNCW came to a close amidst South Korea's democratization. Before that, I map how the KNCW viewed its position as part of the Korean women's movement and what other effects the democratization process in South Korea in the second half of the 1980s had on the KNCW's work and the direction of the Korean women's movement.

[177] See Theodore Jun Yoo, "Muhammad Kkansu and the Diasporic Other in the Two Koreas," *Korean Studies* 43 (2019): 158–159.

7 The Women's Movement, the Korean National Council of Women, and Democratization in South Korea: Scratches in the Archives

> This initiative for a genuine women's liberation movement in Korea may well be expected to come from the as yet unorganized young women who are highly conscious of the revolutionary nature of the task they are facing, and are willing to dedicate their energy and time, if not money which few of them have. As in the case of women's liberation and other revolutionary movements elsewhere, the success of women's liberation movement in Korea will depend largely upon on the quality of its vanguard. The objective situation seems ripe for a full-scale women's liberation movement in Korea but still misses a Korean Betty Friedan or Gloria Steinem.[1]

Korea University's Professor Lee In-ho held hopes for the future of the women's movement in Korea during the 1975 International Women's Year. In a series of articles first published in *The Woman* and then in the academic *Korea Journal* two years later, she discussed the idea and history of women's liberation in Korea. As Lee emphasizes in the above quotation, the strength of the Korean women's movement depended on its leaders. Interestingly, she also hints at the international dimension of the Korean women's movement and acknowledges the familiarity with key American figures at the time, feminist activists and writers Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem.

One figure who had the potential to become South Korea's Friedan or Steinem was Hong Sook-ja. Active in spreading the idea of UN International Women's Year and the Decade for Women, she participated in the Women's Year NGO Tribune conference along with Steinem and Friedan; in 1985, she was photographed posing

[1] Lee, "Women's Liberation in Korea," 7.

with Friedan at the World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya.[2] During the 1980s, her star was rising in domestic and international arenas. As the previous chapter discussed, in 1985, Hong was elected as the president of the KNCW; the following year, she became the president of the global ICW. In that position, she was wrenched in the middle of South Korea's democratization process, which peaked in 1987. After leading the KNCW for two years, Hong gave up her position in the organization to run for president as an opposition candidate in the first democratic elections held in the country in a long time. Before Election Day came, Hong withdrew from the race. Besides losing appreciation in South Korea, the ICW also found it troublesome to have such a politically attached figure as the organization's leader. Eventually Hong's name has largely been forgotten from the narratives of South Korea's democratization and the history of the women's movement. In this chapter, I write the narrative acknowledging her perspective.

In Korean historiography, 1987 compresses the much larger democratization process into a sequence of events that seem to have inevitably followed each other. The importance of 1987 is crystallized in the rise of civil society, which overcame the dictatorship. According to sociologist Seungsook Moon, the South Korean population, which had lived through the militarized modernity, came to realize democratization was the only way to full citizenship.[3] As Chapter 4 discussed, in Park Chung-hee's South Korea, people were disciplined to be anti-communist modernizers of the nation. For many, this represented the right way to be a proper and dutiful Korean. The middle class had enjoyed economic growth and improved standards of living, which created stability in South Korea since the beginning of Park's developmentalist project. However, the middle class started becoming frustrated by the 1980s with the illegitimate measures the regimes used to maintain power.[4] Following Park's assassination in the fall of 1979, Chun Doo-hwan grabbed power through another military coup. Chun's rule was even more violent and brutal than Park's. However, under Chun's regime, new social groups rose, spread, and agitated against state-led modernization and drew the masses to support democratization. The anti-government pro-democracy demonstrations in 1987, to which millions of people gathered, eventually contributed to overthrowing another military strongman, proving that the masses not only make dictatorships live but can destroy them.[5]

2 Picture can be found in *The Woman* 22, no. 2 (December 1985), 4.

3 Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 168, passim.

4 Kim, *Role of the Middle Class*, 157–158. Joan E. Cho also emphasizes the role of non-class actors in overcoming the dictatorship, see Cho, *Seeds of Mobilization*, 11–13.

5 Kim, *Role of the Middle Class*, 118–119, 157–158; Park, "Introduction," 2.

In her introduction to the book *Revisiting Minjung: New Perspectives on the Cultural History of 1980s South Korea* (2019) literature and gender studies scholar Sunyoung Park states that "recollection of the 1980s in South Korea is often associated with controversy, historical recrimination, and the inescapability of politics."[6] The understanding of the 1980s and the democratization has focused on the triumph of people's power, certain key male figures, and the eventual failure of the opposition to defeat the ruling party in elections. As Park states, the decade is so politically important, also for the later generations, that its narratives scarcely include complex and contradictory features.[7] In this process, the identity and history of the women's movement have been trapped in the teleology of its beginning in the democratization movement. Scholars agree that the early 1980s was a fruitful period for the grassroots women's groups to emerge since the struggles of factory girls, women's increased participation in the job market, and their prevalent discrimination had become public knowledge. In addition, the global flow of gender politics in relation to the UN Decade for Women stimulated an understanding of and fight for gender equality.[8] However, for the abovementioned issues to become fuel for the women's movement, a period of maturing was needed. This chapter accounts for how the women's movement in the 1980s was not simply born out of democratization but layered atop the previous arguments on women's movements' role in society, articulated by the KNCW, to a great extent.

This chapter looks at how the rising hopes of democratization transformed the KNCW and its work in the 1980s. I join Chun Kyung-ock's vision of how women's alienation opened the door for democratization in South Korea. Chun argues that women had initially accepted the sacrifice for the country as part of the nation-building project. Eventually, however, the sense of oppression led to conflict and intensified efforts for reform and develop a sense of rights.[9] International pressure and cooperation in gender politics, as the previous chapter discussed, the development of women's studies in academia, and themes related to democratization became highly visible in the work of the KNCW during its third decade of operation. However, also new voices emerged to discuss the women's movement's agenda. First, I introduce how the KNCW understood the role and tasks of the women's movement. I also explore what kind of challenge the new women's organizations, rooted in the democratization movement, posed for the KNCW. The second section considers South Korea's democratization, especially from the viewpoint of Hong

[6] Park, "Introduction," 4.
[7] Park, "Introduction," 4–5.
[8] See, e.g. Louie, "Minjung Feminism," 417–418, 428; Nam, "Gender Politics in the Korean Transition," 96–98.
[9] Chun, "Epistemology and Methodology," 300, 318.

Sook-ja and the KNCW. I discuss the difficult process of democratization by introducing a power battle inside the KNCW that occurred at the turn of 1987–1988 following Hong's candidacy in the presidential elections and how it influenced the ICW. Lastly, I briefly sketch the path the KNCW took in post-democratization South Korea at the turn of the decade. Besides the KNCW's publications, this chapter is largely based on the archival material of the ICW, especially the correspondence between Hong Sook-ja and the ICW officials in 1987 and 1988, which provides an exceptional glimpse into the political climate of South Korea during the democratization upheavals and how one individual experienced those moments. The correspondence is supplemented with newspaper coverage. I entitle this chapter "Scratches in the Archives" to highlight the meaning of previously unused archival material to uncover what happened to the KNCW in the late 1980s.

7.1 Turbulent Times: The KNCW on the Meaning of the Women's Movement and Its Future

Since the 1960s, issues such as the goal of the Korean women's movement and the direction the movement should pursue had framed the work of the KNCW. The debate on the future of the women's movement peaked amidst the democratization struggle in the 1980s. The lack of unity in the activities was a constant worry expressed in the writings for the KNCW's publications, and the writers acknowledged that the Korean women's movement lacked a common philosophical base.[10] This section discusses the self-understanding of the KNCW concerning the women's movement and how the organization defined the women's movement and its goals. I also introduce the emergence of the new women's groups amidst the 1980s socio-political transformations and the issues they brought to the women's movement's agenda. As part of these new groups, another major women's umbrella organization, the Korean Women's Association United (KWAU), was established in 1987. Scholarship has often interpreted the KWAU as the challenger to the position of the KNCW; however, as the contemporary discussion from the side of the KNCW shows, the older generation women's organization actually welcomed the new women's organizations to join the fight for democratization.

In a publication on the Korean women's movement that came out in 1985, Hong Sook-ja appraised that the 1970s women's movement was forced into a suspension period: "Generally speaking, in the 1970s situation where the fundamental human rights were in abeyance, the women's movement could do nothing but wait in spite of the fact that women's education was enhancing, the women's labor force was needed in the fast

[10] See, e.g. "The New Task of Woman's Movement," *The Woman* 5, no. 3 (September 1969), 2; Lee, "Women's Liberation in Korea," 3–7.

industrialization, and the pressure from international women's movement to our country's women rights movement was stimulating..."[11] However, the three factors she mentions – women's education, women's labor, and the international women's movement – all shaped the work of the KNCW despite the difficult political climate and continued to do so in the 1980s. The UN Decade for Women inspired many women: by 1983, the KNCW's membership had increased to 2.5 million, from 450 000 in 1973. In general, membership in women's organizations more than doubled from 1974 to 1983, although the number of women's organizations did not significantly increase.[12]

The KNCW deeply understood the historicity of the Korean women's movement. Unlike most scholarly analyses published after South Korea's democratization, the KNCW did not consider there were any breaks in the continuum of the Korean women's movement. Instead, it viewed itself as the heir of the women's movement inspired by the March 1st movement of 1919 and the joint organization Geunuhoe (see Chapter 3). While the KNCW acknowledged the hardships that the colonial era, the Pacific War, and the Korean War brought to the women's movement, the organization could convincingly connect the colonial era movement to the one that arose in the early 1960s after the government bans against social organizations were lifted.

The historical understanding of the roots of Korean women's movement and the KNCW itself was supported by the growing interest towards women's history in academia. The scholarship on Korean women's history developed within the timeframe discussed in this study. The Park Chung-hee regime and its emphasis on economic growth brought the labor women and factory girls into the social scenery of South Korea and inspired female scholars to take an interest in explaining the present through the past. Women's universities, especially Ewha and Sookmyung, established research groups to examine Korean women's past when men dominated national historiography and women remained absent in the academic field of history. In 1967, the Committee on the Compilation of the History of Korean Women was formed among scholars in Ewha, the KNCW's Lee Tai-young included, to honor Kim Hwallan's 50 years of service to the university. The group produced a three-volume *Hanguk Yeoseongsa* (*History of Korean Woman*) as a framework for women's history.[13] In 1968, the KNCW published several articles on the 50th

11 Hong Sook-ja, "70Nyeondae Hanguk Yeoseongundong-ui Pyeongga," [Evaluation of 70 years of Korean women's movement] in *Hankugui Yeoseong Undong* [Korean Women's Movement], ed. Cho Hae-jung (Seoul: Munhakyeosulsa, 1985), 372.

12 Han, "Activities of Korean women's organizations," 307, 319, 330.

13 Yoo, *Politics of Gender*, 7.

anniversary of the women's movement, dating the beginning of the women's movement to the March 1st Independence Movement.[14]

A decade later, in 1977, the first women's studies program in South Korea was established at Ewha, where several KNCW officers worked. Five years later, a master's program was started. Behind these initiatives were conscious women eager to explore the roots of inequality in society and how to improve the status of women.[15] The KNCW embraced the innovations made in the field of women's studies and actively spread new information in its publications. The organization even named the establishment of women's studies-related academic institutions among the key achievements of the Decade for Women in South Korea.[16] The KNCW also organized training in women's studies for its officers. Lectures were given for example by Chung Sei-wha, the director of the Korean Women's Research Institute (Ewha) and a leading scholar of women's studies since the 1980s.[17] In parallel to the growth of women's studies, the consciousness of the activities of historical female activists was on the rise, and one can notice constant discussion on the past, present, and future of the women's movement in the pages of *Yeoseong* and *The Woman*.

Following the International Year of Women, the KNCW's definition of the goal of the women's movement sharpened. Acknowledging the criticism against women's movements as merely pro-women – still prevalent today – the KNCW emphasized the meaning of gender equality. The following three accounts published by academics in the KNCW's bulletins are representative of the message. Professor Lee In-ho argued in *The Woman* in 1975 that "[t]he first and foremost task of women's movement in Korea today is the cultivation of consciousness, an awareness of the state of affairs between the sexes as it truly is. It is necessary to make everyone understand that the aim of women's liberation is neither domination of women nor obliteration of the natural distinction between the two sexes."[18] The same year, Ewha Professor Yun Soon-duk stated at a seminar "Women and Population" that "No one should make the mistake of thinking that the campaign for women's rights is a battle against men, but rather as a solution of growing family, social and human problems, and means to realization of a democratic sharing in the opportunities of a developing society."[19] At the turn of the 1980s, when the Decade for Women was on its halfway

[14] See especially *Yeoseong* issues in June and July 1968.

[15] Yoo, *Politics of Gender*, 142n18.

[16] "Korean Women and UN Decade," *The Woman* 22, no. 2 (December 1985), 50.

[17] "Activities, KNCW, 1984," attached to a letter Oh Kyung-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 28, 1985, folder 1686 AVG-Carhif. See also pictorial supplement in *The Woman* 15, no. 1 (July 1979), 22.

[18] Lee, "Women's Liberation in Korea," 5.

[19] Yun, "Women and Population," 14.

mark, Ewha's Professor Kim Yung-chung defined the target of the women's movement as the equality of the sexes in *The Woman* but added:

> [it] does not simply mean the removing of discriminations against women, but the provision for every women to be able to pursue her life worthy of a human being. It implies that men and women must be partners in the movement of human society and history. It is encouraging to note that more and more people, particularly those who are responsible for policymaking and social planning, become aware of the need to integrate women in the development process.[20]

These passages indicate that for the KNCW, the definition of the women's movement was closely related to the differences between the sexes and that the goal of the women's movement was to lift women to the same level as men legally, socially, and economically. In 1980, Director of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Lee Ock-soon, suggested that "expanding women's movements" could increase women's social status.[21] Although she believed the government would have a role in reforming its employment policy, for the most part, she was ready to give the task to create strategies, educate women on employment, and create awareness among women to overcome the obstacles to the women's movement and women themselves.[22] This aligned with the KNCW's agenda. Since its beginning, the organization has followed the principle of educating women on women's problems and creating awareness on how to overcome them, which the Family Law revision campaign exemplifies.

Unlike much of the previous research claims, the KNCW was not ignorant of working women's problems, although it struggled to reach the everyday life level of factory workers, given that the people discussing working women's problems were often university professors. In fact, the KNCW has organized seminars on the issue since the 1960s and held regular events dedicated to working women in which "methods of improvement for mistreated woman workers" were discussed.[23] For instance, in 1964, the KNCW collected a survey and held a roundtable talk with women workers. Their joint proposal for better conditions for working women included points that said all women workers should band together in claiming their rights, all employers should treat women workers with special consideration, and

[20] Kim Yung-chung, "The Major Tasks and Directions of Women's Movement in 1980s," *The Woman* 17, no. 1 (July 1980), 12.

[21] Lee Ock-soon, "The employment policy for women should be reformed," *The Woman* 17, no. 1 (July 1980), 15.

[22] Lee, "Employment policy for women should be reformed," 15.

