Expressive Struggles: Neoliberal Temporalities and the Social Reproduction of Feminized Labor in South Korea

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines newly unionized female janitorial workers' struggle in the process of public sector privatization that has unfolded after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis in South Korea. It offers a critique of the discourse of labor precarity and the universalizing neoliberal temporality under global financial capitalism expressed in the post-developmental state regime. This ethnographic study utilizes the oral histories of women workers in their fifties and sixties to trace their life histories which encompass the developmental state regime (1970s – 1990s) and the neoliberal reform era (1997 – present) in Korea. The elderly female janitors' life-stories demonstrate how multiple institutions, mainly the state, the law, labor unions, and the family, participate in the process of capitalist social reproduction of feminized labor. Firstly, I argue that labor precarity is not a new accumulation strategy in global capitalism and Korean developmentalism. The newness narrative prevalent in studies of labor precarity forecloses a radical critique of the reproduction of capitalist social relations by erasing histories of the laboring subjects whose lives repeatedly fall into the old and new categories of the Other and the outsiders. Seen from the female workers' standpoint, labor precarity has intensified from the inception of developmental capitalism to its afterlife under the present neoliberal regime in

Korea. This politics of forgetting erases the heterogeneous histories of feminized labor and reinforces the hegemonic neoliberal temporality that is produced by global financial capitalism. Secondly, I contend that the middle-aged women's struggles at work and in their poverty-stricken homes are emblematic sites of reproductive crises and of a general contradiction immanent in developmental state capitalism and its neoliberal becoming. This view decenters the Western welfare state-centric discourse of labor precarity and suggests rethinking contemporary social struggles from the sites of reproductive contradictions. Lastly, I propose the concept of spatial intimacy as a node for larger coalition building strategies among precarious laboring subjects living under uneven geographies of neoliberal conditions of life. This study suggests that the notion of spatial intimacy that attends to the ways laboring bodies traverse between the realms of production and reproduction to create surplus value enables us to draw a cognitive map connecting various sites of social reproductive crises and to envision a radical feminist politics of care and solidarity.

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Vignette One: How the life-stories began

(Two Hands - "Hands for art are not different from those of workers."
From "Hand Project" Exhibit at the Seoul Marginal Theater Festival, June 2014, Copyright. Hee Kang Shu)

The world looked fractured, divided, black and white, vulnerable, and indisputably lonely. I entered the world of conflicting images in the summer of 2013 into the overwhelming milieu of field research. My initial exposure to the world of objects left me with one starkly realistic photograph. The exploratory research trip in the summer led into a student-worker collaborative art project in the following year through which a number of female janitors learned some basic drawing techniques with quotidian materials like chairs, desks, and uniforms in their workplace. For various reasons, the janitors' collection of art works could not be exhibited on the university campus, known for having the best art school in South Korea. After a brief exhibit in a small underground union office on the fringe of the university, a student who led the project curated the collection as part of the Seoul Marginal Theatre Festival in 2014. *Two Hands* was hung on a black wall in a small theater located in the unevenly developed old town, Myeongdong. *Two Hands* captures the ethos of capitalism's worldview which reduces human life energies and desires into useful body parts accentuating their functions, motions, forms, and skills. Frozen and timeless in compelling silence, the image exudes a certain sense of physical pain accumulated through repetitive manual labor and a sense of fixation not as the original state but as a transfigured body part in fragmented labor processes. Several years later when I talked to Teresa, the model of *Two Hands*, she immediately revealed her disheartened feeling, saying "it looks ugly." Objects of art speak only in the background. Throughout my dissertation and the student-worker art project, the image has shared its own silent narratives, disconnected from the sensuous worlds of the human subject/object. I open this study with this image and untold narratives full of multiple contradictions in order to get closer to the expressive worlds of the elderly female janitors who lived through the "miraculous" era of capitalist development (1960s-1980s) and now are wrestling with its compelling contemporaneity through their disturbed senses of the past and the present.

INTRODUCTION

Expressive Contradictions in Global Capitalism

The winter of 1997 marks the dramatic ending of South Korean developmental state capitalism. Fully blown global financial capital and the state-controlled financial system in South Korea (hereafter Korea) contradicted each other so deeply that the old regime needed a large-scale adjustment to meet the needs of the new global order, neoliberal financial capitalism. I identify myself as a member of the "IMF generation" characterized by fresh young workers who poured into the collapsed labor market in the period between 1997 and 2001, the beginning of crisis and the symbolic ending marked by the Korean government's repayment of the bailout money to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). A Korean GDP growth rate that plummeted from 5.69 % in 1997 to -5. 47 % in 1998 does not tell us much about how people absorbed such a dramatic shock in their lives. The era following the economic crisis saw bursts of new social expressions such as hell-Chosŏn, exit-Chosŏn, the *pijŏnggyujik* (contingent workers), and the IMF generation or *88 manwŏn sedae* (young workers whose monthly wage is about 800 USD).[1] The Asian Financial Crisis not only curved the growth pattern of the old developmental regime but also made a temporal rupture in the collective social memory of the fast growing economy once known as one of the Four Asian Tigers.

The new economic conditions which unfolded after the crisis with the Korean government's swift reforms and the bailout plan of International Monetary Fund (IMF) have

[1] For more discussion on the term "hell-Chosŏn," "exit-Chosŏn," see Ana Fifield's "Young South Koreans call their country 'hell' and look for ways out," *The Washington Post*, January 31, 2016.

divided Korean workers into two social categories: the regular and the *pijŏnggyujik*.[2] This "new" division of labor is hardly a form of precarity limited to young workers of the "IMF generation." The newness of this labor condition can only be recognized in relation to the old forms of labor that have previously been dominant in the course of Korean capitalist development. The generational approach to the phenomenon, focusing predominantly on young workers, has been dominant in scholarly debates and mainstream media representations capturing only a partial picture of the larger structural change in Korean economy. This partial view makes historical research on the relation between the old forms of labor and the new elements almost impossible. When around 140 middle-aged female janitors occupied the Hongik University campus in Seoul, January 2011, I came across another political dilemma in the feminist organization I worked for then. Noticing growing solidarity expressed by various civic groups beyond the labor sector and growing media attention, my organization decided neither to join in the strike nor to sign any solidarity statement. In hindsight, the tendency to prioritize young educated women as the most desirable subjects for feminist activism building resulted in such a decision, on top of the political distance carefully maintained between feminist movements and the national labor unions since the 1987 democracy movement in Korea. I revisited the Hongik University janitors and security union chapter in summer 2013 to find some answers to these omissions in scholarly debates around contingent work and feminist movements. Female janitors in their late fifties and sixties had emerged as iconic figures of the new labor category *pijŏnggyujik.* The new labor

[2] The *pijŏnggyujik* has been translated as "irregular" or "non-standard" employment in English. In this study, I use the Korean word *pijŏnggyujik* to highlight its cultural specificity that functions as a *status marker* beyond employment relations. When necessary, I translate it as "contingent work" following the Korean Contingent Workers' Center through which I collected major resources including recent publications and data for this research.

movement led by contingent workers in the decade following the "IMF crisis" begged a theoretical framework and political sensitivity beyond the young generation-centered approach in the left politics and productivism prioritizing the young educated able bodies prevalent in feminist activism.[3]

In a global context, labor precarity has manifested in various forms, partially captured as gig economy, uberization, freeter (exclusively in Japan), and slash worker. The knowledge traveling through circuits of financial capital and the ever evolving social media technology makes critical inquiry into the root causes of such expressions and practices very difficult. Unsatisfied with surface level descriptions of the "new" phenomenon, more engaged inquiries emerged in the 1990s reigniting debates on the new class politics among scholars in the global North. Notably, Guy Standing's conceptualization of "the precariat" as the site of critique and new political imagination has significantly contributed to the saliency of the universal basic income agenda in contemporary left politics and debates. Standing defines "the precariat" (precarious proletariat) as a distinctive social group that has grown in the globalization era which structurally lacks capacity to act *for itself,* and thus is prone to both extreme political agitation and depoliticization. For this reason, Standing characterizes the group as "dangerous" (2011). Among many important critiques generated by Standing's work, I pay attention to the singularity of narrative in recent studies of global capitalism and labor precarity. Despite its broad scope (selectively looking at Europe, North America, and Asia) and progressive political claims, Standing's work narrates the stakes of global capitalism in the context of the eroding Western welfare state and in the viewpoint of its normative citizen subject. Seen from inside, *the*

[3] This tendency of productivism in feminist activism has become even more salient in the recent #MeToo campaign in Korea that was primarily ignited by the mainstream media targeting powerful men such as politicians, entertainment moguls, and writers.

outsiders (comprising women, migrants, the disabled, and queers) look "dangerous" - even more so when *the outside*, the shadowy economic sphere historically assigned for the outsiders, is growing faster than ever.[4] What if the history of global capitalism were written by those outsiders who have never been granted full security, identity, entitlement, citizenship, and rights through formal labor? Put otherwise, what can we learn about global capitalism and its pattern of reproduction when we begin our inquiry from histories of laboring subjects whose bodies mark the very boundaries between inside and outside embodying the changing logic of capitalist accumulation and development?

This dissertation examines newly unionized female janitorial workers' struggle in the process of public sector privatization which unfolded after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis in Korea. It parcels out the discourse of global labor precarity and the configuration of financial capitalism in the post-developmental state. I use oral histories of female janitorial workers in their fifties and sixties to trace their life histories which encompass the developmental regime (1970s –1990s) and the neoliberal reform era (1997 – present) in Korea. The middle-aged female janitors and their life stories provide a unique lens for studying a developmental state's afterlife in the neoliberal global order and its gendered and racialized (so-called "third world women") workers' lives in the shifting accumulation strategies of global capitalism. I make three main arguments in this study. Firstly, I argue that labor precarity is not a new accumulation strategy in global capitalism and Korean developmentalism. The newness narrative forecloses a radical critique of the pattern of the reproduction of capitalist social relations by erasing the histories of the working people whose lives repeatedly fall into the old and new categories of *the other* or *the*

[4] For more discussion on the spatial logic of inside and outside under financial capitalism, see Klaus Dörre, "Finance Capitalism, Landnahme and Discriminating Precariousness – Relevance for a New Social Critique." *Social Change Review*10, no. 2 (2012): 125-151.

outsiders. The feminized workforce, characterized by extremely low wages, long working hours, labor-intensive jobs, and little to no job security, subtended the Korean developmental state economy from the late 1960s. The young female workers who were interpellated by global production lines in the 1970s and 1980s are now living their elderly lives under even harsher conditions with few welfare benefits or work opportunities. Unlike their male counterparts who had a different path to citizenship through "militarized masculinity" (Moon 2005) and the family-wage system, female workers gradually have been absorbed into growing low-wage service sectors as sweatshop factories have left for other low-income countries in Asia. Seen from these female workers' point of view, labor precarity has intensified from the inception of developmental capitalism to its afterlife under the present neoliberal conditions. On one hand, the newness narrative in the existing studies on global labor precarity and the *pijŏnggyujik* in Korean context – the idea that the *pijŏnggyujik* is a new formation in the Korean economy that has emerged after the Asian Financial Crisis – erases the histories of the female workers and the continuing forms of exploitation in global capitalism by demanding the forgetting of the heterogeneous pasts of those *outsiders*. This politics of forgetting, I argue, produces the hegemonic neoliberal temporality that universalizes socially necessary labor time under financial capitalism. I explore this tendency in the *pijŏnggyujik* movement in Korea by looking at the ways the elderly female janitors are interpellated as "new" subjects of the precarious workforce.

Secondly, this study demonstrates that social reproduction of capitalist relations is mediated through multiple institutional renewals. Through the life stories of female workers, I show how multiple institutions – mainly the state, the law, labor unions, and the family – participate in the subtle process of capitalist social reproduction. I utilize the elderly female workers' life stories that have been silenced in the discourse of labor precarity as an important

medium in tracing continuity and discontinuity between the old and new institutional practices (I explain the concept of life story in detail in the method section). Drawing on Marxist feminist social reproduction theory, I use the term social reproduction to denote *a societal process of reproduction of capitalist relations that entails reconfigurations of other oppressive social relations and categories such as gender, race, sexuality, class, and ability*. As Nancy Fraser points out, "capitalism's economic system depends on social reproductive activities external to it" (2016, 101); processes of social reproduction are dialectical and multi-dimensional beyond the sphere of capitalist production. Fraser's concept "boundary struggle" is particularly useful in explaining such dynamic processes of how capitalist production expands and reproduces its relations in society by redrawing its boundaries around social reproduction (here meaning reproductive activities for and beyond capitalist relations), polity, and nature (Fraser 2017, 35). The Korean developmental state apparatus transitioned into neoliberal governmentality in a relatively short period of time, lacking a fully blown liberal democracy and the welfare state. While male workers employed in the *chaebol* (big conglomerate) companies became targets of mass-layoffs and the government policy of "deserving" welfare subjects (Song 2009) in the restructuring process after the 1997 crisis, society at large - especially women, the elderly, and the poor - was left to buffer the shock. The financial crisis directly led to the "crisis of care" depleting to an extreme level the life energies of those who were already performing devalued reproductive labor at home and work. In this study, I contend that the middle-aged women's struggles at work and poverty-stricken homes are an emblematic site of "boundary struggle" and of a general contradiction (i.e. social reproductive crisis) immanent in the developmental state capitalism and intensified in its neoliberal becoming under global financial capitalism today.

Lastly, I propose the concept of spatial intimacy in order to rethink the relationship between production and reproduction and as a node of larger coalition building strategies among precarious laboring subjects living under the current neoliberal conditions of life. My ethnographic analysis of commodified cleaning labor and unpaid care work performed by the middle-aged female janitors at work and home pays close attention to the ways life energies are circulated, consumed, and replenished in the process of *crossing* the two realms of production and reproduction. Building on the concept of "life's work" proposed by feminist geographers (Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2003; Meehan and Strauss 2015), spatial intimacy looks at the process of how laboring bodies travel between the two realms – public/private, production/reproduction, formal/informal, and work/home – focusing on multiple forms of intimacy negotiated and contested in such corporeal performances. Instead of making a simplistic explanation that bodily energies are replenished and reproduced only at home (the private sphere), the concept of spatial intimacy allows us to look closely at where and how surplus value (labor power) is reproduced. Multiple hierarchical intimacies regulate laboring bodies intersecting home and work. Intimacy at work resembles intimacy at home as heteropatriarchal power and desire dominate and organize social space, reproducing a sexualized feminine body and labor precisely through the entanglement of the two spheres. I show this dynamic in cleaning labor, cleaning public toilets in particular. In turn, laboring subjects in the process of ceaseless negotiation embody a certain knowledge about how to cope with the everyday violence and alienation that regulates the two realms. On the other hand, through the bodily act of repeated touch in cleaning work, laboring subjects experience extended reliance and intimacy with surrounding non-human objects. I analyze this multi-dimensional and dialectical process in cleaning labor by reflecting on my labor process participation and interaction with

Teresa (see Chapter 4). As a coda of this dissertation, I propose that the concept of spatial intimacy helps us to draw a cognitive map connecting various sites of social reproductive crises and can be utilized as an organizing logic for new feminist anti-capitalist imaginaries and projects envisioning a radical politics of care and solidarity.

In short, *Expressive Struggles* attends to the process of social reproduction of gendered class relations in the post-developmental regime subsumed under financial global capitalism. The female janitorial workers' relation to Korean militant labor demands a new set of analytics that can explain how existing gender norms, patriarchal institutions, and sexual hierarchies interact with the formation of a neoliberal labor regime. Unveiling the multimodal capitalist social relations through the oral histories of elderly female workers and interviews with unionists, lawyers, outsourcing company employers, and college students, my ethnography reveals that the liberatory process, the unionization of laboring subjects with cultural and legal injuries, operates through, and oftentimes reproduces, various institutional limits and social norms. This study traces how such social institutions conform to the neoliberal temporal order by deepening alienation, perplexity, and contradiction in the lives of marginalized gendered laboring subjects. In order to disentangle this liberal paradox, I conduct a feminist critical analysis of the historically specific forms of spatio-temporal domination cutting across the developmental state (1960s-1980s) and the post-developmental regime (1990s to the present) in Korea.

The life-stories of eight women on which I ruminate in this study reveal multiple contradictions and conjunctures that shape the spaces and social relations of everyday living through which gendered laboring bodies are made and remade in the historical process of Korean capitalist development. By focusing on the expressivity of multiple contradictions in the intersecting systems of oppressions that are materialized as social institutions, we can better

understand the complexities and political possibilities the social actors in question negotiate, comply with, contest, and from time to time find peace with in their everyday struggles. Expressions of resistance are mediated through multiple political scripts and devices that are embedded in historically and culturally specific social relations. Many of them are not only unseen and unheard but repeated as the very system of representation and oppression is reproduced. My inquiry into these multiple forms of resistance, both seen/unseen and spoken/unspoken, challenges the historiography confining working class struggle within the space and temporality of capitalist imaginaries.

Main Inquiries and Concepts

This study began with the inquiry about how the "new" category of laboring subject, *pijŏnggyujik,* emerged both as Korean organized labor's central political agenda and as a pressing "social problem" in government policies in the period following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. ***What are the political and historical effects of this newness narrative?*** This discursive and material process of making the *pijŏnggyujik* workforce is closely connected to the South Korean economy's articulation with the global financialization process. Francois Chesnais defines financialization as the "pervasiveness of features of interest-bearing capital" that characterizes global capitalism today (2016, 15). In this dissertation, I focus on one of key aspects of financialization Chesnais analyzes: that today's global capitalism "focuses less on the exploitation of labour *intra-muros* than on the predatory appropriation of surplus value from weaker firms, allowed through their monopolistic and monopsony positioning along value-chains" (ibid 16). Seen from this view, labor precaritization can be easily understood as the result of this tendency that *financial capital erases all the social traces and histories of labor* that the

small and large firms are still deeply dependent on, even more so in the global South. The Korean developmental state strategically cultivated the monopolistic dominance of the *chaebol* enterprises and their extractive relations to medium and small firms. The *pijŏnggyujik* workforce appeared when precisely when the *chaebol* finance was freed from its old ties to the state-controlled financial system. The "newness" of the *pijŏnggyujik* can only be explained in this tendency of financialization that erases the histories and traces of the old formations and exploitative labor relations in which the *chaebol* capital has accumulated. Repetitive patterns of exploitation need to be *forgotten* as financialization unfolds with new faces, names, and categories. I define neoliberal temporality as this form of universalizing time, socially necessary labor time in particular, that is produced and controlled by the financialization process in global capitalism. This neoliberal temporality produces dominant temporal norms reorganizing society and demands a radical departure from the past rendering all the traces and remainders of the old social relations invisible and inexplicable. In this sense, the discourse of labor precarity can be read as a universalizing singular narrative rewriting the global history of neoliberal capitalism, precisely erasing heterogeneous historical contexts and narratives of the global South. The elderly female workers who embody the social relations of export-oriented industrialization (1960s-1970s) in Korea are compelled to forget their past contingent forms of employment in order to be fully interpellated as the new category of labor, *pijŏnggyujik*. I call this discursive process a politics of forgetting that activates the neoliberal temporality and the discourse of newness in the category of *pijŏnggyujik* in Korea and of precarious labor on a global scale.

The second question that initiated this research was, ***where did all the female factory workers go?*** What would the lives of the generation of the feminized workforce look like now in

the dramatically developed country?[5] The main focus of my inquiry is not the individual life trajectories of the factory workers, although my study contains some empirical evidence. Instead, my research redirects the question to how the old gendered divisions of labor that jumpstarted the country's economy and its articulation with the global system of production have changed in the following era. More specifically, this inquiry is about the social reproduction of gendered class relations across the developmental period and the post-developmental era. The elderly female workers' resistance (the majority of the workers are in their fifties and sixties) and their emergence as iconic figures of the *pijŏnggyujik* movement in the late 2000s raises tensions in the linear progressive narrative that the increase of various forms of contingent employment is a direct outcome of neoliberal economic restructuring – that is, this labor precaritization is a new phase of global capitalism distinguished from old forms of exploitation. Unlike male workers protesting the downsizing in heavy industries such as automobile and shipbuilding and the various forms of contingent part-time work targeting young workers, the aging feminized laboring population reminds us of the generation of feminized factory labor in the 1960s and 70s.

Whereas previous studies on Korean labor have paid much attention to the gendered paths to citizenship, industrialization, and modernization (Koo 2001, Moon 2005, Kwon 2009, and Nam 2009), my research asks how such gendered class relations have been transformed, if not simply reproduced, in the post-developmental regime. *Pijŏnggyujik* discourse provides a clue and a course to my inquiry into the renewal and reproduction of the system of gendered class oppression. My ethnography reveals a subtle process of institutional renewal by unpacking tensions between elderly female janitors, the male-dominant labor unions, and heteropatriarchal

[5] South Korea's average GDP until the mid-1970s was $405 (USD) and reached $27,105 (USD) in 2015. World Bank GDP per capita (current US$) data.

family relations surrounding them. Despite the fact that the form and content of the *pijŏnggyu* labor struggle are fundamentally different from those of the female factory workers in the 1970s and 80s, I contend that the hierarchical social relations maintaining the subordinate position of feminized laboring bodies have been ceaselessly maintained through various forms of institutional renewal. Elderly female janitors I interviewed during my fieldwork articulate this point in much more expressive language such as *feeling left behind in the 1970s (frozen time)*, *losing what we fought so hard for in the past (lost time)*, and *disappearing labor time (forgotten time)* (see Chapter 1). As a critique of the singular narrative of global labor precarity and its neoliberal temporality, these female workers' expressions of heterogeneous memories and temporalities disrupt the linear progressive history of global capitalism written by and for the normative laboring subject of the Western welfare state.