[23] "A Survey on Women's Professions," *The Woman* 1, no. 2 (June 1965), 2.

women workers should be protected at home and in the community for their responsibilities are heavier than those of men.[24] In an editorial writing to *The Woman* in 1976, KNCW President Lee Sook-chong condemned the fact that female workers were paid less "merely because they were women. This is an unreasonable discrimination."[25]

Lee's vision is connected to the wider discussion on workers' rights. In 1970, the self-immolation of Chun Tae-il, a garment factory worker working at the Pyeongwha Market sweatshop district, had sparked the labor movement. With his action, Chun had protested the poor working conditions, violations of labor laws, and the suffering of female workers, who formed the majority of textile workers. Following Chun's death, many female workers organized their own protests, the most famous being the strikes at the YH Trading, Wonpoong, and Dongil companies.[26] Hagen Koo, a scholar of Korean labor history, evaluates that women's central role in the labor struggle was related to their close contacts to progressive Christian organizations. Their protests received significant support from Christians and church organizations, which showed great interest towards female workers in the most vulnerable position.[27] According to Koo and Chun Soonok, gender issues were not central to women's labor struggles in the 1970s. Instead, the protesting female workers focused on getting better working conditions and opportunities to organize into independent unions. Koo highlights that at the time, most Korean women did not possess the language of gender inequality to contextualize their position, even though sexual violence and patriarchal control were present in their everyday work.[28] The women's groups theorized the issue instead of female workers. Within this framework, the KNCW also took an interest in female workers' issues.

In the 1980s, equal employment with men became an interclass issue as women's groups helped individuals fight their cases. The KNCW stood up in the legal cases of telephone operator Kim Yong-hui, who was forced to retire early at 43, and factory worker Lee Kyung-sook, who, after a car accident, was granted only a compensation matching that of a retiring 25-old married woman, as if she could not have any other

24 "A Survey on Women's Professions," 2; "Regional Development Committee Report," *The Woman* 11 (December 1975), 21.

25 Lee, "Now Is the High Time to Cultivate Our Ability," 2.

26 Koo, *Korean Workers*, 69–74.

27 Koo, 94–96.

28 Koo, 96. While the experiences of the factory women and the social movement they started have been considered essential for Korean women's history and women's struggle for equality, Chun Soonok summarizes that a lack of gender awareness existed among the female leaders of democratic labor unions; thus, they highlighted issues of class and politics instead of issues relevant especially for women, such as maternity leave, discrimination, and unequal payment. See Chun, *They Are Not Machines*, 41–43.

plans for the future. The KNCW organized support for these women workers and held roundtables around the issues. For example, in the case of Lee the KNCW provided the court with a statement on the issue. In her plea in the case, KNCW President Hong Sook-ja reminded that the state had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and that now was the time to improve the disadvantageous conditions for women. The KNCW encouraged Lee to continue the fight in court, and eventually she won the case as the court decided that retirement age for unmarried woman should be the same as for men: 55.[29]

As Chapter 4 discussed, the 1970s had been an era of intense militarization in South Korea. The Gwangju Uprising in 1980 and the ambiguous position of the United States towards it caused growing and spreading dissatisfaction with the authoritarian rule. Park Chung-hee's draconian politics did not disappear with his death but intensified when the black-armored riot police took the streets following Chun Doo-hwan's orders.[30] The three years following the Gwangju Uprising were a period of harsh political repression as new anti-democracy laws were introduced; thus, thousands of pro-democracy activists including students, politicians, church people, and academics were arrested.

At that time, much of the socio-political discussion occurred underground. Among the important groups was Christian Academy, which became a home base for supporters of democracy. Also, the KNCW cooperated with Christian Academy, hosting KNCW events on its premises.[31] Established in 1956, Christian Academy aimed to educate Koreans about political life and democratization. Following the Yushin Constitution, Christian Academy emphasized issues like changing Korean society and criticism of the Park Chung-hee regime; it also formed minjung groups

29 Hong Sook-ja, "Mihon Yeosa-won Yunhwa Sageon-e Ttarun Beobwon Panggyeol-e Gwanhan Geonuimun," [The case of unmarried female employee. Suggestion regarding the court judgement], statement dated April 26, 1985, reprinted in *Yeoseong* 5 (May 1985), 9; "Yeoseong Jeongnyeon Budang Panggyeol Gwadamhoe" [Meeting on the unjust judgement on women's retirement age], *Yeoseong* 5 (May 1985), 13–17; Pictorial supplement "Emergency meeting to support Ms. Yung Hee Kim in her legal battle against sexist gov't. retirement measure," *The Woman* 21, no. 1 (July 1985), 5. For the court cases, see Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 158.

30 Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, 386; Park, "Introduction," 2.

31 See Park Inn-hea, "1980nyeondae Hanguk-ui 'Saeroun' Yeoseongundong-ui Juchae Hyeongseong Yoin Yeongu - Keuriseuchan Akademi-ui 'Yeoseong-ui Inganhwa' Damron-gwa 'Yeoseong Sahoe Gyoyuk'-eul Jungsim-euro," [A Study on Primary Factors of the Subject Building of the 'new' Korean Women's Movement in the 1980s - Focused on the Women's Public Education and Discourse on 'Women's Humanization' from the Christian Academy -], *Hanguk Yeoseonghak* [Korean Women's Studies] 25, no. 4 (2009): 156–157; Heo, "Development and alteration of women's culture," 81.

to draw the attention of less-educated and underprivileged to society's problems. Under Yushin, many of its key members got into trouble with the police.[32] Minjung, the people, refers to the politically oppressed and economically exploited masses that suffered under the dictatorship. The minjung movement became one of the leading forces in the democratization struggle.[33] Intellectually, the minjung discourse provided an environment for women's movement to voice their demands and helped them articulate gender equality regarding the discourse of democratization to which the minjung movement gave rise.[34]

The Chun Doo-hwan regime started liberalizing society and allowed political activity to increase its popularity. An active period of social organizing started in 1983, and civil society groups formed coalitions with opposition political parties. The New Korea Democratic Party (*Sinhan Minjudang*), established in January 1985, became particularly popular, forming a major pro-democracy coalition with the support of civil society. By this time, South Korea's growing middle class had started showing its discontentment with the lack of economic and political equality despite the Chun regime's attempts to liberalize the economy.[35]

Among the new civil society groups were women's groups such as Korea Women's Hot Line (*Hanguk Yeoseoengui Jeonhwa*, est. 1983), Women's Equal Friends Society (*Yeoseong Pyeonguhoe*, est. 1983), and Alternative Culture (*Ttohana-ui Munhwa*, est. 1984). Christian Academy was one of the places where Western feminist texts were read, circulated, and translated. The same women who participated in the study groups were among those to establish the new women's organizations in the 1980s.[36] These groups introduced new issues to women's policies' agenda: sexism, domestic violence, violence practiced by the state against women such as the sexual assaults against students and democracy activists, the transformation of the patriarchy, and a need for a broader grassroots base. University faculty and students, among the first to encounter women's studies, joined the female workers in their demands for equal wages and better working conditions and opposed

[32] For Christian Academy, see Mi Park, *Democracy and Social Change: A History of South Korean Student Movements, 1980–2000* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), 67; Paul Yunsik Chang, "Carrying the Torch in the Darkest Hours: The Sociopolitical Origins of Minjung Protestant Movements," in *Christianity in Korea*, 203.

[33] According to Namhee Lee, *minjung* are "those who are oppressed in the sociopolitical system but who are capable of rising against it." See Lee, *Making of Minjung*, 5.

[34] Louie, "Minjung feminism," 417–418, 428; Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 101–102.

[35] Kim, "South Korea: Confrontational Legacy," 144–145; Kim, *Role of the Middle Class*, 58, 64, 153–154.

[36] Moon, "Redrafting Democratization," 119–120; Hur, "Mapping South Korean Women's Movements," 186.

sexual violence and discrimination.[37] Some students also disguised themselves as laborers and sought work in factories. A significant proportion of these student-turned-workers were women. These activists aimed to spread political consciousness and help organize unions among workers to address larger political and class issues together.[38]

One famous incident that helped raise consciousness on violence against women that led to major demonstrations, especially among women, was the police's sexual assault of Kwon In-sook, a female student who was investigated for having used a false identification card to get a factory job in June 1986. Kwon was the first to press charges against the South Korean government based on sexual assault. Women's groups helped Kwon take the case to court, and public rage against the incident contributed to the policeman being sentenced.[39] The case helped bring sexual violence to the women's organizations' agenda, which the KNCW also adopted. To inform the women's organizations across the country, the July 1986 issue of *Yeoseong* published a protest against the National Security Headquarters in the Ministry of Home Affairs (*Naemubu Chianbonbu*) and urged the government to ensure such inhumane actions and brutality against citizens during police investigation do not reoccur, that women can feel safe with security authorities, and that the case is thoroughly investigated.[40] In October, the National Convention on

[37] Cho Hae-joang, "The 'Woman Question' in the *Minjok-Minju* Movement: A Discourse Analysis of A New Women's Movement in 1980s' Korea," in *Gender Division of Labor in Korea*, 331–333; Moon, "Women and Civil Society," 125; Moon, "Redrafting Democratization," 117n20; Hye-Ryoung Lee, "Bright Constellation: The Rise and Significance of Women's Liberation Literature in 1980s South Korea," in *Revisiting Minjung*, 171.

[38] See Koo, *Korean Workers*, esp. chapter Workers and Students, 100–125; Chun, *They Are Not Machines*, passim.

[39] The case of Kwon In-sook is well documented in feminist research on Korea. See, e.g. Kyungja Jung, "Practicing Feminism in South Korea: The Issue of Sexual Violence and the Women's Movement," *Hecate* 29, no. 2 (2003): 268–270; Nam, "Gender politics," 99. Kwon, who later became a feminist scholar, recalled in her dissertation that she never realized she was a victim of militarization until a class Cynthia Enloe taught in the US in the 1990s. See In-sook Kwon, "Militarism in my heart: Militarization of women's consciousness and culture in South Korea" PhD diss. (Clark University, 2000), 1–2.

[40] Reprinted in *Yeoseong* 7 (July 1986), 11. See also Choi Keum-sook, "Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe 60nyeon Yeoseong Undongsa: Yeoseong Pokryeok Bandae Undong - Seonghwirong Chubang Pomun-eul Yeolda" [Korean National Council of Women, 60 years of women's movement's history: Movement against violence against women – Elimination of sexual harassment begins], *Yeoseong Shinmun*, November 28, 2019, http://www.womennews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=194608 [accessed July 13, 2020].

Women gave a resolution demanding to "eliminate sexual and inhumane infringements of women's rights."[41]

Inspired by the Kwon In-sook case, 21 progressive women's groups, many associated with the minjung movement, formed the Korean Women's Association United (*Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Yeonhap*, hence KWAU) in February 1987. The KWAU brought together students, female workers, Christians, and progressive middle-class people as well as women from the academia, whose background was not significantly different from the KNCW leadership.[42] Lee Wu-jong (1923–2002), the first president of the KWAU, had participated in the Myeongdong anti-government demonstrations in 1976, in which Lee Tai-young and her husband were arrested (see Chapter 4). A professor of theology, she had worked with women workers and opposed the gisaeng house prostitution; later, in the 1990s, she became an advocate for the "comfort women" issue.[43]

In the first publication of its own house organ, *Minjuyeoseong*, in 1987, the KWAU stated that equal rights were insufficient; instead, women needed to seek structural changes to overcome the oppression of women. Compared to the KNCW's definitions of the women's movement discussed above, the KWAU was interested in social structures; due to the strong presence of working-class women in the organization, it articulated its agenda in a manner that resembles intersectional feminism.[44] In contrast, the KNCW, with strong influence from the UN-sponsored women's discourse, emphasized the women's role in development.

The KWAU visibly participated in the street demonstrations in 1987, demanding free elections and the end of dictatorship. Nevertheless, both Seungsook Moon and Chung Hyunback, who have examined the new women's movement rising in the 1980s, agree that engagement in the demonstrations and the violence against the regime harmed the KWAU. Its moderate members could not and did not want to be involved in the violence, yet the KWAU was criticized by the other social movement organizations, especially men's groups, for not being aggressive enough.[45]

[41] "Resolutions. The 23rd National Convention on Women, 2 Oct 1986," *The Woman* 23, no. 2 (November 1986), 36.

[42] Louie, "Minjung feminism," 420; Moon, "Redrafting Democratization," 119.

[43] Jeong Ho-jae, "Go Lee Woo-jeong Seonsaeng-ui Areumdaun Sam," [The Beautiful Life of Lee Woo-jeong] *Shin Dong-ah*, September 7, 2004, https://shindonga.donga.com/society/article/all/13/101756/1 [accessed October 14, 2024].

[44] Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 110–112; Hur, "Mapping South Korean Women's Movements," 186–187.

[45] Chung, Hyun-back, "Together and Separately: 'The New Women's Movement' after the 1980s in South Korea," *Asian Women* 5 (December 1997): 28–29; Moon, "Women and Civil Society," 130–131.

In scholarly opinion, the founding of the KWAU is linked with the existence and activities of the KNCW. According to Cho Hae-joang, a feminist scholar, activist, and founding member of Alternative Culture, the KWAU was established to fulfill two tasks: to contest the KNCW and unite the multiple new women's organizations.[46] In 1989, the KWAU expressed its view on the women's movements of the past: "After the division of our nation, the Women's Movement meant leisurely class women's activities for social welfare, if not, the government sponsored activities for supporting the ruling regime. We can hardly find a Women's Movement which aimed to fundamentally change the society."[47] The KWAU was disappointed with the lack of social change the KNCW had managed to create, regarding it not as genuine women's movement.[48] Kyungja Jung, who has extensively researched the new women's groups that emerged along with the democracy movement, states that "[m]embers of the progressive movement were critical of government-sanctioned organizations such as the KNCWO [sic], through which the government often mobilized women and publicized their policies."[49] Although the KNCW was not visibly present in the pro-democracy demonstrations like the KWAU was, it did not disregard the significance of democratization in its work, activities, and views of the future. Thus, the image of the KNCW, presented in much of the literature regarding the Korean women's movement as an oppositional force to the new women's organizations and their politics, is inaccurate.

Unlike the KNCW, many of the new women's organizations did not register themselves with the state before Roh Tae-woo's term ended in 1993.[50] In 1985, a piece published in *The Woman* reviewing the activities of women's organizations acknowledged the role of new organizations like the Women's Hot Line and Women's Equal Friends Society, encouraged cooperation among the groups and urged women's organizations to avoid projects that are "temporary, demonstrative, or in line with the government's policy."[51] In this manner, the KNCW withdrew its support for government policy as the democratization movement swept South Korea. The new progressive groups were at the forefront of the democratization movement, but the more moderate groups, which used to support the government, also played

[46] Cho, "Woman Question," 325, 334, 346.
[47] See a report by KWAU in 1989 on the discussion between representatives of new women's organizations, cited in Cho, "Woman Question," 325.
[48] Hur, "Mapping South Korean Women's Movements," 186.
[49] Jung, *Practicing Feminism in South Korea*, 83. See also Jones, "Mainstreaming Gender," 114–115.
[50] Moon, "Redrafting Democratization," 117.
[51] Jung Ja-han, "Studies on Activities of Women's Organizations in Korea," *The Woman* 21, no. 1 (July 1985), 24.

an active role during the transition and helped consolidate democracy by calling for political and economic reforms.[52]

Furthermore, the fight against communism and the threat of North Korea had not disappeared anywhere; the issue still strongly resonated with the Korean people. For example, within the KNCW, which had supported the state's anti-communist agenda, it was argued that an open society would be the best fortress against communism. In 1983, at the National Convention on Women, Kim Yung-chung, the director of the newly established Korean Women's Development Institute, gave the keynote speech, stating,

> [t]he institutional foundation for an open society is free democracy; no creative progress is possible without diversity and liberal discussion. Benefits of an open system are to be utilized for political democratization and for a mature industrialized society. Progress in industrialization gradually generates rational and horizontal human relation in lieu of the traditional authoritarian relations, requiring people's spontaneous and open participation in the politics.[53]

In this manner, Kim considered communism the opposite of an open society and named the division of the Korean peninsula as a reason behind the still lingering restrictions on people's freedom in South Korea.[54]

This section discusses the various meanings given to the women's movement in the years leading to South Korea's democratization. Even though the relationship between the KNCW and the new groups that were affiliated with the KWAU has been portrayed as a rivalry in scholarship, the KNCW welcomed new actors and highlighted the need for cooperation in the 1980s. In fact, the lack of mutual understanding and difficulties in cooperation inside the KNCW was a bigger challenge for its future than the new women's organizations, as the next section will discuss. Next, I revisit South Korea's democratization process and show that behind the joy and vigorousness of overcoming dictatorship, democratization also caused wounds in relationships and left scratches on those who made the process possible.