Bridging the Marxist critical theory of labor time and the studies of queer temporalities, I intervene in the normative understanding of labor time in the discourse of precarity in general and *pijŏnggyujik* in particular. Fractured, flexiblized, and liquid time represents the frantically changing environment of work and the living conditions that are affected by such changing temporality of work and life in neoliberal societies. South Korea is at the forefront of this trend in several statistics. Korea was ranked in the bottom third for average annual working hours (before Costa Rica and Mexico) in the data released by the Organization of Economic Cooperation for Development (OECD) in 2016. While people in Korea work more hours (2,069 hours per year) compared to the average work hours (1,763 hours per year) in the majority of OECD member countries, the majority of Korean workers are hired in the expanding category of *pijŏnggyujik* (see Table 3. and 4. for the size and gender composition of the irregular

workforce).[6] The legal maximum number of work hours per week in Korea is 68, which is becoming another contentious site of political debate under the Moon administration whose goal is to reduce this number to 52 hours per week.[7] The average monthly wage of those who are hired in the *pijŏnggyu* track has been lowered gradually since 2001 (53.5% that of regular workers to 48.9% in 2016). In addition to this stark contrast, the gender wage gap in Korea is 36.6% (women workers make 63.4% of that of men, whereas the OECD member countries' average is 85%).[8] These data, however, do not give us a full picture of how the elderly female working peoples' lives look or what the major structural conditions pushing the limits of their working day and the wage needed for a decent life have been. Put simply, ***what makes this gendered aging population keep doing such hard work for such low wages***?

What is at stake in the political debate around working hours in Korea is two-fold. On the surface level, it appears that people in general are working longer hours, which means people spend less and less time on the maintenance and reproduction of their lives. When this general view is applied to the growing number of workers in the *pijŏnggyujik* category, we find a more complex set of data showing a large discrepancy between part-time workers and full-time contingent workers (subcontracting and outsourcing).[9] In fact, the shortening time for reproduction has different impacts on the lives of regular and contingent workers. While the working hour extension of regular workers in the formal sectors does not necessarily lower the

[6] OECD (2018), Indicator: Hours worked.
[7] Moon's policy recommendation has been criticized for using the ad hoc interpretation of 5 day-work week that was invented by the previous Park Geun Hye government.
[8] Chang Jhiyŏn. "*sŏngbyŏl imgŭm gyŏkch'a haesor ŭl wihan chŏngch'aek kwaje* (Policy directions to gender wage gap reduction), *Labor Review*, Korea Labor Institute, 2017.5, 16-24.
[9] The KCWC report shows that the average weekly working hours among full-time contingent workers is slightly higher (47.1 hours) than that of regular workers (43 hours) and that of part-time workers has been lowered gradually to 19.8 hours in 2016. (Korean Contingent Workers' Center, "Statistics of Korean Pijŏnggyu Workers," Issue Paper 2017-1: 53-4.)

value (wage) of their labor as long as those hours are counted, longer or shorter working hours among contingent workers directly reflects the fluctuation of the value of their labor. The changing value of contingent workers' working hours directly affects their quality of life both in terms of wage (unstable income) and their control of time (spontaneous work hours).

Regarding these changing dynamics of the working day, its fluctuating value and meaning, my research looks at two distinct but related aspects of the phenomenon. One is the way the working day (labor time) is regulated not directly by the market and the state but by the law. The post-developmental state in the transitional period has responded to the pressure of financial liberalization by 1) demanding labor's sacrifice in the process of structural adjustment allowing mass layoffs (which lowered labor income share significantly) and 2) implementing new labor laws, now widely called *pijŏnggyujik* laws (Dispatch Law in 1998 and Temporary Work Law in 2006). While the state's direct planning of industrial development and the disciplining of the gendered workforce ended by the late-1980s, the post-developmental state rationalizes its relationship with the (financial) market and its control of the labor force mainly through the law. The law not only starts to fix the terms of socially necessary labor time (e.g. two-year maximum employment of *pijŏnggyujik*) but also de/regulates the social relations of labor (e.g. deregulation of subcontracting and outsourcing) producing new meanings, categories, norms, and orders out of old institutions and practices. Building on Jennifer Chun's study of "legal liminality," I conceptualize this tendency as legal temporality that determines the form and content of (socially necessary or normative) labor time as a central component of neoliberal temporality and as the major mechanism through which old social relations of gender and class are reproduced. Whereas Chun highlights dialectical potential of the labor struggles generated by indeterminacy of workers' status and legal categorizations, I attend to the ways legal temporality

produces and buttresses neutrality of the law by normativizing neoliberal temporality and by becoming a major site of labor struggles. My ethnography shows how legal battles waged by the umbrella union of the janitorial workers reproduce old hierarchies of gender and class through legal professionalization of labor activists and further alienate and silence the elderly women workers in their own fights (see Chapter 3).

The other side of the same coin is then how people cope with such changing dynamics of time and governmentality. ***How are the people fighting back?*** Are the traditional forms of labor union-based movements still valid in the changing environment? If not, what other forms of struggles can we imagine or maybe have ignored too long in the dominant scripts of class politics? How are these women negotiating the power dynamics generated by the converging institutional practices between the state, market, and patriarchal family? These questions require a microscopic lens for the complex life worlds people are endeavoring to make and remake in the quotidian processes of negotiations, compromises, collaborations, and contentions. In this study, I offer the concept of spatial intimacy as an analytic to study intimate relations of labor, gender, and sexuality that build the capitalist world of multiple contradictions (mainly in Chapter 4). Furthermore, extending feminist geographers' concept of "life's work" and their analytical focus on the spatial entanglement of production and reproduction, I propose life-stories as a method for feminist critical labor studies through which intimate narratives of everyday practices of crossing and negotiating the boundaries of production/reproduction, work/home, and value/non-value can be factored into political imaginations for and processes of building radical solidarity among differently situated laboring subjects. Through the life-stories of elderly female janitors and microanalyses of the spatial intimacies governing their labor and life, *Expressive Struggles* opens up the unseen and untold dimensions of the world of labor, human-centered labor processes, and

sexual hierarchies saturated with violence that have been the conditions of possibility for the reproduction of gender and class oppressions and for the old developmental regime's neoliberal becoming. Beyond such violence and the exploitative social relations that have governed these women's bodies from their twenties to their late sixties, *Expressive Struggles* is about the life-stories of the elderly female janitors who have continued to tear down, sort out, clean, restore, and rebuild life worlds in their acute awareness of their finite life times.

Historical Context

The Developmental State and its Gendered Class Relations

The *pijŏnggyujik* formation in contemporary Korea needs to be understood in the regionally specific historical processes of capitalist development. The Korean modern capitalist state evolved from the destruction of the political and social fabric of Korea after independence from Japanese colonization (1910-45) and the subsequent Korean War (1950-53). Born out of political turmoil, the Park Chung Hee regime (1961-79) oversaw the critical period of the formation of the South Korean developmental state characterized by a relatively high level of state autonomy and the selective nurturing of big business conglomerates [*chaebŏl*] through the state-controlled financial system (Amsden 1989, Woo 1991, Evans 1995, Minns 2001, and Chang 2009). The Korea Japan Normalization Treaty in 1965 allowed the Park government to successfully shift to export-oriented industrialization from import-substitution strategies in the previous government. In 1972 Park established the Fourth Republic of South Korea, granting himself authoritarian power without term limits through the declaration of the repressive Yushin Constitution, what historian Namhee Lee described as "a single move that effectively wiped out any remnants of democracy" (Lee 2007, 34).

Chaebol-centered capitalist growth under this developmental regime left deep imprints on the class relations of the country in the following era**.** The developmental state laid out carefully calculated growth indexes through a series of five-year economic development plans, promoted exports maintaining low wages in light industries such as textiles, garments, shoes, and wigs, and in the 1970s channeled investments and loans to heavy industries such as shipbuilding, automobiles, and electronics, bringing about industrial deepening. Class struggles in the regime of what Seung-sook Moon called "militarized modernity (1963-1987)" as male workers were conscripted to the mandatory military system and channeled into the heavy industries produced distinctly gendered class politics and subjects (2005, 2). However, female factory workers primarily in the 1970s, the peak of the export-oriented industrialization, waged a phenomenal democratic labor union [*minju nojo*] movement against the company unions [*ŏyong nojo*] controlled by the military government. As capital's investment in the heavy industries increased throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, the male workers began to take central stage in the working class struggle that culminated in the Great Workers' Struggle in the summer of 1987, which closely followed the democracy struggle of June 1987. The multinational corporations wherein the majority of low-wage female factory workers were employed gradually left Korea as the wage rose in the period. This gendered script of working class politics – that is, making of feminized labor in the light industry (1960s-1970s) and masculine labor in the heavy industry (1980s) – is closely tied to the developmental state's accumulation strategy that normalizes capitalist development and its temporal logic of growth.

Emergence of the Neoliberal Regime and the Pijŏnggyujik

The developmental state gradually unfastened its control of the market from the mid-1980s by privatizing banks, abandoning stock market control, liberalizing non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), and reducing government support for heavy industries. The external factors of the shift included pressure from Japan and the United States on Korean export success and increased production in Southeast Asian countries and China (Hart-Landsberg and Burkett 2001). In the late 1990s, the country's foreign debt level rose steeply to $160 billion and culminated in a "liquidity crisis" in December 1997. The International Monetary Fund, establishing conditions for the $57 billion bailout, demanded restructuring plans including increasing transparency in the financial sector, promoting foreign mergers and acquisitions of big firms and national banks, and the further opening of the financial market. The Kim Dae-Jung administration (1998-2003), born in the midst of crisis, completed the process of market liberalization. Two major labor law reform bills were passed in 1998 and 2006 respectively that provided a legal foundation for the formation of the *pijŏnggyujik* workforce. The process deepened the gendered divisions of labor and increased the wage gap in "dual labor" markets that resulted in deepening inequality between *chaebol* workers (as core insiders) and the others (as outsiders) (Song 2014, 44). According to a set of statistics compiled by progressive labor organizations, the size of the female contingent workforce was recorded as 69.8 % (male 45.3%) in 2002 and reduced to 54 % (male 36.4%) in 2016. The shift from the old developmental state to the neoliberal regime in that period ended up intensifying the existing gendered divisions of labor.

In the mainstream historical view, *pijŏnggyu* labor appears as a homogeneous sub-class of the "strong" male working class which emerged in the late 1980s whose legal and economic

status (including citizenship measured by employability) was threatened by the state's neoliberal reform since the late 1990s. Instead, I argue that the *pijŏnggyujik* is squarely situated in the temporal sequence from the 1987 Great Workers' Struggle to neoliberal restructuring. The linear narrative does not adequately reflect the actual conditions in which traditionally marginalized laboring bodies such as female, elderly, young, immigrant, and disabled workers in low-wage job sectors and informal sectors were selectively recognized as part of the emergent precarious workers. This view assumes that those historically marginalized workers are similarly or equally "threatened" by the neoliberal restructuring as the normative male workers in the formal sectors and the *chaebol* companies. Given the historical fact that the Korean developmental path has depended on the sharply gendered divisions of labor and produced differentially situated working class subjects (i.e. female workers in the light industry/male workers in the heavy industry), the *pijŏnggyujik* discourse needs to be explained in this historical context, rather than simply as a "new" category or as part of the "precariat."

Theoretical Interventions

Both traditional Marxist theory and the labor studies have represented complex life worlds of social actors as historical facts, data, and categories subsumed to capitalist relations. By envisioning feminist critical labor studies through the concept of spatial intimacy and the method of life-story, my research departs from such traditional approach that reduces human life energies and desires into "scalable" research objects.[10] In this section, I review Marx's critical theory of labor time, studies of queer temporalities, and the feminist social reproduction theories

[10] Tsing defines "scalability" as "the ability of a project to change scales smoothly without any change in project frames" and points out that a scalable research project "admits only data that already fit the research frame" (Tsing 2015, 38).

that have informed my research and conceptualization of spatial intimacy. I proceed by first discussing the idea of spatial intimacy and then move to the three distinctive fields of inquiries to highlight key arguments and critiques on which my research is based. I discuss the method of life-story in the methodology section that follows.

Spatial Intimacies: A Critique of the Binaries in Marxism

Spatial intimacy as an analytic concept concerns bodily interactions and performances both in workplace and at home through which surplus value is extracted and conditions of possibility for such extraction (exploitation) are negotiated. Laboring bodies and finite lifetimes are controlled by and also gain meanings from multiple forms of spatial intimacies. Marxist thinkers have argued that culturally specific perceptions of time and space are socially reproduced in the mode of production and, thus, become the very site of social struggle (Bourdieu 1977 and Harvey 1990). I understand space in relation to contesting temporalities and desires as Doreen Massey wrote "while closed system is the foundation for the singular universal, opening that up makes room for a genuine multiplicity of trajectories, and thus potentially of voices" (2005, 33). Through the concept of spatial intimacy, my work focuses on exchanges between "intimacy at work" as the main mechanism through which laboring bodies are regulated and disciplined in workplaces, at times hyper-sexualized and other times desexualized, and "intimacy at home" as the site where heterosexual norms and patriarchal desires produce intimate relations of violence and love. By focusing on the exchange, mobility, and circulation of hierarchical sexual desires and gendered norms between the two realms, the notion of spatial intimacy critically revises the tendency in traditional Marxist studies that analyze the two spheres separately based on a set of abstract spatial binaries such as work/home,

public/private, and production/reproduction. Further, as a critique of the theory of labor process and workers' control in traditional labor studies – which tends to pay attention only to the time and space of paid labor and capitalist production – spatial intimacy enables us to see *laboring bodies as the site of corporeal protest* in which the issues of the working day and desires for a better life are expressed and negotiated (see Chapter 3). Judith Butler suggests a radical reinterpretation of vulnerability as a "mode of relationality" through which bodily dependence on infrastructure, environment, and other bodies becomes the locus of political appearance and political protest (Butler 2015, 130). Indeed, laboring bodies never stop traversing the two realms carrying burdens of emotional and physical exhaustion as well as fulfillment and joy from one place to the other. My ethnography shows how workers' exercise of control issues at the workplace, using such tactics as slowing down, work stoppage, and securing space for rest and rejuvenation, are intimately related to their "private" conditions of living and social relations that govern their gendered and sexualized bodies (see Chapter 4).

On the other hand, spatial intimacy attends to the dialectical process of how intimate relational knowledge is exchanged, circulated, consumed, performed, and contested by laboring bodies between the two realms not only sustaining human relations but also human bodies' reliance on surrounding environment and non-human objects. A particular way of human life is dependent on countless materials surrounding bodies that are connected through multiple social relations. Cleaning labor beyond its commodified value, like other forms of care work (e.g. child rearing, nursing, and prostitution) entails sensuous touches and maintenance of materials through which finite human bodily energy and time are consumed. I theorize these exchanges between human bodies and non-human objects in cleaning labor as a process of negotiating *intimate knowledge and reliance*, *which I call an embodied form of spatial intimacy*. Simultaneously, in

the register of affect, aspirations for belonging, and senses of interdependency, I conceive spatial intimacy as a potentiality for resistance as well as a vision for "spatiotemporal utopianism" and "dialectical utopianism" on which David Harvey elaborates in his book *Spaces of Hope* (Harvey 2000, 182). Through the concept of spatial intimacy, I suggest that the relations between places of commodified work and outside "the hidden abode" (i.e. sites of capitalist production) can be better understood, not as separate spheres that are synced with different temporal norms (e.g. working day, familial time), but as conditions of possibility *for* and *against* the reproduction of capitalist relations of production.

Marx's Critical Theory of Labor Time

The discourse of precarity is intimately related to the normative organization of time controlled by paid work – that is, the working day that has "a fluid quantity" (Marx 1976, 341). Marx's analytics of the working day provide a point of departure in understanding changing material conditions of precarious work arrangements in neoliberal societies. According to Marx, the working day has a "variable quantity" that consists of two components, labor time for reproduction of the labor-power (that is expressed in wage) and time for surplus value creation of commodity:

> I call the portion of the working day during which this reproduction takes place *necessary labor*; necessary for the worker, because independent of the particular social form of his labor; necessary for capital and the capitalist world, because the continued existence of the worker is the basis of that world. During the second period of the labor process, that in which his labour is no longer necessary labour, the worker does indeed expend labour-power, he does work, but his labour is no longer necessary labour, and he creates no value for himself. He creates surplus-value which, for the capitalist, has all the charms of something created out of nothing. This part of the working day I call surplus labour-time, and to the labour expended during that time I give the name of *surplus labour*. - *Capital Vol. I*: "The Rate of Surplus Value" (Marx 1990, 325, *emphasis mine*)

In this capitalist relation, free-laborers who have nothing but their labor-power to sell for a living are conditioned to work more hours than the necessary labor time that is equivalent to their wage in order to create surplus value. Marx defines this contradictory relation in labor time as the rate of surplus value (or exploitation), whereas classic economists see it as the rate of profit.[11] In precarious labor relations (non-normative working day), this formalistic relation between *necessary labor* time and that of *surplus labor* loses its explanatory power, for what is at stake is not simply the mechanical lengthening and shortening of labor time but precisely the changing meaning, category, and value of time itself.

Moishe Postone's reading of Marx's text provides a critical reinterpretation of the formalistic understanding of capitalist time and labor, challenging the classic understanding that human labor and the working class consciousness antagonistic to the bourgeois social order are the main determinants that make social changes possible in capitalist society. Postone's central argument is not in the dynamic relationship between necessary labor time and surplus labor (the rate of exploitation) but rather in the idea of time itself as a *social norm* - that is, a *socially necessary labor time*:

> The time expended in producing a particular commodity is mediated in a socially general manner and transformed into an average that determines the magnitude of the value of the product. The category of socially necessary labor time, then, expresses a general temporal norm resulting from the action of the producers, to which they must conform. Not only is one compelled to produce and exchange commodities in order to survive, but – if one is to obtain the "full value" of one's labor time- that time must equal the temporal norm expressed by socially necessary labor time. (Postone 1993, 191)

Suggesting that time in the capitalist world is a historically-specific social condition, Postone further argues that individual workers are not simply subsumed under the rule of capitalist

[11] The distinction between *absolute surplus value* (by lengthening working day) and *relative surplus value* (by shortening the labour-time) is less important here.

domination but precisely by *the normative relations of (labor) time* by participating in the process of commodity production (as well as circulation) and even in the moment of opposition (ibid 192). This normative temporality governs human *activity* tied to the process of the "development of the commodity form of social relations" and the "progress of capitalism as a form of life" (211-213). Postone's interpretation of labor as human activity that is determined by commodity value and relations challenges the traditional Marxist theory that is represented by Georg Lukács' theory of labor and the revolutionary role of the proletarian. According to this view, an emancipatory process of the proletarian subject from the reified social relations of the capitalist world does not guarantee a radical break from a way of life synced with the historically-specific time (i.e. socially necessary labor time) of commodity production.

Postone's reinterpretation of Marx's critical theory has met immediate criticism from the successors of Lukács' theory of reification and praxis. Andrew Feenberg in his review of Postone's book *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory* (1993) points out that Postone reduces the concept of proletariat and the historical process of working class struggle to the abstract category of labor (1996, 610). In his reading of Lukács' theory of reification, Feenberg argues that capitalist institutions are primarily reproduced by reified social relations, illusions, and practices. What Feenberg calls "dereification" is the process in which workers, whose existence exceeds the realm of the economic, start "breaking with the illusionary thinghood of social institutions and recovering their contingency," which can lead to social change in the law of production and patterns of institutional reproduction (2015, 490). Although Feenberg attempts to explain relationality between different forms of social movements in contemporary society - primarily feminism, environmentalism, and class struggle - through the concept of

dereification, he fails to critique the centrality of the category of worker as revolutionary subject in traditional Marxist thinking and its relation to other forms and agents of social change.

Similarly, Nancy Hartsock's feminist standpoint theory adds the category of women and gendered divisions of labor to the revolutionary role of the proletarian subject, instead of critically analyzing the process of subject formation in the traditional Marxist theory represented by Lukács' theory of reification. In response to the criticism that in her argument "women" is a universal category based on biological determinism, Hartsock responds that it is neither identity nor the type of labor that constitutes the *social* character of the feminist standpoint. It is the "institutionalized sexual divisions of labor" that gives the particular epistemological privilege to "women" located within the capitalist production differently from male workers (Hartsock 1998, 228). The deterministic character of the "women" in her argument as bearers of the feminist standpoint is not an *individual* woman worker, but the historically specific *social* character of feminized labor that is disposed in the sexual divisions of labor. In doing so, Hartsock extends the Marxist analytic of the division of labor and the social character of human labor power to the *social relations of gender* and to the interaction between the realms of production and reproduction.