7.2 The KNCW and the Politics of Democratization

Demonstrators, placards, banners, *taegeukgi* (Korean flags), and tear gas filled the streets of Seoul and other major cities in the summer of 1987. What is known as the

52 Kim, "South Korea: Confrontational Legacy," 139–140.

53 Kim Yung-chung, "Women – the Leaders of an Open Society," *The Woman* 19, no. 2 (November 1983), 9.

54 Kim, 9–10.

June Democratization Movement formed out of a series of mass demonstrations against the regime inspired by the death of Park Jong-chul, a Seoul National University student who was tortured to death during a police investigation in January and whose fate became widely known in May, and by the injury and eventual death of Yonsei University student Lee Han-yeol on a tear gas bomb in early June. The National Movement Headquarters for a Democratic Constitution, a coalition of civil society groups, mobilized people to rallies, which were also joined by critical masses of middle-class people who were angered by the state violence. Mass demonstrations lasted for several weeks in major cities. The anger and frustration towards the regime's violence was accompanied by disappointment related to the regime's refusal to make a constitutional amendment to restore democracy.[55] President Chun Doo-hwan had promised to serve only one term and then step aside after free elections. However, in a meeting of his ruling party on June 10, 1987, Chun announced that Roh Tae-woo would be his successor and no elections would be held. The demonstrations flared up as the announcement was met with fierce opposition from the masses, the workers, the empowered middle class, students, intellectuals, and women who participated in anti-government demonstrations across the country.[56]

When there was a serious clash between the government and the people in South Korea, the headquarters of the International Council of Women and the whole council community anxiously awaited news from its president's home country. Members of national councils sent messages of encouragement to Hong Sook-ja in Seoul. "The news from your country are at times worrying. But then news are always worse from a distance. I hope you and your children are well," Pnina Herzog from the National Council for Jewish Women wrote to Hong in June after reading the news about major demonstrations.[57]

Amidst the demonstrations and under pressure from the Americans to refrain from violence, Chun agreed to step down. On June 26, 1987, Roh Tae-woo gave the "Declaration of Democratization and Reform," also known as the June 26 Declaration, which signposted the road to democratization with promises of a free

55 Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 100; Sunhyuk Kim, "Civil society and democratization," in *Korean Society*, 96–97; Park, "Introduction," 2–3.

56 For the history of South Korea's democratization, see, e.g. Sunhyuk Kim, *The Politics of Democratization in Korea: The Role of Civil Society* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000); *Korea's Democratization*, ed. Samuel S. Kim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Seth, "South Korea: Creating a Democratic Society, 1953–1997," in *A Concise History of Modern Korea.*

57 Pnina Herzog to Hong Sook-ja, June 24, 1987, folder 1044 AVG-Carhif.

election and revision of the constitution.[58] The first free presidential elections in a long time were held in December. The year 1987 is generally acknowledged as the year of democratization in South Korea.

The KNCW welcomed the elections with joy and machined its work towards encouraging women to cast their votes. The organization also produced the first female presidential candidate in South Korea's history as KNCW President Hong Sook-ja decided to run as the candidate of a minor opposition Social Democratic Party, surprising her fellow KNCW officials with her decision. At the time, Hong was also the president of the International Council of Women, drawing the attention of the world organization to South Korea's election. This section discusses the KNCW's and especially Hong's involvement in the South Korean democratization movement. Briefly, Hong was celebrated as an exemplary female leader who dared to challenge the other male candidates in the presidential race. However, Hong withdrew her candidacy from the election before Election Day, destroying her career in the KNCW and plunging the organization into chaos and to the edge of dissolution. KNCW's internal conflict became international when the uncertainty around the organization and its future even threatened the celebration of the International Council of Women's centennial anniversary in Washington in June 1988.

7.2.1 The Fall of a Rising Star

Hong Sook-ja's mainly handwritten letters directed to the address 13 Rue Camartin in Paris – not far from the Louvre Museum – compose an extraordinary archive of voices straight from the middle of South Korea's democratization struggle in 1987. In the histories of South Korean democratization, the role that two opposition leaders, Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung, played is well recognized, as is the great irony that after the opposition failed to agree upon a single candidate, the handpicked candidate and successor of military rule, Roh Tae-woo, won the presidential election. Although short-lived, the presence of a female candidate often goes unmentioned in the popular and academic narratives of the democratization. Hong did not become the female embodiment of the democratization movement. In the following, based on the correspondence between Seoul and Paris and on newspaper coverage of Hong's career, I illustrate how the KNCW experienced the democratization and shed light on Hong's dream of female leadership.

The democratization movement and social upheaval in South Korea unavoidably influenced the ICW's work, as its president was deeply involved in the situation.

58 Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea*, 247–249; Kim, *Role of the Middle Class*, 155–157.

Hong Sook-ja had to cancel some of her trips in 1987 as she felt she could not leave the country. Nevertheless, Hong assured her faith in positive political development in South Korea in her messages to Paris. During the summer of 1987, she wrote several short notices on South Korea's situation to the ICW headquarters:

> As you are aware, Korea is undergoing a great political event & it is all for the better for our people & my future. I'm pursuing my plan for the Centennial preparation here as I mentioned but really concerned over US situation.[59]

> Our pol[itical] development is steady now & as you know my position is secure & KNCW. [...] I'm working a quiet fund raising & all sort of Centennial preparation to be done here nationally.[60]

> Our politics developing for the better & I'm in good position as ever. My own publication is in good progress. I'm sure it'll be a worthy document.[61]

Hong's account of the situation in South Korea brought relief among the worried ICW officials, such as General Secretary Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, with whom Hong was in constant correspondence: "I was glad to hear you were satisfied with the development of the political situation in Korea, in so far as your own position is concerned. We have heard of more troubles: strikes, demonstrations, collective suicides, etc..., but, of course, it is hard to judge when you are living so far away."[62]

The KNCW excitedly received Roh Tae-woo's promise on the upcoming elections and started preparing its own campaigns for the elections and social transformation. *Yeoseong* and *The Woman* featured several articles on the meaning of democratization, women's role within it, and how to increase women's political participation. The November 1987 issue of *Yeoseong* declared in its editorial, "Democracy, a beautiful custom."[63] Hong Sook-ja had visited New Zealand in the summer of 1987; in an interview with local newspapers, she expressed her eagerness to run in the parliamentary elections scheduled for the spring of 1988. She hoped to

59 Emphasis in original. Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, July 4, 1987, folder 1044 AVG-Carhif. "US situation" refers to the situation of the US National Council of Women, which had already concerned the ICW for some time, especially since the American affiliate was partly responsible for organizing the ICW Centennial in the summer of 1988.

60 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, July 30, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

61 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, August 18, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

62 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, August 31, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

63 Lee Jeong-sook, "Areumdaun Jeontong-wi-e Minjujuui-reul" [Democracy a beautiful custom], *Yeoseong* 11 (November 1987), 8.

secure the votes of women "because I've worked hard for women, they respect me for that, and after all half of the voters are women."[64] Without female legislators, Hong believed women would be destined to beg for improvements from men who would never solve anything. Rather than winning, she found it important to participate, encourage other women to do likewise, and be a role model for the future. She accounted that she wanted to fight against the presupposition that women are simply an aide to men – not only in Korea but throughout Asia and Africa.[65]

The political campaigning attracted Hong Sook-ja earlier than the parliamentary elections. The idea of a female president was mentioned at the 24th National Convention on Women in September of 1987. Seoul National University Professor of Sociology Han Wan-Sang asked in his keynote speech, "Why don't we have a woman President? Why not woman Prime Minister? Why not a Chair Woman of the National Assembly?"[66] Hong reported the occasion to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin with excitement: "Speaker even raised, 'Why not woman presidential candidate at coming national election?' of course it was applauded loud!"[67] In less than two months, Hong would make this initiative a reality.

Hong Sook-ja was nominated as the presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (*Sahoeminjudang*, 1985–1988) on November 11, 1987.[68] According to Hong, since establishing a women's party was impossible, she found a platform for her political career from the Social Democratic Party, and the party wanted a candidate to bring some attention.[69] The party was organized following the European example of social democratic work. Hong had utilized her networks within the ICW to get to know European politicians. For instance, in the early 1980s, she asked the ICW headquarters in Paris to arrange a meeting with Danielle Mitterand (née Gouze), a human rights campaigner and the wife of French President François Mitterrand. Hong, at that time the Vice-Chairman of Social Democratic Party, hoped

64 Rosemary Vincent, "Showing women the way..." *New Zeeland Women's Weekly*, July 13, 1987. News clipping in folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

65 "Political Power Is the First Step," *The New Zealand Herald*, May 27, 1987. News clipping in folder 1044 AVG-Carhif; Vincent, "Showing women the way."

66 Han Wan-Sang, "Hanguk Yeoseong-ui sidejeok samyong, Minjuhwaro ganeun gil" [The Mission of Korean Women Today – The Road to Democratization] *Yeoseong* 9 (September 1987), 17. Han Wan-sang, a professor and a scholar of critical sociology and *minjung* theory, later served South Korean presidents from Kim Young-sam to Roh Tae-woo in different positions, such as deputy minister of unification.

67 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, September 12, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

68 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, November 5, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

69 See Central Election Management Committee, *Daehanminguk Seongeosa 1980.1.1.–1988.2.24* [History of Elections in the Republic of Korea January 1, 1980–February 24, 1988] (Seoul: Central Election Management Committee, 2009), 555.

to meet with a socialist leader as it would have been "a great favor for me & and my work."[70] Issues she would have liked to discuss were the human rights situation in South Korea, North–South Korea relations, and how to open a dialogue with the Socialist International Women. However, the meeting never happened.[71]

Hong's presidential candidacy became big news in domestic and international media as she was the first woman to run for the presidency in a country known as a male-dominated society. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Hong said, "Housewives say they support me. Working girls come up to me and say that I give them hope. I'm making history now. The next one will find it easier to run."[72] *Yeoseong* also celebrated her candidacy by showcasing foreign and domestic media coverage on the issue.[73]

Hong resigned from the presidency of the KNCW in late November 1987 to focus on the elections but continued as the ICW president. [74] Amidst the campaign, Hong had little time to focus on the ICW duties, and in November, she only sent a hurried note to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, saying the campaign was going fine and all were excited about the first female candidate.[75] The ICW officials followed the ongoing race in South Korea with keen interest and collected news clips from newspapers, many of which have been deposited in the ICW archives.[76] Several national councils of women wished her good luck.[77]

Hong's presidential campaign focused on issues like weakening the power of chaebols (South Korean business conglomerates), promoting public ownership, Korean unification, permanent neutrality, and women's issues. Her nomination speech talked about her wish to unify people – between South and North, men and

70 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, August 22, 1981, folder 243 AVG-Carhif.

71 See Hong Sook-ja to Francoise Dissard, January 13, 1982; a telegram from ICW HQ to Hong Sook-ja, February 16, 1982; Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, May 4, 1982, folder 1685 AVG-Carhif.

72 Haberman, "Woman in the Race Gives Korea a Jolt"; Kim, "Hong Suk Ja"; "Mme. Hong Suk-ja nominated as SDP's presidential candidate," *The Korea Times*, November 12, 1988 (reprinted in *Yeoseong* 11, November 1987). Hong's comments on the meaning of her candidacy resemble much of those given by Helvi Sipilä during her visit to Seoul in 1982; see the previous chapter.

73 See pictorial supplement in *Yeoseong* November issue in 1987.

74 Hong herself announced November 25 as the resignation day in a letter to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 20, 1988, yet Kim Kyung-o announced it as November 20 in a letter to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, April 8, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

75 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, November 21, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

76 See Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, November 13, 1987; Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, November 27, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

77 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, December 3, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

women, classes and generations. She proposed an amendment to the Family Law, especially to end the prohibition of marriages between people from the same lineage origin (dong-seong-dong-bon system, discussed in Chapter 5). Her campaign poster, as candidate number 5, said, "Political miracle for a female president.[78]

At the beginning of the presidential race, Hong Sook-ja criticized Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung for the lack of unity and for playing the election game with their personalities as the opposition leaders instead of having a real political agenda. Aware of her low chances of gaining votes, Hong still wanted her candidacy to promote democratic change in South Korea.[79] However, before Election Day on December 16, 1987, Hong withdrew from the presidential race on December 5 to support Kim Young-sam of the Reunification Democratic Party (*Tongilminjudang*) to form a united front behind one opposition candidate. In a joint press conference, she declared, "I quit the presidential race in the belief that the most important thing is to form a united front to terminate the country's military rule and set up a democratic Government. I will do my best to help Kim to win."[80] Hong was expelled from her own party, as a candidate withdrawing to support another candidate went against its principles. The ruling Democratic Justice Party (*Minju Jeonguidang*) criticized Hong's decision by saying she had cheated people with empty promises.[81] In the ICW, news of Hong's withdrawal was received calmly amidst a busy season getting work done before Christmas.[82] The Honorary President Miriam Dell wrote to Hong:

> We have all been thinking about you a great deal over these weeks. It is very frustrating for us here in that we do not get so much detailed news of events in

78 Hong's campaign budget was a moderate 55 million won compared to Roh Tae-woo's 13 billion won, Kim Young-sam's 5,4 billion won, and Kim Dae-jung's 4,9 billion won. See Central Election Management Committee, *History of Elections in the Republic of Korea*, 555.

79 Haberman, "Woman in the Race Gives Korea a Jolt"; Jameson, "Korean Candidate Battles a Male-Dominated Society."

80 "Hong quits race to support Young-sam," *New Straits Times*, December 6, 1987, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1309&dat=19871206&id=kNlUAAAAIBAJ&sjid=gJADAAAAIBAJ&pg=6908,1402377&hl=en [accessed July 27, 2016].

81 "Women candidate pulls out," *The Bulletin*, December 6, 1987, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1243&dat=19871206&id=uJxYAAAAIBAJ&sjid=pIYDAAAAIBAJ&pg=3421,787534&hl=en [accessed July 27, 2016]; "Woman drops out," *The Times-News*, December 6, 1987, https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1665&dat=19871206&id=JHU0AAAAIBAJ&sjid=PCQEAAAAIBAJ&pg=5238,1357251&hl=en [accessed July 27, 2016].

82 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, December 11, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

Korea from day to day as they do in other parts of the world. I am sure you have found your political involvement very stimulating and exciting.[83]

Ultimately, the candidate of the ruling party and Chun's favorite, Roh Tae-woo, won the presidential election as the votes were split between opposition candidates Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung. Roh took advantage of the democratization promises he and Chun made in the summer and gained close to 37% of the votes.[84] In the aftermath of the elections, *Yeoseong* featured articles reviewing the past elections and the upcoming parliamentary elections. In one article, Professor of Law Kim Sook-ja complained that regionalism played too big of a role in the election as Roh, born in Daegu, grabbed votes in the north and north-eastern part of the country; Kim Dae-jung, born in Jeolla province, won in the south-western region; and Kim Young-sam, born in Geoje-do, won in the south: "Locality of this election misled the course of people's political participation and turned a presidential election to that of a provincial representative. This is what we should feel ashamed of ourselves."[85] Nevertheless, Roh's victory was tight, and the election results showed that many people had been unhappy with the ruling party.