My research intervenes in this unresolved theoretical debate in contemporary Marxist thinking by critically investigating the political processes of making and remaking the category and consciousness of the working class in relation to the normative time of commodity production in global capitalism. Postone's discussion of *socially necessary labor time* as normative temporality in capitalist society suggests that the working class lives (as well as capitalist producers) and their revolutionary visions are inevitably tied to and conditioned by the hegemonic rhythm and logic of production both on the ideological and material level. The category of *pijŏnggyujik* (as well as the discourse of precarious work) lies at the center of this tension between

the traditional Marxist idea of the proletariat (the fear of its disappearance) and the changing *socially necessary labor time* in neoliberal capitalism. In contemporary politics, the tension is expressed in highly politicized language such as in the cases of reviving the coal mining industry under the Trump administration and of the devastated workers' lives by the shrinking shipbuilding and automobile industries in South Korea. The traditional industrial working class appears to be no less deeply compelled by the speed of capitalist time and its disastrous way of life in contemporary financial capitalism where basic social safety nets have been eliminated by the neoliberal government policies. Critically reflecting on this dilemma, my study places *the relationship between the working class struggle and the socially necessary labor time (i.e. normative temporality in the relations of production)* at the center of inquiry. I suggest reformulating the question of how to recover the power balance between capital and labor as: *In what ways can the historically-specific temporal demand of commodity production (i.e. temporality of the capitalist way of life) be challenged in the political process of remaking working class struggle and visions?*

Queer Critique of Heteronormative Time

The scholarship of queer temporalities has informed my study of hegemonic capitalist time and the limits of the traditional Marxist idea of the working class in significant ways. Whereas Marx's critical theory mainly concerns capitalist relations of production, studies of queer temporalities offer a different set of analytics on the question of production of life and reproduction of intimate relations. Capitalist ways of life have relied heavily on the heteronormative nuclear family system and the gendered divisions of labor at home and work. Elisabeth Freeman conceptualizes this seamless control of capitalist time over human bodies and intimate relations as

"chrononormativity" - that is a "mode of implantation, a technique by which institutional forces come to seem like somatic facts" (Freeman 2010, 3). In Freeman's critique of heteronormative time and the capitalist order of life, *queering* the national time of development and the domestic familial time synced with the cycle of capitalist production, becomes "points of resistance" where one can encounter "other possibilities for living in relation to indeterminately past, present and future others" (ibid xxii). In a different manner, Lee Edelman juxtaposes the normative tempo of heterosexual desire for reproduction with queer temporalities that allow both an "access to jouissance" and ways of *refusal* of the forceful political rhetoric and demand for reproduction of the Child (as symbolic value of future) - what Edelman calls "reproductive futurism" (Edelman 2004, 5). José Muñoz responds directly to Edelman's *No Future* by identifying it as an "antirelationality theory" that relies on sexuality as a singular analytic and which refuses to "give up on concepts such as politics, hope, and a future that is not kid stuff" (2009, 92). In his radical idealism, Muñoz articulates "queer futurity" as a performative aesthetics that conjures "both the not-yet-here (the future) and the no-longer-conscious (the past)" (ibid 83). Muñoz explains, "the not-quite-conscious is the realm of potentiality that must be called on, and insisted on, if we are ever to look beyond the pragmatic sphere of the here and now, the hollow nature of the present" (ibid 21).

Queer critique of heteronormative temporality and capitalist time is particularly useful in understanding Korean contemporary social movements coming out of nationalist projects of economic progress and their regressive tendency toward heteropatriarchal social norms. I situate the *pijŏnggyu* labor movement in the context of neoliberal market reforms and the "new" labor politics coming out of the old social agenda, such as stabilizing the developing economy, liberal democratization, and establishing middle-class heteronormativity in the family The "threats"

expressed in the process of neoliberal market liberalization by the majority of working men were about the loss of old social values, including the dwindling economic growth rate, the return of authoritarian figures (in the form of neoliberal democracy) that they fought against so hard in the 1980's democracy movement, and shrinking middle-class heteronormative familial time and relations. My research takes the relations between capitalist domination and heteropatriarchal control of human bodies and intimate relations seriously. I examine different forms of neoliberal temporalities that have regulated feminized laboring bodies in Korea, which includes *developmentalist time (as national time), juridical time, union time, and heteropatriarchal time*. Furthermore, following Muñoz, throughout this study I focus on the potentiality of the alternative politics that might be *not-yet-here* and *not-quite-conscious*, to conjure various moments and spaces of *quotidian disjuncture* from capitalist labor time and from heteropatriarchal control of female bodies and energies expressed in the lives of elderly janitors.

Marxist Social Reproduction Theory

Any political struggle against capitalist and heteropatriarchal time happens in a particular space where multiple temporal rules, norms, meanings, and values are institutionalized and regulated through borders and divisions. Indeed, Marx's idea of the working day only makes sense through spatial binaries such as home/work, private/public, and production/reproduction. In Marxist theory, a working day ends when the workers walk out of the workplace and enter into the world outside of commodified labor relations. Louis Althusser investigates this spatial metaphor in Marxist theory most thoroughly by distinguishing different forms and functions of state apparatuses in capitalist society. Althusser defines Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) as "*a system of defined institutions, organizations, and the corresponding practices*" that ensures reproduction

of the conditions of production specific to a particular capitalist society (2014, 77). Althusser's theory of state apparatuses offers an analytic framework that can explain how disparate social institutions operate, somehow maintaining harmony and cohesion among differently situated social bodies, to reproduce particular temporal norms, orders, meanings, and relations in capitalist society. Among many other ideological institutions, Althusser's discussion of the legal institution is particularly relevant to my research. Categorizing the law as part of the Ideological State Apparatus (not as a Repressive State Apparatus such as the police and military), Althusser argues that the "specific dominant function" of the law is "not to ensure the reproduction of capitalist relations of production, but *directly to ensure the functioning of capitalist relations of production*" (ibid 169). This point that the law participates in the reproduction of capitalist relations of production not in repressive way but by articulating and regulating *the code of conducts and rules* (e.g. working hours and contracts) is important in understanding the growing power of legal institutions under contemporary neoliberal financial capitalism.

Beyond looking at the technical sophistication of legal relations under the current mode of capitalist production in Korea, I examine the ways legal reforms, primarily in the *pijŏnggyujik* laws (Dispatch Law in 1998 and Temporary Work Law in 2006), participate in the process of reproduction of the old gendered class relations - that harnessed the developmental state until the late 1980s - in the current post-developmental period. The transition from the developmental state to the (neo)liberal regime in Korea has been studied mainly focusing on the changes in economic institutions including government organizations (e.g. Economic Planning Board), banks, and big businesses, leaving analysis of the growing legal institutions in the transitional period relatively void. Filling the analytic gap, Aerim Yoon's pioneering studies on triangular labor relations in the Korean neoliberal economy have been influential in shaping analytic

frameworks and practical strategies among labor scholars and activists alike.[12] Jennifer Chun's study of "legal liminality" – defined as "a state of institutional exception in which workers are neither fully protected by nor fully denied the rights of formal employment" – offers an insight into the ways employment relations and class dynamics in Korea are undergoing a major shift primarily in the terrain of law (2009, 537). What has not been addressed in these studies, however, is the question of how these legal changes in labor relations continue or discontinue reproducing the old social relations, rules, and norms that have buttressed developmental state capitalism. Tying this question to my inquiry of neoliberal temporalities, I contend that courts are increasingly becoming the major institution that determines *socially necessary labor time after* the developmental state stopped controlling the working day and gendered labor directly. This tendency renders the old tactics and strategies of labor struggles (i.e. the democratic labor union movement) increasingly anachronistic, which has resulted in the legal professionalization of labor activists and the movement itself in the past two decades. My ethnography illustrates this tendency by focusing on the process of the elderly female janitorial workers' alienation from the union struggle and their shared perplexity on their participation in the union's legal battles (see Chapter 3).

Key Interventions: Feminist Theories of Social Reproduction

Early Marxist feminist studies of spatial hierarchies (production/reproduction, public/private, paid/unpaid, and work/home) mainly concern the question of how the space

[12] Selectively, see "The Criteria for Establishing a Triangular Employment Relationship" (Yoon 2014), "Labour Protections for Care Workers in Triangular Employment Relationship" (Yoon 2013), and "The Liability of User-Employers in the Collective Labor Relations" (Yoon 2004).

outside wage labor (i.e. un-commodified work in the domestic realm) operates for the reproduction of capitalist social relations and orders. Kathi Week's review of Marxist feminism in the 1970s – primarily *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (1973) by Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James and "Counter-Planning from the Kitchen: Wages for Housework a Perspective on Capital and the Left" (1975) by Nicole Cox and Sylvia Federici – sheds new light on the political significance and potential of the "wage for housework" and "refusal to work" framework (Weeks 2011). Weeks' interpretation of early Marxist feminist work guides us to recalibrate the significance of the basic income approach in the context of the crisis of work and welfare under the post-Fordist political economy. Weeks suggests demand for basic income, like the wage for housework campaign, can be understood as a "provocation to freedom" and "provocation of desire" that allows people to "create the possibility of a life no longer so thoroughly and relentlessly dependent upon work for its qualities" (ibid 145). The analytic shift from the early Marxist feminists' focus on the realm of reproductive work to broader conception of *life* as the central spatio-temporal metaphor for feminist post-capitalist imaginaries and anti-work politics that Weeks' study has initiated is a key lesson I embrace in my study. However, I depart from the frame of anti-work and the universal basic income for two critical reasons. The framework is not only politically limited only to the normative citizen subjects of the Western welfare state but also oblivious to the historical development of the global care chains under neoliberalism (Parreñas 2001 & 2012, Nguen et. al. 2017) and the global North's dependency on the devalued third world female labor in social reproduction of its valued citizen subjects and "life-times" for political actions (Tadiar 2013).

In a similar vein, in their review of Lise Vogel's *Marxism and the Oppression of Women Toward a Unitary Theory* (reprinted 2013, original print 1983), Susan Ferguson and David

McNally highlight the importance of unitary theory in feminist critique of social reproduction like Vogel's early study that analyzes domestic labor in relation to the process of surplus value creation in capitalist society. Nodding to Vogel's later correction of her original view that domestic labor is a component of necessary labor (wage), Ferguson and McNally reassert that un-commodified domestic labor does not directly augment the rate of surplus value because "there is no direct cost-structure for capital involved" in such social practices (ibid xxxiv). Although this point is analytically sound and useful for a unitary feminist theory of surplus labor, as Vogel herself points out in her essay, theory cannot offer "richly textured accounts of social life" and "less does it directly explain events, suggests strategies, or evaluate the prospects for political action" (Vogel 2013, 186). This debate makes us wonder, then, what a unitary theory does for a feminist collective endeavor to envision viable anti-capitalist politics relevant to the current conditions of financialized global capitalism.

The Marxist feminist scholars make another important correction that the reproduction of labor power is not exclusively done by and within private kin-based households (Vogel 2013, Bhattacharya 2017). This correction is largely indebted to women of color's critique of social reproduction in both realms, incorporating intersectional approaches and the category of race in their analyses. Aída Hurtado's critical study on the relationship between white middle class women and women of color in the United States reveals the ways in which working class women of color's private lives and domestic affairs have always already been the realm of public control and policing since their entry point to the continent through slavery, conquest of their homeland, and institutionalized labor migration (Hurtado 1989). Reversing the white middle-class centered feminist slogan "the personal is political," Hurtado suggests that "the political consciousness of women of color stems from an awareness that the public is personally political" (ibid 849).

Similarly, Evelyn Nakano Glenn's research on racial-ethnic women's location in the organization of reproductive labor shows that racialized immigrant women in the U.S. have been assigned to conduct the social reproduction in the public realm by two forms of waged reproductive work, "domestic service in private households and institutional service work" (Glenn 2010, 6). As a critique of Marx and Engels' two-fold conception of the production of subsistence/the production of human beings, Glenn offers a social historian's redefinition of the term social reproduction as "the creation and recreation of people as cultural and social, as well as physical, being" that involves "mental, emotional, manual labor" (ibid 4). Although I apply Glenn's broad definition of social reproduction to see both realms and as a way to include various institutions, my research primarily concerns how certain gendered class relations of oppression are socially reproduced across different regimes of power and governmentality in the broad spectrum of social reproduction. Instead of focusing on the form of labor (e.g. care work), my research gestures toward life-stories of people who have done various types of work in their lifetimes.