In general, the KNCW regarded the presidential elections as a disappointment for women. None of the top candidates had considered women a special campaign target. For instance, Kim Young-sam's Reunification Democratic Party related all women's problems to the military dictatorship, believing democracy would solve them. Roh Tae-woo's camp wrote letters to housewives appealing to them as "springs of happiness." In an article published in *Yeoseong*, Yonhap News Agency's reporter Lee Yung-nim demanded that women needed to unite to make themselves a political power that could no longer be ignored.[86] The abovementioned Kim Sook-ja gave credit to Hong Sook-ja for her participation: "Setting aside whether she received the absolute support from the women's circle, or how many votes she would have got, or what kind of course she chose after resignation from the candidacy, it is worth being recorded in the history of women's politics that a woman became a candidate for the president."[87]

83 Miriam Dell to Hong Sook-ja, December 12, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

84 Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea*, 249.

85 Kim Sook-ja, "Seongeowa Dutmin-ui Jeongchi Chamyeo. Apeuro-ui Seongeo-e Daebihan Yeoseong-ui Jase" [Election and the People's Participation in Politics. Women's attitudes towards future elections], *Yeoseong* 1–2 (January–February 1988), 7.

86 Lee Yung-nim, "Seonseogong-yak-e Bichin Yeoseong" [Women and election commitments], *Yeoseong* 1–2 (January–February 1988), 16–17.

87 Kim, "Election and the People's Participation in Politics," 8.

As for the course Hong took after the election, she was already heading towards another round of elections after her short-lived presidential campaign. She wrote to the ICW headquarters: "Nov P[residential]. election is over but you can imagine how things are since we are proceeding to have congressional election early February."[88] After Hong Sook-ja resigned from the KNCW's presidency, the board appointed Kim Chun-joo, a consumer movement activist, as the acting president until the next general meeting in February. In January, Hong reported to the ICW that she was still occupied by politics due to the incoming parliamentary elections and the KNCW elections. Her messages to the ICW remained short and mainly concerned her busy schedule preparing for the two elections. She was concerned about finding an English-speaking president for the KNCW to maintain the relationship with the ICW.[89] Still, in early February 1988 Hong was confident that the general meeting "will easily finalize" a new lead for the KNCW.[90]

In mid-February, newspapers in South Korea reported on the ambiguity in the KNCW's leadership: Hong Sook-ja was accused of misusing authority and public funds. The following days' headlines announced that the KNCW had plunged into an internal conflict ahead of the general meeting.[91] According to a report by the KNCW, which was cited in the newspaper, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, Hong had ignored the board's opinions, unilaterally decided upon the theme of the National Convention on Women, abused a staff member, and paid for personal costs with public money. Kim Chun-joo, the acting president, wanted to send the case to the Seoul District Prosecutors Office to be solved, but the board members could not agree on whether the president could decide such things or whether the general meeting should make the decision. The general meeting scheduled for February 23, 1988, was postponed; instead, an emergency board meeting was called to convene. However, the ranks of the KNCW were split, and a faction that disagreed with Kim Chun-joo held their own meeting.[92] Eventually, in February, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

88 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, December 21, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

89 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, January 3, 1988, folder 1046 AVG-Carhif; Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, February 15, 1988, folder 1046 AVG-Carhif.

90 Emphasis in original. Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, February 9, 1988, folder 1046 AVG-Carhif.

91 "Yeohyeop Chonghoe Apdugo Naebun Pyomyeonhwa" [Ahead of the KNCW General Meeting, internal conflict surfaces], *Maeil Kyungjae*, February 17, 1988; "Yeohyeop Jeonggi Chonghoe Gaechwaessago Jintong," [Controversy surrounding the KNCW General Meeting] *Dong-A Ilbo*, February 17, 1988. See also *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 187.

92 "Yeohyeop Isajik Bakthal Georon. Hong Sukja Jeon Hoijang Jikgwon. Gonggeum. Namyong" [Dismissal in KNCW directorship. Ex-president Hong Sook-ja. Public

had to intervene as it did not regard the simultaneous meetings legitimate to fulfill the demands for the quorum and thus the ministry abandoned the election of the new KNCW president.[93] Hong's version assured the press the accusations were false and that she was ready to sue Kim Chun-joo for defamation.[94]

Hong Sook-ja, who simultaneously led major South Korean and international major women's organizations, paid a high price for the democratization in South Korea and her involvement in it. As the first female presidential candidate, she received extensive media attention in South Korea and abroad. Then, not long after her withdrawal from the election and Roh Tae-woo's victory, she was again amidst turbulence, facing charges of bad leadership and corruption. After her departure, the KNCW leadership was in disarray. The ICW was in an even more difficult position as the officials in Paris were trying to figure out who to trust and how to proceed, especially when the grand celebration of the ICW's centennial anniversary was right around the corner. The following section discusses the international dimension of the scandal and its consequences.

7.2.2 Internal Is International: KNCW's Internal Strife and the ICW's Centennial Anniversary

While reviewing a folder on Hong Sook-ja's ICW presidency at the Archive and Research Centre for Women's History (AVG-Carhif) in Brussels, I ran into an interesting pile of documents, some of which have several copies. A fierce correspondence between the KNCW and ICW officials and Hong in the spring of 1988, just months before the ICW's centennial celebration in Washington, D.C., reveals how serious the trouble was that the Koreans had caused the ICW. Letters, telegrams, court documents, anonymous phone calls, and suspicions on who was telling the truth and who was lying piece together a puzzle comparative to an intriguing detective story on how individuals' life stories were intertwined with South Korea's democratization process.[95] Hong's candidacy in the presidential

money. Abuse] *Kyonhyang Shinmun*, February 15, 1988; *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 188.

93 "Busabu, Yeohyeop Satae Gaeip" [Ministry of Social and Health Affairs intervenes in the KNCW situation], *Dong-A Ilbo*, February 29, 1988.

94 "Yeohyeop Chonghoe Apdugo Naebun Pyomyeonhwa" [Ahead of the KNCW General Meeting, internal conflict surfaces], *Maeil Kyungjae*, February 17, 1988.

95 In January 1988, the ICW Secretary-General Jacqueline Barbet-Massin received a phone call from the American Embassy in Paris. The caller asked for certain ICW documents on behalf of Hong Sook-ja. Hong, however, had already received such documents at the ICW Board meeting and assured Barbet-Massin that she had not requested them, especially not via the Embassy. The ICW's archival records do not reveal whether the identity of the person who requested the documents was ever

elections in South Korea, although initially welcomed as an exemplary act by a woman in a deeply conservative country, challenged the ICW's position as an apolitical organization and led the organization to even change its rules to avoid political attachments going forward. The ICW's actions highlight the organization's fear of political alignment after avoiding all political labels throughout the Cold War.

Shortly after the press had publicized the scandal within the KNCW in South Korea, the ICW Secretary General Jacqueline Barbet-Massin received a disturbing note from the KNCW to her office at the ICW headquarters in Paris. The letter, signed by Kim Chun-joo as "acting president," announced that Hong Sook-ja was charged with misappropriation and dereliction of duty. In addition, the letter claimed Hong had allegedly collected funds for ICW Centennial, and Kim inquired how the ICW had received such funds.[96] Bewildered, Barbet-Massin assured Kim that the ICW had never received money from Hong and requested more information about the charges made against Hong. Given that Hong was still the ICW President, Barbet-Massin inquired if Hong had any role in the KNCW anymore – a precondition to continue her position at the international level.[97]

Unaware of the looming chaos at the ICW headquarters, which tried to figure out if they had a legitimate president in charge of the organization or not, Hong Sook-ja reported to the ICW that the KNCW was having difficulties choosing new leadership.[98] General Secretary Barbet-Massin was eager to receive clarification on the situation of the local council in South Korea.[99] However, Hong provided Barbet-Massin only a complex answer on the KNCW's election procedures, claiming Kim was trying to purposely defame her. According to Hong, Kim's election as the next KNCW president was out of the question, and "she did everything to cloud my image to revenge but I am the one who upheld my honor most throughout my life, she only hurt herself."[100] Just two days later, Hong declared her innocence in another letter, repeating her belief that Kim had made the charges to dishonor her, telling that her reputation would be cleared afterwards as the KNCW preparatory meeting had already ordered Kim to withdraw the charges.[101]

exposed; however, it seems likely that someone inside the KNCW was trying to find some evidence against Hong. See correspondence between Jacqueline Barbet-Massin and Hong Sook-ja between January 29 – February 15, 1988, folder 1046 AVG-Carhif.

96 Kim Chun-joo to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, February 22, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

97 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Kim Chun-joo, March 7, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

98 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 4, 1988, folder 1046 AVG-Carhif.

99 Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, March 11, 1988, folder 1046 AVG-Carhif.

100 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 18, 1988, folder 1046 AVG-Carhif.

101 Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 20, 1988, folder 1046 AVG-Carhif.

Despite Hong's assurances, in a couple of weeks, the ICW headquarters was pressing the panic button. It had learned via diplomatic channels that charges against Hong Sook-ja had been raised due to improper use of funds, which were claimed to have been collected for the ICW Centennial celebrations, and that the issue had become publicly known in South Korea.[102] Fearing for unfavorable attention towards the ICW on the eve of the Centennial celebrations and due to a lack of support for Hong in her own national council, the ICW asked Hong to resign from the ICW presidency at the end of March 1988. It became evident to the ICW that the scandal around Hong was related to her political career. In a letter to Hong asking for her resignation, the ICW Honorary President Miriam Dell and Vice President Françoise Bouteiller wrote, "Members of the ICW, who well know your involvement as a candidate for the Presidency of your country and your intention to pursue a career in politics, will no doubt attribute your decision to the demands of your political life. We hope that you will see your resignation as a way to maintain your good name and that of ICW."[103]

Meanwhile, measures were taken in Seoul to save the KNCW's image. Hong on her part, gathered evidence that the charges against her were only to damage her image. Eventually, she sent all the court documentation from the Prosecutor's Office to Paris, asking the ICW to confirm via diplomatic channels that she had been cleared of charges.[104] The KNCW was still trying to elect a legitimate leader after Kim Chun-joo's election had not been ratified. Also, a second attempt to elect a new president was problematic as none of the candidates received over half the votes among the delegates of the general meeting. This time, however, the KNCW's Board confirmed

[102] Diplomatic channels refer to Françoise Bouteiller's enquiry to Ministre Plénipotentiaire in France, J. Mouton-Brady, to investigate the case in South Korea and find evidence, and Francoise Dissard's enquiry to Mademoiselle Boulouis, Ambassador of France in Korea. See Françoise Bouteiller to J. Mouton-Brady, March 22, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif. Attachment to the letter, "Note à l'attention de Monsieur Mouton-Brady," emphasizes that the risk of scandal on the eve of ICW Centennial celebrations is particularly big since the event will be organized under the protection of First Lady Nancy Reagan and the White House will host one of the receptions. Francoise Dissard to Mademoiselle Boulouis, March 31, 1988, folder 748 AVG-Carhif. The answers were asked via telephone; thus, the information is not in the archival records.

[103] Miriam Dell and Françoise Bouteiller to Hong Sook-ja, March 22, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

[104] Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, March 20, 1988; Hong Sook-ja to Françoise Bouteiller, April 1, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif. For withdrawal of the charges, see also Kim Kyung-o to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, April 8, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif; Hong Sook-ja to Françoise Bouteiller, May 9, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif. The Korean language certificates from the Seoul District Prosecutors Office are also in the archives.

the election, and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs did not see a reason to interfere in the election.[105]

The new KNCW president was Kim Kyung-o, the president of the local Zonta Club and Korean Women's Aeronaut Association. Born in 1934 in Kanggye, North Pyeongan of today's North Korea, Kim was the first and only female military pilot who served in the Air Force during the Korean War. After the war, she was sent to an aviation college in North Carolina since there were none in South Korea. Kim had started serving the KNCW in the mid-1970s as treasurer.[106] As if to secure her position in the eyes of the ICW, Kim Kyung-o confirmed that Hong Sook-ja no longer had any role or status in the KNCW and requested that all correspondence related to the KNCW must be sent directly to her.[107]

The ICW was between two positions: The representatives of the member council asserted that Hong Sook-ja no longer had a status in the organization and thus could neither serve as the ICW President; however, Hong claimed that even as an ex-president, she was an Honorary Board member within the KNCW. The ICW was desperately trying to figure out the situation in South Korea to prepare for the closing of the Centennial Celebration. In April, Jacqueline Barbet-Massin sent a telegram to Seoul to receive a quick answer to a simple question: Does the KNCW still support Hong Sook-ja's presidency in the ICW?[108] The KNCW's answer was disappointingly vague: "In spite of Dr. Hong's recent irrationality, We originally intended to support her activities as the President of ICW. Now, however, We have our continued support under consideration due to her disturbance of our council's business."[109]

While the debate regarding Hong's fate progressed, she continued her duties as the ICW President since the headquarters had not wanted to make the issue public before it could pressure Hong to resign. Thus, Hong visited New York and the US National Council of Women, which was preparing for the Centennial celebrations. She complained to Françoise Bouteiller that Jacqueline Barbet-Massin had stopped communicating with her and asked the General Secretary to continue.[110] Barbet-Massin sent a final letter regarding the matter found in the ICW archives to the

[105] *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 188–189.

[106] "Activities of Member Organization, Korean Women's Aeronaut Association," *The Woman* 13, no. 1 (November 1977), 40; Beth Gollob, "Korean aviator honored Kyung Kim was the first female military flier in her native country," *NewsOK*, May 10, 2005. http://newsok.com/article/2895698 [accessed July 12, 2017].

[107] Kim Kyung-o to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, April 8, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif; Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Kim Kyong-o, May 30, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif. See also *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 7

[108] Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Kim Kyong-o, April 20, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

[109] Kim Kyung-o to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, April 27, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

[110] Hong Sook-ja to Françoise Bouteiller, May 9, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

KNCW headquarters at the end of May 1988. Cold and frustrated in its tone, the General Secretary was forced to remind the KNCW of unpaid membership fees, lacking the name list of the Korean delegation to the Washington Centennial celebration, the lack of information regarding new elections among the KNCW, and the organization's opinion regarding Hong Sook-ja's position, which, in the previous month, was "under consideration." The ICW needed an "official and definite" answer regarding Hong's position in the Korean council.[111]

Because the Centennial celebration, where Hong would step down from the ICW presidency in any case, was fast approaching, the ICW did not force Hong to resign despite never receiving final clarification from the KNCW on the situation. Hong presented a "report of the president" to the ICW officials, received in Paris in June 1988, in which she recalled her difficulties during the past six months:

> The past few months were a tense and stressful period for me personally & for KNCW. Since Korea had two most crucial elections during the period, our lives & mine in particular, were affected a great deal. I regret to report that it was not the right time to raise funds, due to politics, however, I shall certainly keep it in my mind to live up to my previous promise to raise a minimum of $50,000 for the ICW capital fund. After Olympic games this fall, surely Korea will settle down to normality & KNCW too.[112]

The collection of funds, which had initially caused the scandal, was related to Hong Sook-ja's promise to collect money for the ICW. As the ICW President, she had encouraged the national councils to raise funds for the ICW ahead of the upcoming centennial and secure the organization's continuity for another century. To be a role model, she was determined to take similar measures in South Korea.[113] At the ICW Board meeting in the fall of 1987, she promised to donate $50 000 to the capital funds of the ICW.[114]

An official report on the incident submitted to the ICW Board in June 1988, marked as confidential and not for distribution, reveals that even the Centennial Celebrations were at risk of being postponed. The board had been well aware of

[111] Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Kim Kyong-o, May 30, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif

[112] Report of the president, handwritten by Hong Sook-ja, stamped June 7, 1988, folder 1046 AVG-Carhif. A transcription of the same text is in folder 3494 AVG-Carhif.

[113] Hong Sook-ja, "Circular letter to national councils," July 20, 1988, folder 1044 AVG-Carhif. Half a year before, Hong asked the national councils to give publicity and gain support for the ICW Centennial and raise funds for the celebrations, see Hong Sook-ja, "Circular letter to national councils," December 23, 1987, folder 1043 AVG-Carhif

[114] Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, September 12, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-Carhif.