Tithi Bhattacharya's recently edited volume *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression* (2017) provides timely reflections on the above mentioned corrections in the feminist theories of social reproduction and the current global conditions of financialized capitalism. Bhattacharya reinstates the spatial binary of production/reproduction in Marxist thinking by pointing out that "they are particular historical forms of appearance in which capitalism posits itself" (2017, 74). Far from being a reductive theory that focuses only on class relations, in which the orthodox Marxists and the most left politics are still ingrained, Bhattacharya reasserts that social reproduction theory "is primarily concerned with understanding how categories of oppression (such as gender, race, and ableism) are coproduced in simultaneity with

the production of surplus value" (ibid 14). Nancy Fraser further specifies this position in the same volume with the notion of "boundary struggles" by pointing out "in periods of crisis, social actors struggle over the boundaries delimiting economy from society, production from reproduction, and work from family – and sometimes succeed in redrawing them" (ibid 25). Seen in this light, the main goal of class struggles in capitalist society is negotiating such boundaries, instead of fighting within already existing social divisions and borders that are designed for capital accumulation. Combining the two very important points made by Bhattacharya and Fraser, I reframe *feminist social reproduction theory as a field of study that surveys the ways in which capitalist surplus value production compels reproduction (or renewal) of existing relations of oppression (class, gender, race, sexuality, ability etc.) and social boundaries*.

Now I turn to two important conceptual interventions made by feminist scholars on the neoliberal configurations of social reproduction in global capitalism. Challenging the traditional Marxist binary of production/reproduction, the concept of "life's work" redirects the focus of analysis to the spatial and temporal entanglement of the two realms – public/private, paid/unpaid, visible/invisible, and work/leisure (Mitchell, Marston, and Katz 2003). Revisiting the early studies on life's work, Kendra Strauss and Katie Meehan alert that "[a]s economic restructuring has intensified demands for time, labor, and value extraction "at work," we recognize that recent crises-economic, political, and environmental- have also reconfigured the conditions and possibilities for life's work" (Strauss and Meehan 2015, 2). In the same volume, Gorman-Murray, studying a crisis-driven household politics in Australia, adds, life's work is "how we 'keep it all together': the performative network linking the activities and spaces of paid and unpaid work" (ibid 66). While these feminist geographers' conceptualization of life's work allows us to capture the fractured and blurred spatial and temporal boundaries of work, the forms of entanglement

between production and reproduction and the temporality of progressive economy and social life - that is, its "frame of reference" (Rifkin 2017, 29) - relies heavily on the context of the Western welfare state and the global North. When global financial crises radically shift the forms of entanglement between capitalist production and social reproduction, in what ways do the historically marginalized populations in the global South and those systematically *left behind* or deemed *disposable* (e.g. racialized poor communities, undocumented immigrants) in the Northern hemisphere negotiate with the shifting spatial and temporal politics in their everyday lives?

In bridging Marxist analysis of labor time in global capitalism to feminist debates on social reproduction, Neferti Tadiar offers a notion of "life-times" as an analytic for the complex social relations between the activities of social reproduction tailored to meet the needs of global capital (e.g. Filipina domestic workers' commodified labor supporting the lives of others in the global North) and the restorative life-making activities that exceed the value chain of global capital (e.g. social and leisurely activities of Filipina domestic workers outside the workplace-home) (2012, 11-12). Tadiar describes the migrant workers' time used for themselves *outside* the domain of capitalist production/reproduction – whose life-time is exchanged as national commodity and disposable labor in global capitalism – as "a time of recovery and restoration" and "remaindered life-times as other times of human becoming" (ibid). Tadiar's exploration of these sites of "remaindered life-times" via migrant domestic worker' lives in the global North and radical artists' exhibits and films featuring such othered forms of life-making activities situated in the global South reveals the limits of the universal category of *life* and the politics of *being human* that are regulated by the hegemonic temporality of global financial capitalism (Tadiar 2012 & 2013). Extending Tadiar's radical critique of the universal temporality of global capitalism (including categories of life and human) and neoliberal conditions of life, I propose the concept of life-story

as a medium and a method to narrate heterogeneous histories of global capitalism from the standpoint of those laboring subjects whose "life-times" are both expressed as disposable in global labor value chain and remain ineffable sources of social reproduction – inexplicable in the capital's standpoint that their life energies (re)produce "life-times" for others and themselves beyond capitalist sociality.

Methodology

Ethnographic Encounters

My fieldwork began in summer 2013 on the campus of Hongik University, an affluent private university well known for its top-ranked art school, where I could meet the janitorial workers whose 49-day strike and campus occupation in 2011 was still emanating tensions. Located in the most crowded area in Seoul, Hongdae (the campus neighborhood) attracts young foreign tourists to local designer fashion shops, hip bars, and fancy restaurants. The miraculously surviving local shops compete with global brands, even if the tiny local cafes in the corner of almost every building must sell coffees at half price to do so. While the large cafes bustle with several workers, those small local ones may only have one young staff member to cover everything from orders to making and serving drinks. In those tiny shops, time seemed to flow even faster than the already speedy urban rhythm of Seoul. I used to pass by countless shiny colorful shops that reached all the way to the underground union office on the fringe of the university campus. My official fieldwork resumed in August 2014 and continued until July 2015. My initial visit in the summer of 2013 left me full of conflicting feelings and confusion. Three of the women I interviewed had a particularly strong impact. Teresa was the first interviewee I met in that period and continued to be one of the most influential figures throughout this research. I also quickly became close to Haeson, the

Hongik University chapter leader, from the beginning of my fieldwork. She shared her most intimate knowledge about the union and her life with me, more often than not taking care of me like a mother and sometimes a friend. When I felt my fieldwork was going nowhere, I met Youngjin in the middle of a collective bargaining meeting. Youngjin was surrounded by people listening her story and I was one of them. I immediately asked for an interview with her and we met three times for interviews beyond the regular meetings and rallies.

I met several union activists for informal interviews during my initial field visit in 2013. During that time, I visited the Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (KPTU) office and met the main organizer of the "Right to a Hot Meal" campaign and many programs for janitorial workers such as the annual May Day Janitorial Workers' March. During my formal fieldwork period, I focused on the Seoul-Gyeongin Branch of KPTU (hereafter the SG Union). I conducted a participant observation of the SG Union's weekly meetings where the SG Union staff and the university chapter leaders discussed the weekly activities of each chapter and the agenda related to the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). KCTU as a national umbrella union produced weekly or monthly progress reports and key agenda documents that were circulated through its member organizations across the country. During the last six months of my fieldwork, my daily schedule was filled with public rallies and strikes, plus intensive oral history interviews. As the SG Union collective bargaining meetings also grew more intense at this time, I had to negotiate between many different activities (See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion on the organizational structure and history of the SG Union). Beyond the union-based activities, I was able to work with the Korean Contingent Workers' Center [*han'guk pijŏnggyu nodong sent'ŏ*] (KCWC). The generous KCWC staff offered me a space and time for reflection and refreshment, as once a week I could use their office to review their research materials and

organize my fieldwork activities and notes. I interviewed nineteen people including in-depth oral history interviews with nine janitorial workers (see Appendix) and recorded public rally speeches and workshop discussions, which I used as background information in the process of my writing. I also collected major research documents and reports from the SG Union, KPTU, and KCWC. In order to show the conflicting views between the government and the labor unions, I used statistical data from both sides in this dissertation.

Ethnographic Writing as Prolonged Dialogue

An ethnographic event becomes a text to interpret, translate, and decode. An ethnographer constitutes a scene in writing always in "belated and derivative" tempo (Ramamurthy 2014), thus, her "active" participation also occurs in the moment of writing through on-going struggle and engagement with the voices and agencies located in the field site. I understand this process as ethnographic dialogue through which meaningful exchanges of feelings, understanding, and relationships arise, often in belated tempo. Ethnographic dialogue, thus, can be understood as experimental practices for new forms of relations and intimacies. This feminist praxis of ethical relationship building in global knowledge production has been a central theme in transnational feminist studies (Alexander & Mohanty 1997, Mohanty 2003, Sandoval 2000, and Fernandes 2013). For instance, Leela Fernandes explains an *ethics of risk,* as feminist ethical relationship building technique and method, entails suspending one's own presumed ethical-political judgments and immersing one's self into the worldviews of the real people who are living in the specific discursive and material reality, which requires an active mutual learning process for those who are engaged in feminist knowledge making, production, and circulation (2013, 133). In this

view, *feminist ethnographic writing can also be understood as a process of learning and critical study that can challenge dominant ways of knowing and hegemonic knowledge.*

Feminist Oral History as a Subversive Method against the Dominant Temporality

An oral history interview is in itself an event. An oral history is not only a *present* interpretation of one's life events and subjective reconstruction of the past but also an *expressive performance* that requires the full engagement of psychological and physical interactions between a narrator and an interlocutor. Emily Honig's question on the relationship between the narrative present and personal past from the oral history documents of Chicana garment workers' strike in the early 1970s reveals the constitutive aspect of the present in making a version of life history, which contests the belief that oral history can recover and represent authentic experiences of the subject's past (1997). The present influence of union strikes, Honig argues, shapes the way a particular version of life history is told and formulated. In this way, oral histories never simply tell *facts*. Instead, a narrator's subjective truth challenges the mainstream knowledge and the set of facts in performative ways. By doing so, the feminist oral history method allows researchers to deviate from normative "data" and historical "facts" and to think critically about what data *does* in knowledge production and how our study can undo certain data that eliminate other ways of seeing and thinking. In this dissertation, Youngjin's oral history, in particular, plays a significant role in undoing the *pijŏnggyu* data production. Further, Youngjin's oral story challenges a normative conception of time in the *pijŏnggyujik* discourse. Thus, pushing the feminist view that oral history is a politics of the present, *my study uses oral history method to critique the idea of absolute scientific time and dominant tempos of capitalist production as well as of heteropatriarchal time.*

Indeed, oral history aims to more than simply fill the gap in existing historical knowledge. Joan Scott's reading of E.P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* informed my research in terms of how a certain concept of class is constructed in historical text through a particular way of understanding "experience." According to Scott, experience in Thompson's study has two dimensions: one as the social structure external to an individual, the other as the psychological force that makes an individual feel and express (Scott 1991, 784). Experience is the medium through which class-consciousness and identity is felt and articulated. Since the structural position in the mode of production determines the experience of workers, the feeling is not individualistic but social. Historicizing experience, for Scott, means considering the "emergence of concepts and identities as historical events in need of explanation" and entails "focusing on processes of identity production, insisting on the discursive nature of "experience" and on the politics of its construction" (ibid 792, 797). In the same vein, Emma Perez, in her book *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History,* shows how the relation between the imaginary and the real can be challenged in the process of questioning the "normative understanding of the past" (1999). Building on these feminist historical research, *I approach oral history as a subversive method that can challenge political demands to forget certain violent pasts.*

Life's work, life-times, life-stories

Drawing on the concept of "life's work" proposed by feminist geographers who have critically revised the spatial politics of production and reproduction, I propose life-stories as a critical feminist method through which intimate narratives of "life's work" can be heard and shared without erasing people's lived experience and capacity to narrate their stories. Revisiting the early studies on life's work, Kendra Strauss and Katie Meehan warn that "[a]s economic

restructuring has intensified demands for time, labor, and value extraction "at work," we recognize that recent crises-economic, political, and environmental- have also reconfigured the conditions and possibilities for life's work" (2015, 2). While this inquiry in feminist geography highlights the "salience of space, place, and scale to the transformations in structures and relations of social reproduction" and the ways global crises reconfigure such spatial relations, it is limited in deepening our understanding on how disparate social actors negotiate with such changing spatial and temporal dynamics in the realms of production and reproduction. When we refocus our analysis to social actors - not the form of labor (life's work) but performances of the actors - who cross the spheres multiple times making and remaking the spatial relations in their everyday lives, we may be able to articulate how the changing structural conditions are lived and negotiated by various laboring subjects *differently* and *unevenly* in the globalized world. To do so, *I suggest reframing life's work as a site of social struggle in which people aspire to make their life worlds livable and express their desires for better life despite and beyond the world built by capital (its spatial politics) and regulated by various institutions and multiple forms of oppressions. Throughout this study, I argue that when these social actors articulate their own constellations of "life-time" through various storytelling techniques, subversive spaces of alternative temporalities arise, that can challenge the hegemonic temporality of capital and the oppressive social system* (see Chapter 4 and Coda).