Hong running for president in South Korea, and the only reason that affairs of a national council were in the ICW's interest was that "ICW itself is affected or jeopardised by them." Although the ICW kept the issue secret, it was disturbed by the fact that the issue had become public in South Korean media and could violate "the good name of both ICW and Dr. Hong."[115] To avoid any further publicity around Hong, the ICW had forbidden Channel IV, which was planning to shoot a film on the ICW Centennial to showcase the elections in South Korea and ICW President's involvement in them. According to Barbet-Massin, it did so to avoid attachment to national politics and any particular political system and party.[116] Hong's assurances of her innocence were treated with suspicion, although she had told the ICW about the internal strife of the KNCW. The report ends with the following notion: "The apprehension felt from the beginning has not been fully allayed."[117]

The ICW Centennial celebration occurred in Washington, D.C., from June 26 to July 4, 1988, under the theme "The Splendid Vision." Eventually, Hong Sook-ja participated in the event as the ICW President. The conference report lists her as a member of the Korean delegation, but the KNCW denied that she belonged to it, and the reports published in *Yeoseong* or *The Woman* did not mention her presence.[118] Hong's conference speech recalled the 100 years of history of the ICW, from its founding 40 years after the Seneca Falls meeting until the 1980s when the world was still an unequal place – where the ICW fought against discrimination "even in situations of extreme difficulty and sometimes danger." In a century, the ICW had standardized its participation in peace work and became a "Peace Messenger" designated by the UN.[119] The conference report recalls the haste in which Hong worked during her presidency and yet praised her candidacy in the presidential election as "an example of what women can achieve in the

[115] Report to the Board on matters affecting ICW and its President, June 15, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

[116] Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to July Jackson (documentary director, International Broadcasting Trust), April 11, 1988, folder 3285 AVG-Carhif.

[117] Report to the Board on matters affecting ICW and its President, June 15, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

[118] International Council of Women, *Report of the Centennial celebrations and 25th plenary conference of the International Council of Women, Washington DC, USA, 26th June – 4th July 1988* (Paris: International Council of Women, 1988), 165. See also Kim Kyung-o to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, April 27, 1988, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

[119] Dr. Sookja Hong, "Address of the President of the International Council of Women," in International Council of Women, *Report of the Centennial celebrations and 25th plenary conference, Washington DC, USA*, 6–8.

political field."[120] At the Centennial, Hong became the immediate past president of the ICW as she had already announced in October 1987 that she would not run for a second term.[121] In an interview with *USA Today*, Hong said she planned to run in the elections for Seoul mayor and added, "I have to win. I can't afford to fail." In her typical uncompromising rhetoric, Hong expressed her will to continue in politics, although it had already meant losing her privacy and brought a feeling of isolation.[122]

In the scandal's aftermath, the ICW Board, which convened during the Washington Centennial celebration, decided that "no ICW President should stand for public office during her term of office."[123] In this manner, the events in South Korea influenced how the ICW operated. The relationship between the ICW officials and Hong was also damaged. Hong never returned to the ICW Board meetings despite being entitled to do so as the honorary president. Also, the correspondence between Hong and the ICW waned. In the fall of 1988, she sent congratulations to the newly elected president, Belgian Lily Boyekens, and wished her success.[124] In 1989, over a year after the scandal, Hong wrote to the ICW headquarters and stated that "it is my wish that again, someday, I'll be able to serve ICW with my time & sincerity."[125]

After her term as the ICW President, Hong withdrew from politics, contrary to her earlier plans. She moved to New York for a while to study. In an interview with *Kyunghyang Shinmun* in 1990, Hong said that after the accusations of misuse of public funds, she had considered for two and half years what to do and decided to continue in politics if she were invited to a minor political party again. In her spare time, she finally had time to read and meet old friends – things she had been unable to do while running a career as a diplomat or the head of a women's organization.[126]

[120] "President's Activities," in International Council of Women, *Report of the Centennial celebrations and 25th plenary conference, Washington DC, USA*, 42.

[121] Minutes. Meeting of the ICW Board. JW Marriott Hotel, Washington D.C., 24th June – 4th July 1988, September 30, 1988, folder 3495 AVG-Carhif; Jacqueline Barbet-Massin to Hong Sook-ja, October 30, 1987, folder 1045 AVG-CArhif.

[122] Walter P. Calahan, "Korean paves way for women," *USA Today*, June 28, 1988. News clipping in folder 3283 AVG-Carhif.

[123] "Minutes. Meeting of the ICW Board."

[124] Hong Sook-ja to Lily Boyekens, October 18, 1988, folder 782 AVG-Carhif.

[125] Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, August 21, 1989, folder 782 AVG-Carhif.

[126] Yu In-kyung, "Yojum Eotteoke Jinaesimnikka: Yeoseong Daetongnyeong Hubo Hong Sukja-ssi, Misinhakdae Suryo, Jeonggye Jaedojeon Kkum" [How are you doing these days: Female presidential candidate Hong Sook-ja, finished American theological school, dreams of political challenges], *Kyonhyang Shinmun*, August 18, 1990.

Figure 6 Hong Sook-ja passing the ICW presidency to Belgian Lily Boyekens at the ICW Triennial Conference in Washington in 1988. Courtesy of Archive and Research Centre for Women's History – AVG-Carhif, Brussels, Belgium.

The scandal around Hong Sook-ja in the spring of 1988 relates significantly to two issues – one international and the other domestic. First, the concerns within the ICW raised by a political scandal involving its president drew attention to the ICW's insistence on remaining apolitical. After 1988, the ICW changed its rules to forbid a person with a political career from accessing the leading position of the organization. In other words, Hong's involvement in Korea's democratization movement cast doubts over the ICW's apolitical stance. Nothing of the controversy was reported in the pages of *The Woman*, and the ICW kept the issue within its inner circle to avoid unfavorable publicity. Even the newest ICW history published in 2005 does not mention the incident, and my impression is that one of the writers of the book and archivist at the AVG-Carhif learned about it only when I inquired about additional materials related to it.

Second, the conflict inside the KNCW reflected the heated political situation in South Korea at that time. Hong Sook-ja's rise to the presidency of the ICW had been a success story of Korean female leadership. Yet Hong's experiences also proved how difficult it was to lead a political life. The way the KNCW, or at least some parts of it, turned its back on Hong well describes the atmosphere of democratizing Korea. The democracy movement consisted of various voices and opinions. Hong's

decision to withdraw from the election and support Kim Young-sam angered her erstwhile supporters. The first issue of *The Woman* in 1988 was published only in June after the scandal had abated. A piece commemorating the changes in 1987 used a harsh tone against Hong, who had "suffered dishonor when she gave up in this election, but this outcome was anticipated."[127] How the organization that Hong had led in past years abandoned its previous key figure is a telling example of how narratives that do not fit into democratization's success story have been sidelined. Suddenly, Hong's achievements, such as those forming the KNCW's international character, no longer mattered as it was believed that giving up the presidential race was too shameful. The last part of this chapter discusses the consequences of the internal conflict for the KNCW's future in democratizing the country and how a new direction for the women's movement was drafted.

7.3 "KNCW should be transformed in order to protect and expand women's rights to the full": The KNCW after the Democratization

Since joining the KNCW in the 1970s, Hong Sook-ja has spoken on behalf of women's political participation and the importance of the international dimension in developing Korean women's status for over a decade. Following the democratization, the legacy of her work was pushed back in the KNCW, and the past president's relationship with the organization grew cold. Although Kim Kyung-o had started building the KNCW back together, and she also created connections to the ICW; still, in August 1988 Hong claimed to the ICW that this time, "Kim no. 2" had been sued by the members due to the illegal election in the spring; however, no sign of this appears in the KNCW materials.[128] Instead, the KNCW's 30-year history compilation argues that Kim Kyung-o's presidency brought a change to the KNCW's work as she started a new era by bringing up past challenges and was willing to change how the KNCW operated.[129]

In the early 1990s, the KNCW regarded it problematic that the organization had once relied on strong and longtime leaders, such as Kim Hwallan and Lee Sook-chong, who both had ruled for a decade. In the 1980s, when the ideas of Korea's democratization started shaking the established grounds of the KNCW's existence, the leaders changed in rapid succession and presidents Lee Chul-kyung, Sohn In-sil, Hong Sook-ja, and Kim Chun-joo did not build lasting careers at the top of the

[127] "Korean women's movement -1987," *The Woman* 25, no. 1 (June 1988), 44.
[128] Hong Sook-ja to Jacqueline Barbet-Massin, August 11, 1988, folder 782 AVG-Carhif.
[129] *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 191.

organization.[130] Following the democratization, the KNCW had to renegotiate its position as part of the women's movement and civil society and build its foundation on solid ground that was not dependent on single leaders. This section reflects the discussion within the KNCW in the aftermath of the democratization and how Hong Sook-ja's erasure from the organization influenced the transnational connections.

The beginning of Kim Kyung-o's term as the KNCW president marked a time for self-reflection as the KNCW prepared for its 30th anniversary in 1989. A special issue of *Yeoseong* was dedicated to the topic of finding a way to reactivate the KNCW after the internal conflict. As the previous section shows, the discussion on the future of the KNCW with the ICW was still unfinished. However, the KNCW was moving the problems fast ahead because the membership was making demands for group maintenance and improving operations as the conflict was still in newspapers.[131] In her first editorial in *Yeoseong*, "For the Day When Broken Becomes One," new president Kim Kyung-o called for reconciliation by writing "I cannot tell you why our KNCW was divided into two or three and which one was right or wrong. Now is not the time or need for that. Now, we need to get back to one route. By doing so, we can become the KNCW that represents women's rights and interests."[132] The special issue also featured the opinions of several KNCW members and past officials regarding the organization's future. Past presidents Lee Chul-kyung and Sohn In-sil hoped the KNCW could recognize the community over individuals and saw the conflict as an opportunity to see what the responsibilities of an important mission (women's movement) are. Some others hoped to strengthen the secretariat and executive team to reach a more systematic, effective, and democratic way to operate.[133]

To distinguish herself from the previous leadership, Kim Kyung-o wanted to adopt a more open style of leadership and listen to members' opinions on the future of the KNCW. Her presidential message published in *The Woman* declared, "[C]urrent society rushes to a new era in a great tide. In order not to lag behind this tide, the KNCW should be positive and renovative enough to get away from the fixed ideas and stereotypes of the past. […] KNCW should be transformed in order to protect and expand women's rights to the full."[134] The democratization process in

130 *Korean National Council of Women 30 years*, 191.

131 "Controversy surrounding the KNCW General Meeting," *Dong-A Ilbo*, February 17, 1988, 7.

132 Kim Kyung-o, "Dudonggangi-ga Hana-ga Doeneun Nar-eul Wihae" [For the Day When Broken Becomes One], *Yeoseong* 3 (March 1988), 4.

133 "Teukjip. Yeohyeop Hwalseonghwa Bang-an-eul Mosaekhanda" [Special issue. KNCW, in search for energization], *Yeoseong* 3 (March 1988), 5–13.

134 Kim Kyung-o, "Presidential Message. Participation & Cooperation Expected," *The Woman* 25, no. 1 (June 1988), 10.

the 1980s had already moved the KNCW further away from the status of a state-sanctioned organization, and the organization continued to transform into a member of civil society. Kim's passage underlines the self-understanding of the changing circumstances and how the KNCW started separating itself from its authoritarian past and turned critical towards its past decisions.

One significant feature in the KNCW's search for a new beginning was closer ties to its member organizations, which, according to Kim Kyung-o, would help the Korean women's movement "bloom and bear fruit." Kim believed better cooperation among member organizations and the KNCW would be a key to more efficient problem-solving and improving KNCW's image. In the changing society, she hoped the KNCW would eliminate "fixed ideas and stereotypes" that belonged to the past to move on to the future.[135] Kim Chun-joo had held similar ideals during her short leadership. Her first and only editorial in *Yeoseong* in January 1988 called for strengthening the ties between organizations through harmony. She believed if each organization worked autonomously, it would cause division instead of unity and settlement. Kim Chun-joo compared the situation to national politics: If the president can ignore national conflicts and cooperate with people, women's organizations should be able to contribute to the development of women in each field of society in 1988 and produce a sense of grouping so that every member feels like being part of the Council.[136] To enhance the message of better cooperation of member organizations, *Yeoseong* and *The Woman* started featuring several photographs from the events of member organizations. The KNCW regulations were re-formulated and project funds were offered to the member organizations to implement changes so they could plan their actions. To exchange information, the KNCW organized meetings between the leadership and the working-level staff.[137]

Strikingly, besides creating unity, the new KNCW leadership used *Yeoseong* to highlight Hong Sook-ja's failings. The KNCW's official message in the bulletin was that withdrawal from the presidential elections brought Hong only dishonor. The readers were provided a full report on the current situation to clarify the events in the newspapers. According to the report, the affair had started when some abnormalities had been noticed in the KNCW's accounts. Several deficits in the expenses were spotted when Kim Chun-joo, the then-acting president, reviewed the final business report for the National Convention of Women for the fall of 1987. The finances had been improperly managed, and the sums were found in notebooks and bankbooks in irrational order. The report blamed Hong for leaving the position of General

[135] Kim, 10.

[136] Kim Chun-joo, "Sinnyonsa" [New Year's Address], *Yeoseong* 1–2 (Jan–Feb 1988), 4–5.

[137] "Projects For The Year of 1988," *The Woman* 25, no. 1 (June 1988), 28.

Secretary vacant for several months, so no one oversaw the use of funds, keeping the KNCW Board in the dark about the problems. According to the report, after her selection as the ICW President, Hong used that position to raise funds from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and businessmen without reporting it to the board and used the money for her travel expenses without paying them to the ICW, which was already covering the travel costs. Finally, the issue was taken to the Seoul District Prosecutor's Office, which filed a temporary suspension for the executive officers in question, Hong Sook-ja, Vice President Chang Do-song, and Treasurer Kim Kyong-som, with corruption charges. Unlike Hong's version, which she provided to the ICW, stating that she had been cleared of the charges, the KNCW announced that the organization had decided to drop the charges to promote harmony.[138]

The report in *Yeoseong* reveals certain insights into why the Hong Sook-ja scandal initially erupted. First, there was a concern about the use of KNCW funds. Nevertheless, as the report mentioned, the finances had not been very professionally handled since the beginning of the KNCW, so this was not the main reason to chastise Hong. Instead, the report suggests that since Hong had been using the name of the KNCW for suspicious fundraising, especially because she had withdrawn from the presidential race, she had caused a severe loss of face for the organization and the whole female sex. The case had caused tremendous damage to the KNCW's public image because the individuals and their selfish purposes had harmed the organization.[139] Thus, the most severe violation Hong had committed was defaming the KNCW's name for individualistic purposes. The KNCW used its disappointment with its previous leader as a campaign agenda in the National Assembly elections in 1988. The KNCW advised women to vote for people who are cooperative and active in women's issues because democracy does not work as a direct system where an individual can decide on everything. Kim Sook-ja wrote in *Yeoseong*, "We should be the masters who are wise enough to elect rightful people to carry out their duties as faithful servants."[140]

The scandal around Hong Sook-ja and the moment when the organization almost fell apart was ultimately a productive process for the KNCW, although not for Hong herself, whose career was destroyed. She had been elected President of the ICW in 1986 as an example of a woman from an Asian country with an impressive international career, but during her two-year term, she could not meet the ICW's expectations. The ICW's centennial celebration at the Triennial Conference in Washington in 1988 also marked the end of Hong's career in the ICW.

[138] "Yeohyeop, Hyeonan Satae-ui Jeonmo Bogo" [KNCW, Full report on the ongoing issue], *Yeoseong* 3 (March 1988), 14–15.

[139] "KNCW, Full report," 14–15.

[140] Kim, "Election and the People's Participation in Politics," 10.