Further, the rich life-stories of the elderly female workers who lived through the developmental era of the 1970s can potentially challenge such discourse that sees labor precaritization as a "new" singular reality and temporality of global capitalism. As Chandra Mohanty points out that Third World women's narratives in itself cannot dismantle the hegemonic discourse but "it is the way in which they are read, understood, and located

institutionally that is of paramount importance" in feminist knowledge production (2003, 77-78). When read through the above mentioned critical feminist lenses, life-stories can challenge the "absolute time" and a "singular history" by revealing multiple frames of temporality expressed in life worlds that are not simply coexisting within the global capitalist mode of accumulation and time but always *in contradiction* requiring rigorous *translation*. As Mark Rifkin suggests, (life) stories allow us to understand time more critically "as an expression of affective orientations" (2017, 40). Translating life-stories, thus, in itself can be an act of political intervention to the dominant concept, framework, and temporality.

Summary of Chapters

The first chapter, "Pijŏnggyujik and Neoliberal Forgetting: Disarticulating Stories of Feminized Labor," offers a critique of the universalizing discourse of labor precarity in global financial capitalism and of the *pijŏnggyujik* formation in South Korea. It examines three life-stories of elderly female janitors in the context of the neoliberal labor restructuring that has unfolded in response to the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. Drawing an historical arc between developmental state regime (1960s-90s) and the neoliberal reform era (1997-present), the three life-stories reveal multiple forms of temporal disjuncture from the universal neoliberal temporality, such as *feeling left behind in the 1970s (frozen time)*, *losing what we fought so hard for in the past (lost time)*, and *disappearing labor time (forgotten time).* This subversive storytelling in turn reveals how the newness narrative of the *pijŏnggyujik* erases heterogeneous histories of the feminized laboring subjects who have never been "regular" workers. I contend that this politics of forgetting in the discourse of global labor precarity and the *pijŏnggyujik* in

effect forecloses a radical critique of the process of social reproduction of feminized labor and reinforces the universal neoliberal temporality of financial global capitalism.

The second chapter, "Paradoxical Consciousness: Cyclical Time, Strike, and Perplexity," analyzes the cyclical pattern of the female janitorial workers' strikes and the gendered relations of labor that constitute their struggle. As a critique of the linear progressive narrative of working class consciousness in Marxist analyses and the mainstream labor history, this chapter articulates the janitorial workers' relationship to the democratic labor union [*minju nojo*] discourse and to the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions' effort to organize *pijŏnggyu* labor. Paradoxically, the heteropatriarchal leftist ideology that promises to liberate the marginalized female workers alienates the very consciousness of the marginalized subjects in seeking legal and cultural recognition. Drawing on Ramamurthy's (2014) concept of perplexity as an affective form of contradiction expressed in the lives of subaltern laboring subjects disarticulated from the global commodity circuits, I argue that the janitorial workers' corporeal resistance in and against their paternalistic union and the discourse of *pijŏnggyujik* movement puts the breaks on the reproductive cycle of devaluation of feminized labor and holds the potential to form an alternative politics of temporal awakening and becoming that can challenge the universal neoliberal temporality.

The third chapter, "Legal Temporality: Working Day Reforms of the Post-Developmental State," examines the relationship between the post-developmental state and the rule of law, in particular the *temporal effects* of the labor law reforms in the process of neoliberal restructuring after the 1997 Financial Crisis. It provides a close look at the process of how the Korean government has promoted labor law reforms to renegotiate the social dimension of the working day and how organized labor fights against such reforms. I analyze the janitorial workers'

struggle in the changing legal environment by examining two specific legal disputes: the damage indemnification case filed by the Hongik University and the janitorial workers' working hour dispute. Reviewing the legal formation of *pijŏnggyu* labor and the process of legal professionalization of labor activists and unions in the neoliberal reform era, this chapter elaborates on the productive function of the law that not only regulates laboring populations and the value of labor reshuffling already existing social divisions of labor but also participates in social reproduction of patriarchal hierarchies upholding the universal neoliberal temporality of global financial capitalism.

The fourth chapter, "Navigating Spatial Intimacies for a Radical Politics of Care and Solidarity," redirects analytic focus to reproductive time and the familial life that constitute the cycle of surplus value production. I pay close attention to the intricate relations between paid labor and domestic care work and to multiple intimate spaces of the everyday material worlds that produce and are produced by laboring bodies. My ethnography tracks multiple sites of the entanglement of the realms of production/reproduction featuring life-stories of the two eldest members of the janitorial union, Teresa and Jaerim. In this chapter, I offer the concept of spatial intimacy as a critical feminist analytic that enables us to study 1) how intimate relations and desires extract surplus value from sexualized and gendered laboring bodies through various forms of spatial controls and binaries (e.g. the public/private and work/home) and 2) the ways feminized laboring subjects navigate the built-in spatial hierarchies in their workplaces and homes seeking different "use" and "meaning" in their everyday interactions with non-human objects by making and remaking their life worlds.

The coda, "Storytelling as Spatiotemporal Technique for Expressive Struggles," gestures toward new forms of resistance beyond the reified class relations and the regulatory machine of

neoliberal labor, temporality, and space. Examining three contemporary cinematic representations of feminized labor in Korea, *Snowpiercer* (2013), *Cart* (2015), and *Factory Complex* (2015) that are closely related to the thematic of this study, I revisit the major arguments of this dissertation. I draw a cognitive map of various forms of spatial intimacies expressed in the lives of differently situated laboring bodies that are disarticulated, fractured, severed, and deceased in the post-developmental neoliberal Korea. In doing so, I suggest that the five life-stories of elderly female janitors I weave in this study can be read as alternative storytelling of the ruins of developmental capitalism and the violence of global financial capitalism, which invites us to different political spaces for radical imaginations and intimacies.

CHAPTER ONE

Pijŏnggyujik and Neoliberal Forgetting: Disarticulating Stories of Feminized Labor

The first executive order signed by president Moon Jae-in, newly elected in May 2017 after the phenomenal impeachment protest in Korea, was on establishing a Job Creation Committee with his promise to check the "progress" of the committee's work on a "daily" basis.[13] What was at stake, however, was not the numeric increase of jobs, but a political intervention in the pervading public sentiment that "there is no future in this country." The Korean economy showed dramatic resilience during the recurring global financial crises primarily in 1997-8 and 2008, which accelerated the country's neoliberal reform and articulation with the process of financial globalization. The crisis-driven structural adjustment programs in the following period have generated new cultural expressions, such as the IMF generation, hell-Chosŏn, exit-Chosŏn, and the *pijŏnggyujik* (contingent workers). As a new labor category capturing this broader social anxiety and a "structure of feeling" (Williams 1977, 133) expressed in the post-developmental regime, the *pijŏnggyujik* can be read as a ramification of "Neo-Korea" - what anthropologist Jong Bum Kwon describes as "the constitution of the social-political imaginary of the present as a radical break from the dark past" (Kwon 2014, 72-3).

Studies on labor precarity as a process of neoliberal capitalist accumulation have highlighted shared anxiety about shrinking standard labor relations both in developed and developing countries. Transnational managerial imaginaries of a "flexible" workforce are increasing vulnerability even among the traditionally privileged groups of workers in the Global

[13] "President Moon Orders to Create Job Creation Commission," *The Korea Economic Daily*, May 11, 2017.

North, reconfiguring historical inequalities maintained through the racialized and gendered international divisions of labor in global capitalism. Like the *pijŏnggyujik* in Korean context, labor precarity as a "new" form of exploitation in the post-Fordist neoliberal global economy demands forgetting historical relations and the past uneven development that together have constituted the global North and South, rewriting a singular universal history of global capitalism. The seemingly similar or comparable forms of precarious labor across globalized markets, despite their heterogeneities and multiple temporalities in contradiction, are becoming a "scalable research project" (Tsing 2015, 38). This conceptual shift driven by the ever more abstract circuit of financial capital entails new forms of historical amnesia and "epistemological colonization" (Mohanty 2003). This chapter examines the institutional processes of neoliberal reforms and of social reproduction of the low-wage female workforce in Korea as a lingering effect of the developmental state and a condition of possibility for its neoliberal becoming.

In order to reveal the discursive formation of labor precarity in global capitalism and the temporal logic behind it, I examine three life-stories of elderly female janitors in the context of the Korean neoliberal labor restructuring that unfolded in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. This chapter is organized with three parts. First, I briefly revisit the feminist studies on gendered global production and feminist social reproduction theories and discuss what they can offer to our understanding of labor precarity. Secondly, I draw an historical arc between the Korean developmental state (1960s-80s) and the neoliberal reform era (1997-present) by reading the life-stories of female workers in order to reveal the neoliberal temporality to which the *pijŏnggyu* movement is subsumed. Lastly, I show how the discursive re-making of the 1970s' female factory workers as historical figures of the past and the making of *pijŏnggyujik* subjects went hand in hand in the 2000s, the reform era after the 1997 crisis. Seen from the standpoint of

the female workers who have traditionally constituted the shadowy *outsiders* in relation to the "core-insiders" (Song 2014, 44) – i.e. male employees of *chaebol* businesses - in Korean economy, the level of labor precarity or contingency has been intensified from the era of developmental state capitalism to the present neoliberal labor regime. In effect, the newness narrative of the *pijŏnggyujik* erases heterogeneous histories of these female workers who have never been "regular" workers (full-time direct employment) in their lives and forecloses a radical critique of the process of social reproduction of feminized labor. I argue that this politics of forgetting constituting the newness narrative of precarious work activates the universal neoliberal temporality of financial global capitalism.