In light of archival records, communication between the KNCW and ICW significantly decreased after Hong Sook-ja's presidency. After 1988, the ICW's archival records include only a little correspondence from South Korea. The waning correspondence can also be explained by introducing new communication technologies, but it is likely that the relationship between the organizations temporarily deteriorated due to a lack of trust on both sides. With her long international experience, Hong had been a crucial link between the national and transnational levels but was sidelined in both organizations.

Only in 1993 did KNCW President Kim Kyung-o turn to the ICW when seeking support for Korean women who had been forced to sexual labor. The "comfort women" issue – the use of women as military sex slaves by the Japanese during the Second World War became widely publicized in South Korea and elsewhere in the early 1990s. In South Korea, where it is now estimated that possibly 200 000 Korean women were taken by the Japanese to work in military "comfort women" stations, the issue was long silenced. In 1991, however, some former "comfort women" stepped up with their testimonies and demanded justice for past wrongdoings.[141] The KNCW joined other women's organizations to transnationalize the question of women suffering in war. In her letter to the ICW President, Lily Boeykens, Kim Kyung-o asked the ICW's support for South Korea's demands to make Japan apologize and compensate for the sufferings of comfort women. A newly established organization, the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Sexual Service by Japan, would submit the issue to the UN Commission on Human Rights. Kim was aware of the ICW's position as an NGO in an upcoming UN meeting in Geneva, so she hoped the ICW could help make South Korea's opinion clearly visible in the discussion.[142] Boyekens's answer to the KNCW cannot be found in the archives, but the ICW most likely once again refused to interfere in the national politics of its member councils.

7.4 Conclusion

The end of dictatorship, democratization, and the emergence of multiple new social organizations challenged the KNCW's position as the leader of the Korean women's movement. The social and political changes in South Korea at the end of the 1980s forced the 30-year-old organization to reconsider its values, working methods, and leadership style. Pronouncements by Kim Kyung-o, the new president, on the new direction of the KNCW indicate the end of an era in the organization's history. How the KNCW operated profoundly changed by the end of the authoritarian era. The democratization marks the end of the historical investigation of the KNCW's work

[141] The literature on "comfort women" is discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.
[142] Kim Kyung-o to Lily Boeykens, April 22, 1993, folder 1687 AVG-Carhif.

in this study. A demand to consider the collective memory of the Korean women's movement and the KNCW's role in it opens up. I shall return to frame the memory space for the KNCW and consider how its activity in the authoritarian era has defined its role in the historiography of the women's movement in the concluding remarks of this study.

This chapter accounts the well-known history of South Korea's democratization process in the 1980s from the less-known perspective of the KNCW. As the final chapter, it connects to the KNCW's earlier history as I have narrated it since the 1950s. For the KNCW, the democratization meant great organizational changes – ideologically and structurally. The KNCW had brought international ideas on women's development into its work since its genesis, and under the framework of the UN Decade for Women, the organization enforced them into discussion in South Korea during times when one dictatorial regime turned into another and major economic and political transformations occurred. In the early 1980s, when civil society was harshly suppressed, the KNCW could continue its work; the ICW Triennial was held in Seoul in 1982 during this period.

In the 1980s, under Hong Sook-ja's leadership, the KNCW started to increasingly discuss the idea of democratization and moved further away from the state-sanctioned role practiced during the previous decades. Hong's default from the long-awaited presidential election race plunged the organization into disarray, eventually leading the KNCW towards a new road of operation. The organization started seeking a less centralized structure that could also integrate the dozens of member organizations. However, the period of disarray harmed the good relations with the International Council of Women, and the end of the 1980s, with its domestic and international changes, marked the end of an era also in the KNCW's transnational work.

The case of the KNCW shows there was no gap in the continuity of the women's movement; instead, the movement has worked in cycles between old and new, criticism and revival. Today, those "new feminists" of the 1980s who criticized the KNCW and the lack of development in women's policies are the "old" ones, facing new groups of women activists and new demands for feminism. Since the late 1990s, the new feminist groups have also criticized the KWAU for its engagement with the state. The KWAU and KNCW have faced charges for their limited representation of women, meaning their focus is on able, heterosexual women. Issues of sexual minorities have largely remained outside the agenda of both organizations. Only recently have the differences among women been recognized. To avoid historical presentism, this study has focused on showing how the KNCW understood the

gender difference and aimed to establish policies for a category of women that is not problematized biologically or socially.[143]

I have often been asked what the KNCW achieved and why it was important. The KNCW has been criticized for slow progress in advancing women's rights, and the organization has readily acknowledged that the changes did not happen overnight. In fact, to see any major steps taken in the field of women's affairs, a decades-long perspective is needed: The revision of the Family Law was slow, the family head system was only abolished in 2005, the number of female legislators in the National Assembly has increased only slightly, prostitution still exists, and the discussion on legalizing abortion continued well until the 2020s. Yet, when we look at the big picture, the more than 30 years of history discussed here, we can see that the KNCW kept the idea of equality and women's role in society alive during very unfavorable times. The new women's organizations that saw the daylight beside the democratization movement in the 1980s did not have to start from scratch.

[143] For a more detailed discussion, see Hur, "Mapping South Korean Women's Movements," 190–194. For the Korean terminology on the sex difference and gender equality, see Kim, "Cold War Feminisms in East Asia," 507–508.

8 Conclusion

> The name Helen Kim provokes in me the same ambivalence that many people – men who had good reasons to distrust her, and other feminist women who had doubts about her integrity – admitted to feeling before and after her death. But history must be examined with a sense of irony, as Father himself often insisted. Because Helen Kim so willingly made those shady compromises, she was able to keep what was to become the single largest institution of women's education, a haven for millions of Korean women who came after her. Because she spared nothing to preserve her cause, she was able to rescue half of her country's population from ignominy and servitude. And because she pandered, she could help her fellow women to be free from pandering. Democracy is a strange beast. In my mind, her greatest achievement was to leave the next generation of women the weapons with which they could criticize her. She empowered them to become informed and able to sort right from wrong, and this empowerment may not have been possible without her flattery to the mafia-esque right-wing and their American bosses.[1]

Korean-American author Jid Lee's autobiographical memoir, *To Kill a Tiger* (2010), reveals what growing up and living in South Korea as a girl in the 1950s and 1960s was like. The book offers insight into multiple social inequities and preconditions against women. As the beginning of this dissertation suggested, certain connections can be drawn between the New Women of colonial Korea and the contemporary female writers of the 2000s who have brought up the issue of gender inequality, a cluster of which Jid Lee also joins. Lee's book talks about Kim Hwallan, also a New Woman and widely known by her English name Helen Kim, and elaborates her and other feminists' role at the Ewha campus whose contribution to a more equal Korean society Lee among others had failed to understand. As Lee's book describes, feminism was a hidden gem in her youth but something the country could not yet afford.[2]

1 Jid Lee, *To Kill a Tiger* (New York: Overlook Press, 2010), 97.
2 Lee, *To Kill a Tiger*, 97–100, 306.

Jid Lee's discussion on Kim Hwallan's legacy for Korean society and feminism illustrates the narrow memory space that has been open for the main protagonists of this dissertation – the female activists who sided with the ruling authorities during difficult but formative times when the modern South Korea we know today was in the making. Remembering Kim Hwallan is one example of the dynamics of memory in South Korea. In the late 1990s, a severe controversy arose around Kim and her thoughts and activities during the colonial era: collaboration with the Japanese colonial power to keep the Ewha school open. Also, Kim's involvement in the so-called gisaeng parties during the Korean War, which she provided Ewha students to entertain the Korean and foreign soldiers, has received criticism. According to feminist historian and activist Insook Kwon, "a political strategy of silence" was adopted by feminists and women's movement representatives not to discuss Kim, who had become a taboo.[3] So far, most of the gender analysis conducted on the authoritarian era has been limited to viewing the women through the state. However, this study shows that other interpretations are possible. This study accounted how the Korean National Council of Women under Kim's leadership in the 1960s particularly criticized the state for utilizing gisaeng houses as sites for making politics. Historian Haeseong Park analyzes that Kim, devoted to advancing the position of Korean women, was ready to exploit their sexuality for political ends because, after all, the students' participation in entertaining soldiers was under Kim's own supervision, control, and will.[4]

To borrow Jid Lee's notion on reading history, it is ironic that collaborating with the Park Chung-hee regime has defined the understanding of the KNCW as an organization. Although the KNCW is recognized today as one of the leading coalitions in the South Korean women's movement, the organization's early history has remained in the shadows. Looking beyond the relationship between the KNCW and the authoritarian state and situating Korean women's organizing within women's global activism during the Cold War, this study argues that the authoritarian era did not cease South Korean women's political activism. Instead, I have viewed the KNCW's negotiation with the authoritarian regime as a strategy to advance women's rights and examined its motivations for doing so. The discussion above on Kim Hwallan's legacy also reveals that feminism is a fluid category, and its definitions vary in time and space, making it necessary to deconstruct its meaning with historical understanding.

This dissertation examined the history of the Korean women's movement during South Korea's authoritarian era, focusing on the organizational and transnational history of one particular women's organization: the Korean National Council of

3 Kwon, "Feminists Navigating the Shoals of Nationalism," 58–59.
4 Park, "Christian Feminist Helen Kim," 171, 188.

Women. This concluding chapter presents the contributions this study makes to the fields of Korean studies, women's history, and Cold War studies empirically, theoretically, and methodologically. I highlight the political history of the authoritarian era from a gender perspective, women's transnational activism during the Cold War, the history of the everyday Cold War, and the production of the war by discourse and actions. Along the way, I mirror the key findings of the previous chapters in relation to the aims of the research. I also discuss the meaning of memory in Korean historiography and reflect on the cycle between old and new feminism. I review this study's limitations and open some opportunities for future research. Lastly, I finish with some notes on today's gender conflict in South Korea.

8.1 Contribution of This Study

I began this study with the notion that significant gaps still exist in our understanding of the development and diversity of the Korean women's movements, despite growing interest in Korean gender history in South Korean academia and abroad. By constructing a historical narrative about the KNCW and its members' activism in Cold War South Korea, I have contributed to filling the gap from the late 1950s to the turn of the 1990s. This study has brought up new visions of the histories of the Cold War and the authoritarian era in South Korea, challenging the still dominating perspectives of the male elite and military. Utilizing a gender perspective has revealed that the feminist activists during this period navigated a complex terrain of political alliances, state surveillance, and international diplomacy, making their contributions significant and unique.

My study demonstrates that by adopting the theory of mass dictatorship and Cold War feminism as analytical tools, we can develop a more nuanced image of Korean women during the authoritarian era. Throughout this study, I argue that a more diverse understanding of nation-building during the authoritarian era benefits from the gender perspective that does not condemn women's participation. Instead, as the theory of mass dictatorship suggests, it is more important to focus on analyzing the opportunities that were open for women to utilize in making their daily lives and futures. In the big picture, this study has contributed to the discussion on the contested legacies of the Park Chung-hee regime, especially in the framework of the mass dictatorship paradigm. The paradigm has been a product of an analysis related to the late 1990s Asian financial crisis and nostalgia among South Koreans towards the times of building the "Miracle of Han." My study has been motivated by the need to better understand Korean memories on the authoritarian era and to dare to view

"the grey zone" – the everyday realm between resistance and consent.[5] Thus, I join the ongoing scholarly discussions on the relationship between state and society in South Korea. Recent research on the Park Chung-hee era shows the relevance of studying the period from perspectives other than economics and politics. Examining the involvement of a social organization such as the KNCW in historical processes and networks has shed light on how Korean society under an authoritarian regime operated not only from above but below.

This study joins the recent growth of the scholarship addressing Cold War women's activism. According to Francisca de Haan, it is exactly the Cold War and its paradigms we should be reconstructing to reach the next level in the transnational history of women.[6] I complement the previously understudied Korean case and join Suzy Kim's study on North Korean women's organizing as part of the Women's International Democratic Federation by introducing how South Korean women were affiliated with the International Council of Women. By expanding the idea of Cold War feminism from the critique of American influence and maternal perspectives discussed, for instance, by Lisa Yoneyama, Mire Koikari, and Suzy Kim, the Cold War feminism observed in this study has focused on the possibilities the Cold War created for women to organize and advocate their issues.[7] As much of the recent growth in the study of Cold War women's activism has focused on the WIDF and socialist women, I have examined how the ideals and practices of the ICW and its national affiliations, particularly the one in South Korea, were influenced by the tensions of the Cold War. Broadly, these studies reflect wider interest towards non-state actors within Cold War studies. The campaigns launched by the KNCW were locally and internationally informed and connected to the pressing global questions. In the transnational scene, Korean female leaders built significant networks, including those of Kim Hwallan and Hong Sookja, who eventually reached the top of the ICW.

During the research process, I have observed how memory functions in Korean historiography and paid special attention to the absence of women's activism in the nation-building project. It is important to understand how the memories of the authoritarian era were created, why memories matter, how meanings have been changing, and who makes them. Situating the KNCW in the narrative adds to our understanding of South Korea's feminist history and its authoritarian past. In this study, narrating the past differently benefited from the concept of post-corrective

5 Yun, *Grey Zone of a Colony*, 23–26.

6 de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms," 550–551.

7 See Yoneyama, "Liberation under Siege"; Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*; Yoneyama*, Cold War Ruins; Kim*, "Origins of Cold War Feminism."

historiography drawn from the works of Kelly Coogan-Gehr and Clare Hemmings.[8] Given the international context in which the KNCW was born and operated, I have added another chapter to the history of the Korean women's movement, its transnational character, and the meaning of Cold War for its past, present, and future as the Korean women's organizations continue to fight for peace and freedom on the Korean peninsula.

While conducting this study, I have engaged in an intertextual reading of women's issues and joined an emerging field of research that utilizes gender and agency as categories of analysis; seeks to find lost voices, characters, and motives from history; and adopts interdisciplinary and intersectional methodologies to discuss the interplay between feminism, the state, women's movements, race, nationality, religion, and gender. I have analyzed rich empirical material, such as correspondence and other archival documents, women's periodicals, different reports produced by and on women's organizations, and newspapers, among others. This transnational archive originated from women's networks between Seoul, Paris, and beyond. Together, these sources have produced a historical narrative providing a multilingual perspective on the Cold War with a focus on South Korea.

This study has followed the KNCW for three decades, mainly under three leaders. The KNCW participated in making the Korean nation and spoke on behalf of women's inclusion. Along the way, its agenda matured, not least because of the development of women's studies, which provided analysis and tools for women's organizations to use. In the 1960s, following the military coup and the Park Chung-hee regime's establishment, the KNCW, under Kim Hwallan's leadership, still firmly believed the state would repay women's participation in nation-building. Kim was ready to collaborate when she found it useful; thus, the KNCW interacted with the state. Simultaneously, the KNCW could present its own arguments, such as how the population problem was an issue of gender equality, and support issues of national security, such as South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War.

In the 1970s, when Park Chung-hee's rule harshened, the KNCW found space to operate in international circles since international recognition was what South Korea longed for. On the national scene, the KNCW, under Lee Sook-chong's leadership, sought to utilize the legislation – the only influence-making channel available – to advance revisions to the Family Law. Nevertheless, the women's organization had to face the reality that the law-making machine under the Yushin system was handicapped. The KNCW balanced itself between the hopes of change and geopolitical realism. In that framework, however, the recognition of international development in the issue of gender equality intensified, bringing new ideas to the

8 See Hemmings, "Telling feminist stories"; Coogan-Gehr, *Geopolitics of the Cold War*; Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter*.

KNCW and spreading the message of the UN's sponsored International Women's Year and Women's Decade in South Korea.

Unlike in previous decades, the KNCW had several leaders in the 1980s, and the organization was clearly in pain to overcome the leadership issue. Under the leadership of Hong Sook-ja, who represented a new generation of women, the KNCW started cherishing democratic ideals more clearly without any preconditions and took a more definite position concerning workers' rights or violence against women. Hong's election as the leader of the ICW was a high point in South Korean women's international participation. However, Hong's career in the KNCW and ICW ended in a scandal that both organizations wanted to be swept under the rug.

These developments paint a picture of Korean society's transformation. The KNCW was very conscious of its surroundings, be it the demands of internationalism, the realism of the Cold War on the Korean peninsula, the requirements of economic growth, and the improvements in the quality of life. The previous scholarship tends to evaluate women's social and political activism framed by broader goals more critically than gender-specific issues.[9] I argue that women's activism cannot be disconnected from the broader political and social change in South Korea. I have taken the KNCW women seriously, as Cynthia Enloe suggests, and placed them in the context of South Korea's political history; thus, I have uncovered surprising intersections between their paths and key figures and events in the country's conventional political narrative.[10]

The transnational dimension in the work of the KNCW is significant yet invisible in most of the previous research concerning the organization. Chapter 3 shows that this organization was founded following an initiative from the International Council of Women as part of its strategy to connect women in Asia and Africa to its network and counter communism in these areas. Since the ICW could not exist in communist China and never managed to create an affiliation with Japan, South Korea became the ICW's steppingstone in East Asia. I argue that the operation of the national councils cannot be understood only on the local level; their operation needs to be examined as part of the Cold War women's internationalism. The transnational–local nexus suggests the agency of South Korean women was not limited to South Korea–US relations and that the connections to the broader international women's movement were created through the ICW. This study thus challenges the dominance of the South Korea–US relationship, highlighting that alternative pathways also

[9] See Laura C. Nelson and Cho Haejoang, "Women, gender, and social change in South Korea since 1945," in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Korean History*, ed. Michael J. Seth (London and New York: Routledge, 2016); Kim, "Resurgence and Popularization of Feminism," 78.

[10] Enloe, *Curious Feminist*, 3.

existed. During the Cold War, South Korea balanced between post-colonial and anti-communist identities.

The rivalry between the ICW and the WIDF, especially their race in the Third World, benefited the women in developing countries to participate in the transnational discussion on women's issues. This is not to say that the work of either organization was all-inclusive, as many women were excluded and did not experience the outcomes of the women's policymaking in their everyday lives. Transnational feminism continued serving those from better backgrounds – educated and networked women. However, they were in a position that enabled them to introduce gender-sensitive legislation to the decision-makers; often, they were in the ranks of the decision-makers as being among the first women elected to the national assemblies and parliaments, although limited in numbers.

As Chapter 3 discussed, the Cold War rivalry on the Korean peninsula influenced the operation of the ICW and the WIDF, even to an extent that led to a temporary expulsion of the WIDF from the UN. Yet, the history of Korean women's involvement in the international women's movement in the early Cold War reminds that the ideological divisions were not simply a product of the Cold War. The long-term approach highlights that women, who after the Korean liberation and national division actively participated in shaping the futures of South and North Korea, had begun their careers in colonial Korea, and the motives for their activism were rooted in the patriarchal nature of Korean culture. It is also evident that, for instance, Kim Hwallan and Pak Chong-ae, the leader of the North Korean Women's Democratic Union, shared a similar reputation among their own international networks. Suzy Kim describes how Pak was praised among the WIDF as an extraordinary Asian woman fighting imperialism and defending Korean independence, peace, and women.[11] Kim Hwallan was similarly an expected visitor and speaker in multiple occasions. Following their life stories, I have examined how the Cold War shaped gender cultures and how Cold War feminism was produced in the work of women's organizations in both Koreas. The chapter also clearly indicates the KNCW has its roots in the Cold War aspirations of the international women's movement.

Chapter 4 traced the KNCW's early years and how the organization found room to operate near the Park Chung-hee regime. The KNCW women believed the state had the power to bring permanent changes to women's lives. In its relationship with the authoritarian regime, the KNCW insisted that gender equality must be the precondition for women's ability to participate in nation-building. South Korea's geopolitical position in the Cold War was a way for women to pressure the government to consider improving women's status. By utilizing the global

[11] Kim, *Among Women across Worlds*, esp. 14.

development paradigm and South Korea's position as a subempire, the KNCW connected South Koreans' desire to develop women's rights.

Chapter 4 established that the right to participate in modernization and national security as a "women's issue" is an entry point needed to understand women's activities, the role of women's organizations, and the choices they had to make under authoritarian rule. Scholars such as Seungsook Moon and Carter J. Eckert argue that understanding the role of militarism in Korean society is relevant here.[12] By the 1960s, Korea had faced five international wars, which had touched the peninsula and its development within a relatively short time. The Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War at the turn of the 19th century were fought on Korean soil and sealed China's decreasing and Japan's increasing influence in the area. Following the First World War as part of the winning Allies, Japan legitimatized its presence in East Asia and the Korean peninsula. In the Second World War or the Pacific War, Koreans sacrificed themselves as part of the Japanese military machine by producing war materials, while the Japanese forced some Korean women to sexual slavery. Finally, the most devastating of all, the Korean War ripped the peninsula apart. Given the influence of war and the military in Korea for the development of 20th century, it is unsurprising that during the Cold War, militarism affected every section of society; thus, women's motives to participate in the war effort must be reviewed through that lens. In the work of the KNCW, Cold War feminism meant emancipating women through development and the fight against communism. Ultimately, because of their domestic significance, women were those who brought state ideology into the home.

As Chapters 4 and 5 analyzed, the KNCW participated in and adopted many government policies, such as support for the war in Vietnam, economic frugality, and family planning. Although the level of activism was mainly local and national, the Cold War framework of this study has helped contextualize how the centrality of war, scientific domesticity, and reproductive rights were global issues. These chapters contribute to the scholarship on how the Cold War was a produced, imagined, and lived reality.[13] However, as I have delved deeper into the KNCW's argumentation on behalf of women's rights, the motives for participation in the state's projects have diversified. By analyzing the KNCW publications *Yeoseong* and *The Woman* in Chapter 5, I discussed how the KNCW contributed to advancing legal reform on women's status and argued for the necessity to revise the Family Law to allow women's full participation in nation-building. Regarding family planning, the KNCW argued that no planning would be needed had gender equality

12 See Moon, *Militarized Modernity*; Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea.*
13 See Kwon, *Other Cold War*; Masuda, *Cold War Crucible*.

been fulfilled. The organization utilized the centrality of housewives in the domestic sphere as an argument for greater opportunities for women to participate in national development. The KNCW also expressed frustration towards the economy-driven state and demanded protection for consumers and the environment. Thus, the organization also aligned itself with the policies of the UN, gaining more leverage in its work. Through campaigns and by producing leaflets, magazines, and books, the KNCW spoke to women and on their behalf – as housewives, mothers, citizens, and leaders – and sought to inspire women to edge out into the political arena and towards female leadership.

Chapter 6 analyzed the KNCW's transnational networks. Throughout this study, I have demonstrated the connections and communication between the KNCW and ICW. My observations on their relationship have strengthened Kim Young-sun's previous analysis of the KNCW's transnational character. The leaders of the KNCW appeared to have more in common with their international counterparts in some aspects – middle-class background, university degrees, occupations, religion – than with their sisters in Korea, which explains the relatively smooth integration of Korean women within the networks of the ICW. Because of this integration, the international head organization was willing to utilize Koreans as its representatives in East Asia.

The battle between anti-communism and communism was influential and productive for women's activism during the Cold War. Out of the debates on women's status grew the International Women's Year in 1975 and the Decade for Women, along with World Conferences on Women. The KNCW was vocal in South Korea in communicating the meaning of these events to local audiences. As Chapter 6 argues, the Korean women's movement was not isolated from the international sphere but actively participated and brought women together well before the transnational solidarity movements for the "comfort women" in the 1990s. Eventually, organizing the ICW's main event – the Triennial Conference – in Seoul in 1982 clearly manifested the recognition of Korean women's efforts in international arenas. Here, the KNCW's relationship with the state played a crucial role. While the ICW was willing to ignore the human rights conditions in South Korea under the Chun Doo-hwan regime, it proved once again its apolitical stance of staying clear from national politics.

While the democratic uprising in Gwangju and its bloody aftermath in 1980 did not influence the ICW to problematize its relationship with South Korea, during the 1980s it had to face the meaning of national politics for the KNCW. Chapter 7 demonstrated how democracy gained more weight on the KNCW's agenda. Throughout the study, I have sought to problematize the division line between the government's supporters and the opposition. The democratization movement shows that the camps were not clear entities, and it is evident that throughout the

authoritarian era, most of the people did not share a single vision of the country's future. Rather unwillingly, the ICW faced the pains of democratization in South Korea when Hong Sook-ja, its Korean president, entered national politics. The correspondence between Hong and the ICW headquarters has provided a novel lens to examine an individual in the whirls of South Korea's democratization. The 1980s also witnessed an emergence of new women's organizations, many of which also had a critical attitude towards the KNCW, which they considered conservative and old-fashioned. On the contrary, the KNCW welcomed the new actors to broaden the spectrum of the women's movement. Clearly, by the turn of the 1990s, the terrain in which the KNCW had once operated had changed. Although democratization was not completed in one night – many think the process is still ongoing – for the KNCW, the democratic turn marked a pivotal moment of self-reflection and reconsideration of its role and leadership in the organization.

8.2 Contested Memories

After the country's democratization, the remembrance of the past became an issue of competition among social forces in South Korea. The struggles over interpretation include sensitive points of memory, such as the Japanese colonial era and collaboration issue, the Korean War and the atrocities committed by South and North Korean soldiers and their allies, and the images of presidents Syngman Rhee and Park Chung-hee.[14] The need for new interpretations of the past was not only related to the democratization but to the end of the Cold War in the rest of the world and the collapse of communism in Europe. Following these developments, the scenery of history writing took new steps across the world, not least due to opened access to archives that had been closed for decades.[15] However, the Korean peninsula did not move to the post-Cold War era in the 1990s as most of the rest of the world did. Instead, it faced North Korea's nuclear crisis, worsening relations between the US and North Korea, between the two Koreas, and eventually, the Asian financial crisis. Demands for reexamining Korea's history and national existence, particularly in relation to the topics mentioned above, were high.[16] Yet, this process unfolded alongside the influence of victimhood nationalism, which, as Jie-Hyun Lim argues,

14 Chung Yong-wook, "War and Memory in Korean History," *The Review of Korean Studies* 7, no. 3 (2004): 3. See also Baker, "Exacerbated Politics," 192–212; Don Baker, "Memory Wars and Prospects for Reconciliation in South Korea," in *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*, ed. Mikyoung Kim (London and New York: Routledge, 2016); Mikyung Kim, "Introduction: Memory and reconciliation," in *Routledge Handbook of Memory.*

15 Miyoshi Jager and Kim, "Korean War after the Cold War," 233.

16 Chung, "War and Memory in Korean History," 4–5.

continues to shape dominant narratives and hinders critical self-reflection on questions of historical responsibility.[17] The civil society empowered through democratization has also played a role in investigating the past. For instance, as mentioned, in the early 1990s, the KNCW participated in the restoration project for the victims of Japanese colonialism in the form of the "comfort women" issue. However, to a great extent, organizations such as the KNCW that had collaborated with the authoritarian regime have not played the role of a knowledge producer about the country's authoritarian past.

During the authoritarian era, the KNCW clearly considered itself the flagship of the Korean women's movement, as is evident from the material the organization produced. The organization saw itself as the heir of the colonial era women's activism, and it placed itself in the story of the Korean nation and worked towards a better future for Korea with pride. It imagined a future where both sexes would be equal but where there was no room for communists. Against this backdrop, the image of the KNCW presented in most of the Korean and English language scholarship on the Korean women's movement notably differs. There, the KNCW is presented as a condescending group that accepted orders from above. The democratization influenced the formation of this image and created a one-sided memory. Kim Young-sun suggests that the difficult historiography of the KNCW viewing the organization as the Yushin era "official" or "conservative" women's movement is related to the emergence of the progressive women's movement in solidarity with the democratization movement. The new players of the women's movement viewed the KNCW as an organization only targeted towards middle-class women and not participating in the democratization movement.[18] The image has been enforced by presenting the Korean Women's Association United after its establishment in 1987 as the progressive option and the true representative of the women's movement. The histories written from the perspective of the KWAU and the new women's movement of the 1980s have significantly affected the remembering of the earlier layers of the women's movement. This position neglects the trend that new movements often build on top of previous ones to continue or challenge them. In my view, however, the KWAU was born as a reaction of dissatisfaction with the previous generation's feminism.[19]

Unlike the so-called wave metaphor suggests, the history of feminism is not based on waves that come and go. Instead, we should consider the forces that build upon the previous ones. Part of the original force is maintained, and part of it is

[17] Lim, *Victimhood Nationalism*.

[18] Kim, "Internationalization of Women's Movement," 173n3.

[19] On the relationship of KWAU and KNCW from the 1990s onwards, see Jones, "Mainstreaming Gender"; Moon, "Women and Civil Society," 137.

replaced with new ideas and conventions. Thus, feminism is cyclical. As gender historians Karen Offen and Karen Garner suggest, it is important to point out that historical women's activism, even with its failures and historiographical invisibility, served the future women's movement.[20] In the Korean case, a certain circulation of old and new women would be the most appropriate description of the women's movement. When the New Women as a cultural sphere emerged in 1920s colonial Korea, there were "old women" who had already spoken on behalf of girls' education. Those belonging to the New Women generation, such as Kim Hwallan and Lee Sook-chong, continued their careers after the height of New Women had faded away. Strikingly, given the wide interest towards the New Women, little research has been conducted on their lives after the colonial period. One unanswered question is where did they go and what happened to them in liberated Korea? Some of the early Korean feminists have been found in the histories of North Korea, thanks to the work of Ruth Barraclough and Suzy Kim, among others, but especially in English language literature, their presence in the nation-building project of authoritarian South Korea is missing. This study has contributed to making more visible what happened to those women during the Park Chung-hee era.

In the genealogy of Korean feminism and the women's movement, if we continue following the cycle, we notice that again, a set of new women emerged along the democratization movement, and they eventually secured their position as part of gender mainstreaming in the 1990s. However, the KWAU, as the leader of these new women's groups, faced the challenge of operating as an umbrella organization without drifting too far in any political direction or losing touch with its roots. It struggled to create interest among the younger generations of women and had to acknowledge that its ignorance of middle-class women restrained its support base since the middle class formed a significant mass.[21] Since the mid-1990s until the mid-2000s, young feminists who operated on university campuses and identified identity politics and challenging patriarchy as their key themes formed a new cycle of feminism. According to Jinsook Kim, it is now the "young young feminists," easily navigating online platforms to make their case, who have framed the new coming of feminism in South Korea since 2015.[22] Previously, women's organizations and professionals dominated women's activism, but the recent popularization of feminism in South Korea, related to the prevailing patriarchy, misogyny, and gender conflict, has, for the first time in history, brought feminism

20 Offen, *European Feminisms*, esp. Conclusion; Garner, *Shaping A Global Women's Agenda*, 10.
21 Louie, "Minjung feminism," 425, 428.
22 Kim, "Resurgence and Popularization of Feminism," 85–86.

into ordinary people's lives.[23] The generational perspective helps highlight that the basic issues such as sexual violence, reproductive rights, and participation in labor and politics remain unchanged throughout decades and cycles. Drawing from Jid Lee's idea at the beginning of this chapter, the key feature is that previous movements provide tools for criticism for future generations, which is essential for the nature of feminism.

After the most intense democratic transition period in the late 1980s and the turn of the 1990s, the relationship between the KWAU and the previous women's mass organizations, such as the KNCW, started to improve. Still, in 1991, the Korea Women's Development Institute saw in its White Paper on Women that the antagonism between the two organizations was a major issue, asking them to tolerate each other's differences in ideology and activities.[24] After the more radical period of resistance against the state during the democratization, the KWAU adopted a more moderate line seeking to institutionalize the gender issues in the new democratic country. In the 1990s, new women's organizations that had emerged from the democratization movement, such as the KWAU, registered with the state, started receiving public funds, and institutionalized their role through the Kim Young-sam, Kim Dae-jung, and Roh Moo-hyun administrations, as gender equality attained a larger role in the state's agenda.[25]

In the process, the boundaries between activists and policymakers blurred, and the women's movement lost part of its radicalism of the democratization era.[26] According to Seungsook Moon, the status of the KWAU was "[…] changing from fighters against the state to collaborators with it."[27] Here, the women's organizations faced the dilemma this dissertation has addressed: how to coexist with or be independent of the state. Kim Young-sun sees certain similarities in the attempts of the KNCW and the women's organizations of the 1990s to engage the state to institutionalize women's affairs. With this dissertation, I have joined Kim's argument that the state feminism and gender mainstreaming of the 1990s have their historical roots in the authoritarian era. [28] The post-liberation extension of women's rights and national reconstruction, women's voluntary organizations, the work of the KNCW, and especially its engagement in enforcing the UN actions on women's status and demanding the establishment of a governmental organ for women's affairs have all been important steppingstones towards the improvements that occurred in

23 Jung, "'Gender Wars,'" 4–5.
24 Moon, "Women and Civil Society in South Korea," 136–137, 144n20.
25 Moon, "Redrafting Democratization," 121.
26 Jung, *Practicing Feminism in South Korea*, 5, 78.
27 Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 112.
28 Kim, "Internationalization of Women's Movement," 188–190.

the 1990s. Here, I have broadened Kim's argument by explicitly examining the KNCW's activities based on numerous primary sources – national and transnational – from the 1950s to the 1990s.

The rich material the KNCW produced over the years on the status of women has indeed merited reading from a new approach. Considering the background, life histories, and personal connections of the founders and activists of the KNCW, it is difficult to see any other trajectory than acquiescence to the developmentalist, anti-communist, and increasingly authoritarian state that the organization had to choose to pursue its goals. In retrospect, we can recognize certain breaks in history and acknowledge their meaning for change. To uncover what women imagined to be the best futures for their nation, we need future anteriority to open the future of the specific past, as Tani Barlow suggests.[29] South Korea, during the authoritarian era, underwent dramatic and rapid changes in the name of modernization. Inevitably, at that pace of development, also utopian dreams of the country's future appeared. Thus, it should be unsurprising that women also dared to dream about gender equality and laid their beliefs on modernization and economic development, which would help them attain their goals.

8.3 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

At the beginning of this study, I posed questions on methodology and epistemology. What does it mean to write transnational and national history, and how can sources from both sides help supplement each other? What does it mean to write Cold War history on Korea where the Cold War has not ended? As noted elsewhere, making visible the manifestations of the Cold War in a divided nation like Korea and its effects on the paths of women's activism on the local and transnational levels deepens our understanding of how a conflict can also be productive.[30] Uncovering these previously unknown narratives also creates legacies and resources for contemporary movements.

By finishing this study, it has become clear that mainstream Cold War historiography has limited our understanding of the nature of anti-communist feminism. While much of the recent research has focused on uncovering the communist women's contributions and their agency, the other camp deserves equal attention. The lack of previous research on the Cold War policies of the International Council of Women has sometimes made it challenging for me to contextualize the Korean case. As I am aware that the ICW's archives would have a lot of material to

[29] Barlow, Q*uestion of Women in Chinese Feminism*, 3.
[30] Kauhanen, "From Seoul to Paris," 593.

examine in this matter, combined with personal collections and, for instance, the materials of the Committee of Correspondence, I look forward to new openings in gendered Cold War history.

My limitations in locating certain sources have left some questions open; thus, the narrative in this study is sometimes denser and sometimes more incomplete. During the research process, I could stand on the same ground in the same locations as the KNCW women did: at the Ewha campus where everything began, at the KNCW headquarters in Yongsan, at the grave of Yuk Young-soo in Seoul National Cemetery, and in the City Hall and the Gwanghamun Square, which were filled with pro-democracy demonstrators in 1987. Yet, what separated us was time and the transformation of South Korean society and cityscape between the 1960s and the 2010s. My distance in time and space with the subjects of this study has inevitably shaped the themes this study highlights. History's ability to reflect reality is limited. In my interpretation, based on a handpicked collection of archival material and published sources, I have reached a certain kind of conclusion, which is by no means a perfect image of the past. I welcome new additions to the story of the Korean National Council of Women as, hopefully, the archives of the KNCW and other women's organizations will be better organized and open to the public someday. Similarly, I wish someone with better contacts and resources could conduct those interviews that I did not do before it is too late. That would greatly contribute to a specific generation of Korean women, even given the limitations related to oral history and memories. I have also mainly focused on the leadership of the KNCW, which leaves its grassroots-level organizing open for future examinations.

My study has made visible how gender discourse was not only related to home and family but to many institutions of power. As demonstrated here, gender equality was not a separate discussion from the economy, national defense, politics, legislation, and the court system, which, in many ways, were the most masculine spheres of society. Future research has much potential to broaden the gender perspective on Cold War South Korea from the organizational history of the KNCW in this study. Topics I have discussed in short, such as the Vietnam War, consumer movement, or environmental issues, form an interesting framework for examining women's participation. Our understanding of the authoritarian past benefits from using a wide array of sources. Chun Kyung-ock's notion on Korean women's political history and microhistory perspective guides for including women from all walks of life and searching for other means to hold power beyond the state.[31] Women's magazines, personal accounts, cultural products, and museum collections are examples of materials that are quite readily available for researchers.

31 See Chun, "Epistemology and Methodology."

This study has covered a time span from the 1950s to the turn of the 1990s. Still, there is more material to examine, such as what happened to the KNCW after 1990, or to look closer at how the KNCW started addressing working women on its agenda from the 1970s and 1980s onwards, a topic I have only touched upon here. Focusing on the turn of the 1990s would allow us to further examine the tensions between old and new feminists and their impact on gender mainstreaming. Another interesting topic would be how the KNCW continued promoting inter-Korean relations in the 1990s, inspired by the unification of Germany. Due to efforts by female activists, including the KNCW, women from North and South Korea gathered four times from 1991 to 1993 in Seoul, Pyongyang, and Tokyo to hold a discussion on "Peace in Asia and the Role of Women." [32] Examining these meetings and networks would allow us to bridge the developments during the Korean War, the crucible of the Cold War, and the so-called post-Cold War world around women's interest in peace.

In addition, the other end of the time span covered here, especially events preceding 1959 and the establishment of the KNCW, still lacks accuracy. I have traced the transnational context and Rose Parsons's role in helping a Korean affiliation with the ICW take form. But how the KNCW emerged from the previous women's groups and coalitions, what kind of personal friendships and maybe rivalries were in the background, and why none of the existing organizations took the role of Korean council remains largely open. Thus, a missing chapter is still needed to bridge my study and for example the work of Lee Im-ha, who has focused on women during the liberation space and the Korean War.

Finally, I hope the stories of the individuals discussed here and many others will inspire studies on transnational consciousness as a historical phenomenon that goes beyond nationalism and further challenges the previous beliefs related to the Cold War. For instance, the correspondence of Hong Sook-ja reveals that she held connections to European and even Finnish social democrats; examining this sphere of influence-making would be greatly interesting, not to mention Hong's other networks. Additionally, a path of research that deserves broader attention and interests me personally the most is the work of Helvi Sipilä and her contribution to Finnish-Korean relations. This study has featured Sipilä as a representative of the UN and the ICW, who visited South Korea twice and received attention from the South Korean media. What would definitely deserve more scholarly attention is how the personal relations of Sipilä and the example she set as a female leader in the UN and as a presidential candidate helped women in different locations find empowerment.

[32] See Choi, "Unified Women's Movement."

8.4 Only Utopian Dreams?

Today, the Korean National Council of Women is a women's organization of over two million members. In the 60 years since its establishment, the KNCW has become a mature organization that still operates around the issue of achieving gender equality in South Korea. Settling their friction, the KNCW and KWAU have cooperated in various projects and, among other issues, proposed jointly adopting a quota system for political elections, revising the Family Law, and eliminating the military extra point system.[33] Over the years, the KNCW has produced several female politicians in national and international arenas. In the spring of 2018, the KNCW participated in the evolving #MeToo campaign that brought issues of sexual harassment and unbroken gender inequality in South Korea into large-scale public discussion. The KNCW announced the establishment of a support center for the #MeToo movement and, with other women's organizations, launched a campaign to influence the legislation and procedures related to reporting harassment cases and other forms of support to women. The organization wanted to highlight not only the issue of sexual harassment but the wage gap, glass ceilings, and other issues related to women's rights in workplaces.[34] The organization has not forgotten its transnational roots and the appeal Kim Hwallan made in 1959: that internationalism is the demand of our times. The ICW Triennial returned to Seoul after 30 years in 2012, and a South Korean served as the president of the ICW for the second time from 2015 to 2022 when Kim Jung-sook, a former member of the National Assembly (1996–2004) and a founder of the Korean Institute for Women and Politics, held the position.

33 Moon, "Women and Civil Society," 136–137; Moon, "Redrafting Democratization," 121; Hur, "Mapping South Korean Women's Movements," 190. Before the 1990s, the KNCW had been the only organ that suggested quotas. This was done in 1984, 1987, and 1988 at the National Convention on Women. See Jones, "Mainstreaming Gender," 295; Lee Hye-sook, *Gukgawa Yeoseongjeongchaek* [The State and Women's Policy] (Seoul: Dasan Book, 2016), 131. For more on the history of the KNCW from the 1980s onwards, see Hye-ran Oh, "Activities of Women's Organizations in Korea: Focusing on the Activities of the Korean National Council of Women since the 1980s," *Asian Women* 5 (Fall 1997): 145–155.

34 See #MeToo, #Withyou "Urineun kkeutkkaji hamkke handa! Gijahoe-gyeon gaechwi" [We Stand Together Until the End! Press Conference Held] posted March 5, 2018 to the online notice board of the KNCW, http://www.kncw.or.kr/admin/bbs/board.php?bo_table=02_02&wr_id=237 [accessed February 22, 2019]; Choi Keum-sook, "Hanguk Yeoseong Danche Hyeobuihoe 60nyeon Yeoseong Undongsa: Beoseu Chajang Gija Jeonhwa Gyohwanwon Deung Chabyeore Matseoda" [Korean National Council of Women, 60 years of women's movement's history: Bus Conductors, Telephone Operators, etc., Stand Against Discrimination], *Yeoseong Shinmun*, October 26, 2019, http://www.womennews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=193921 [accessed July 18, 2020].

Writings on women and by women analyzed in this study –in the form of articles in *Yeoseong* and *The Woman*, letters sent between Seoul and Paris, or newspaper accounts – signal the KNCW's hope for a better future. In my reading, the KNCW actively reevaluated women's status in theory and practice, although the organization did not seek to radically challenge the social order and the ruling regimes. Were the hopes of gender equality that the KNCW had cherished for decades only part of the authoritarian utopia? In today's South Korea, this hope is seemingly fading as the country faces the severe outcomes of its rapid development. This dissertation has highlighted how the overlapping and unfinished processes of post-colonialization and democratization combined with the unfilled promise of gender equality created tension that has fueled the women's movement for the duration of the Republic of Korea's whole existence. Notably, those processes have caused many other inequalities. Economic instability, societal competitiveness, lack of social safety nets, growing income inequality, high prices of living and education, youth unemployment, and regional differences are keenly related to South Korea's path to modernization. The future as an economically developed and strong nation that Koreans envisioned together during the authoritarian era has come with dystopian features. To borrow from literature scholar Youngju Ryu, "the ready willingness of Korean people to exit from life […] is matched in degree only by their great reluctance to give birth to new life," referring to South Korea's record-high suicide rate and record-low fertility.[35] The roots of the decreasing fertility rate can be directly traced back to the Park Chung-hee era and the family planning campaigns that women so eagerly adopted. Having fewer than two children, even if they are girls, however, has not helped South Korea reach gender equality.

To end this study where I began, it returns to present-day feminism and its historicity in South Korea. I started this dissertation project in 2015, which has been considered a moment of feminist reboot. That year marked a momentum for the collectivization of feminist identities through social media channels among South Korean women and the beginning of Megalia, an online platform seeking to fight misogyny.[36] Indeed, in a survey by the Korean Women's Development Institute in 2019, nearly half of female respondents in their 20s self-identified as feminists.[37] Today, the KNCW is still insisting on its core vision of gender equality it has held since the 1960s: Women need guidance and protection but also opportunities to show their capacity. Still, instead of men as protectors, the KNCW has, throughout its history, believed in women as a source of empowerment for other women. In a panel discussion organized by *The Korea Times* in the summer of 2024, the current KNCW

35 Ryu, *Writers of the Winter Republic*, 178.
36 Kim, "Resurgence and Popularization of Feminism," 76–77.
37 Kim, "Resurgence and Popularization of Feminism," 77.

President Huh Myung once again confirmed that for the KNCW, gender equality does not mean men should be excluded or something should be taken away from them. Gender equality is not a zero-sum game.[38] This notion greatly resembles what Chapter 7 discussed on the KNCW's vision of the task of the women's movement.

However, that argument seems to be very far away from the public discourse. Violence against women takes place not only inside the walls of the home but in public. Misogyny occurs on online and offline forums. Many politicians condemn feminism. Women's counter-attacks have taken the form of defaming men, online trolling and mirroring gender inequality against men. This signals the seriousness of gender conflict in today's South Korea. The #MeToo movement represents a continuum to the debates around women's rights, citizenship, and agency since the Cold War. The new feminist organizing around loose online communities adopts self-help and pragmatism as forms of activism, whether in the form of joining the Escape the Corset movement criticizing beauty standards or the 4B movement (refusal of marriage, childbirth, romances, and sexual relationships with men).[39] This militant online feminism combines the legacies of the far-reaching militarization of Korean society and the critique towards the feminist foremothers and Korean society at large.

The intensity of today's activism in South Korea signals long-denied gender equality and frustration. This dissertation has provided an analysis of an era when the constitutional promises for gender equality failed Korean women. Nevertheless, this study's protagonists could not imagine how the future would turn out. Although many of the legislative reforms and grievances the KNCW and other female activists proposed, advocated, and lobbied for decades have been achieved, the issue of equality remains unanswered. Abolishment of the *hojuje* system has been replaced with questions on how to be *sedaeju* (head of one's own household) when family and relationships do not offer comfort and safety amidst economic insecurity. The decriminalization of abortion finally became effective in 2021, yet now women face the pressure to make babies to keep the nation going amidst the shrinking population. Sexual violence against women in war is no distant memory as women face their lives being threatened in relationships and on the streets. Historizing these issues, this dissertation has explored the connections between the Cold War and women and demonstrated how women's activism, agency, and networks on local and

[38] Lee Hyo-jin, "FORUM | 'Not having enough women in decision-making positions will hold Korea back,'" *The Korea Times* June 5, 2024, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2024/08/113_376054.html [accessed August 24, 2024].

[39] Jieun Lee and Euisol Jeong, "The 4B movement: envisioning a feminist future with/in a non-reproductive future in Korea," *Journal of Gender Studies* 30, no. 5 (2021): 633–634.

transnational scales reveal the often-overlooked roles women play in navigating and challenging the national and geopolitical dynamics.

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This list includes texts and other sources cited in this study. Excluded are newspaper and magazine texts due to their sheer numbers, which would have exhausted the bibliography. Also, materials available on different online databases are not mentioned separately by name. However, all sources are cited and mentioned with full bibliographic details in the footnotes when used for the first time. Online sources have been accessible on the date mentioned in the footnote. For Korean language publications published by an institution, the institution's name is provided in English in the bibliography. Thus, for example, all the publications by the Korean National Council of Women are listed sequentially regardless of the language of the publication.

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