Global Labor Precarity as Discourse

Labor precarity as a vector of broader neoliberal social precarity has been conceptualized mainly in the context of post-industrial and post-Fordist capitalist societies through sociological and economic frameworks. Examining the processes of neoliberal economic restructuring in North America and European countries since the 1980s, these studies have focused on the shifts in normative employment relations, new patterns of work-life organization, and the indeterminate class status of the flexiblized labor force.[14] Revealing the normativity of "standard employment relations" in the scholarship, Leah F. Vosko extends the inquiry to gender contract theory and normative employment's constitutive function of citizenship (Vosko 2010). The

[14] See mainly, Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London; New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic (2011); Arne L. Kalleberg "Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition." *American Sociological Review* 74, no. 1 (2009): 1–22.; Dennis Arnold and Joseph R. Bongiovi. "Precarious, Informalizing, and Flexible Work Transforming Concepts and Understandings." *American Behavioral Scientist* 57, no. 3 (March 1, 2013): 289–308.

International Labor Organization's (ILO) 2012 report *From Precarious Work to Decent Work* defines precarious work by identifying three major characteristics: 1) contractual uncertainty (temporal, fixed-term), 2) lack of clarity in employment relations (multilateral, triangular, disguised employment), and 3) insufficient or a "total absence of trade union rights" (2012, 27-8). Despite ILO's attempt to provide a global spectrum of the phenomenon, the international forum normalizes the experience of the developed countries that treats the disparate conditions of developing economies as "exceptions." In effect, this approach renders the historical relations and uneven processes of globalization irrelevant in such international convention. Against this approach universalizing certain patterns of labor precarity, critiques from the Global South, notably Ronaldo Munck (2013) and Ben Scully (2016) point out the ahistoricity of the concept of labor precarity and claim that it extends Eurocentric modes of thinking by reaffirming modernization theory. Still, others attempt to find political usefulness in the new concept, addressing the limits of the informal economy framework in developing countries' historically different relations to neoliberal global economy (Ferreira et al. 2016).

Feminist scholarship on global capitalism including studies on gendered global production and social reproduction theory can potentially challenge the conceptual dominance of labor precarity that universalizes the normative standard labor relations (SLRs) in the global context. SLRs was pivotal to the operation of the male breadwinner model and the family-wage system that upheld the short-lived welfare regime in the global North (Fraser 2009). Feminist ethnographies on gendered global production have revealed, as Jennifer Bair notes, both the "patterned and contingent nature" of the relationship between global capital and gender (Bair 2010). The feminization of factory labor in global production has manifested in various locales and has been constituted by different cultural meanings and existing social relations of

production and reproduction. The general phenomenon expressed in the term "New International Division of Labor" is "a real abstraction" which lacks the historical specificities of each production site in which old and new gendered meanings and subjects are negotiated and performed differently.[15] What has not been fully addressed in Bair's review of the gendered global production literature, however, is the specific roles played by major institutions, such as the state, market, community (religious or secular, urban or suburban, etc.), and the family. Feminist ethnographies on gendered global production have shown us how existing institutions are reproduced in the process of transnational capital's penetration into the old social fabric. These studies encourage us to rethink the discourse of precarious labor in two critical ways: firstly, labor precarity can be examined as an evolving structural condition propelled by financialized global capital both materially and discursively, and secondly, we know very little yet about the ways in which the existing social institutions in historically different locations are articulating their forms and contents accordingly to the global formation of precarious workforce.

Marxist feminist social reproduction theories can reveal another hidden layer of the labor precaritization discourse in the global scale. In her recent publication, Tithi Bhattacharya describes social reproduction theory as "a series of reflections on the political economy of labor power" that is attentive to the ways in which "categories of oppression (such as gender, race, and ableism) are coproduced in simultaneity with the production of surplus value" (2017, 14). This view encourages us to rethink the discourse of labor precarity as a historically specific process and condition through which multiple forms of oppressive relations and differences are

[15] The classic articles include Fröbel et al. (1978) "The New International Division of Labour" and Helen I. Safa, *The Myth of the Male Breadwinner: Women and Industrialization in the Caribbean* (1995).

reconfigured and reproduced. In addition, because of its dependency on the formal labor market, the discourse of labor precarity lacks explanatory power when applied to the informal sector and the reproductive realm. In the same volume, Nancy Fraser reframes the current form of capitalist crisis as "the social-reproductive contradictions of financialized capitalism" (Fraser 2017, 32). What these feminist theorists highlight is not simply disappearing regular jobs in formal sectors but the extreme reduction of socially necessary labor time expressed as low-wage (both in formal and informal sectors) that is deeply felt and absolved at home, schools, hospitals, and communities in which labor power is reproduced and life is maintained. Seen in this light, the phenomenon of labor precaritization cannot be reduced to shrinking standard labor relations. Rather, it is a material and discursive process in which the very relation between production and reproduction is reconfigured *unevenly* across the globalized labor markets. Further, what Fraser calls as "boundary struggles" in the current form of global financial capitalism necessarily exceeds the realm of surplus value extraction (class relations) and entails reworking historically formed systems of oppression within and beyond national borders, including the discursive and material relations that have constituted the global North and South (Fraser 2014).

Feminized Labor's Pasts

The articulation of *pijŏnggyujik* in South Korea lies in this "exceptional" relation to the global processes of labor precaritization. It particularly disrupts Guy Standing's provocation of "class in the making" or "dangerous class" in two regionally specific characteristics (Standing 2011). First, as the Korean government spearheaded the neoliberal restructuring after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis with the bailout plan of the International Monetary Fund, the state played a quintessential role in the formation of the *pijŏnggyujik* as the precarious working class (Ji

2011). Major legal reform bills that allowed non-traditional forms of employment – mainly mass layoffs, subcontracting, and outsourcing - were passed in the period between the two major financial crises of 1997 and 2008. Unlike in Western countries, the changes in labor relations tended to be engineered by the strong state through its strategic turn to the regime of law in the reform process. Second, while the representative two national trade unions (Korean Confederation of Trade Unions [KCTU] and the Federation of Korean Trade Unions [FKTU]) were being incorporated into the government-led "social compact" council in the reform process, newly emerged contingent workers who were entirely excluded from the state-business-labor negotiation triangle sought various forms of non-traditional organizing strategies (Gray 2008). Far from being dormant or "dangerous," *pijŏnggyu* workers have led the most militant labor struggles in the following period (Cho 2008; 2011). Elderly female janitors, the iconic figure of this new subaltern class formation, are situated in historically complex relations both to the scripts of the "old" democratic labor union [*minju nojo*] and the "new" *pijŏnggyu* movement. Keeping the discursive tension between precarious work and *pijŏnggyujik* at the center of my discussion, I underscore the internalized ahistoricity and the persistent developmental ideology embraced by the progressive elites and labor union activists in the current *pijŏnggyu* labor movement in Korea. This chapter focuses on the three life-stories of elderly female janitors that disrupt the linear temporality of the *pijŏnggyujik* discourse.

Youngjin: Feeling "Left Behind"

I met Youngjin at the Seoul-Gyeongin branch collective bargaining meeting in 2015. Youngjin had to quit her first janitorial job after experiencing several incidents of verbal and psychological abuse that left her with psychosomatic symptoms – such as nausea, dizziness,

breathing problems, and panic disorder. She recalled that at that time, "I felt completely isolated from society. Korea became so wealthy and I was the one *left behind in the 1970s*." Youngjin, born in 1963, spent her childhood in the old garment factory town, Dongdaemun, Changsin-dong, where the historic Seoul Peace Market [*p'yŏngwa sijang*] was located. She had a vivid memory of the winter when she finished elementary school and started working at a garment factory in the early 1970s:

> After elementary school I wanted to learn the sewing machine to support my family. Everyone said and did so in my neighborhood. I started working as a *sida* (seamstress's assistant). I was shorter than my peers because I started school one year early. Sitting on my knees all day, I passed things like pants under the sewing machine. We were treated like a joke, doing anything we were asked to do. I just wanted to work to support my family. I could attend middle school with the money I earned.

Youngjin's father was a day-laborer who barely brought home enough money to meet the basic needs of the family members. She wanted to "support her family" with the small amount of money she earned from a nearby garment factory where her first lifetime labor was treated like a "joke." Youngjin could attend the middle school with the extra income she brought to the household. At that time girls' commercial high schools in the urban area attracted students in low-income households, like Youngjin, both to continue schooling and to start an early career in the country's flourishing manufacturing industry and booming contingent jobs. Despite her desire to take the school assignment test and go to a regular high school in a nearby town, Youngjin entered the Chung-gu girls commercial high school [*ch'ŏngguyŏsang*] that did not require tuition. Youngjin's father showed up at her middle school graduation ceremony and handed her one semester amount of tuition for the regular high school attendance. Youngjin recalled the day with full of gratitude and the missed chance to be a "normal" high school student.

The Chung-gu girls high school owned an electronics factory in which most of the students from rural areas could work during the day time and go to evening classes, staying in the school dormitory. Since Youngjin did not need to stay in the dormitory, she was assigned various kinds of jobs on top of the factory work:

> In the morning, let's say now we call it '*alba* (part-time job),' once I sold newspapers like *Hankook Ilbo* in front of the school. It was very competitive, since you need to sell more than that of other students. Some years, I worked at the electronics factory…I still remember the smell of adhesive, now I know what that was…*Twaejibondŭ* (widely used rubber-based adhesive brand). Although we worked hard all day, since we had to go to school in the evening, we were paid way less than the (regular) workers there. They worked until 6 p.m. while we went to school by 3 p.m. Instead, we started work very early in the morning. Still, the money we got was too little compared to the (regular) worker.

The contingent jobs Youngjin had during her high school years were actively reinterpreted in her present memory. She highlights the student workers' low wage compared to the regular workers at the factory. To my question about her first resume, Youngjin answered that she did not list any of the contingent works she did in those days. "People told us that it would only harm your chances when you want a formal job," Youngjin explained. The formal job she found, however, was not very different from her previous work. From her late teenage years, she worked at two manufacturing factories, a traditional medicine company and a wet towel manufacturing factory. During the interview, she repeatedly pointed out both the low-wages she received from the so-called "formal" jobs and the chemicals her body was exposed to at the factories.

Youngjin married when she was 23 and became a quiescent housewife who never talked back to her husband. Her father-in-law had two wives, thus two mother in-laws for Youngjin, including six siblings. Youngjin's long silence in her marriage led to a relapse of her childhood sickness related to her lymph nodes that caused extreme weight loss at that time. When little, she used to be a very vocal girl. Even at the medicine factory, she once asked the owner of the

company why their wages were so low. Youngjin decided to be silent to avoid further conflicts, being afraid of already-vociferous in-law family members, including not only the repressive father but the older sisters. Before she started working as janitor in her fifties, from her late thirties to her forties, Youngjin worked as a part-time sales person at a side-dish counter of a supermarket and, after taking classes for elderly care, briefly lived as a domestic care worker.

In her early fifties, Youngjin started working as a janitor at a university in Seoul. After recovering from the first few months of traumatic experience in the workplace, Youngjin luckily returned to the original position she had. The working conditions remained unchanged under the control of the same supervisor who threatened and insulted Youngjin and her coworkers. A difference was made in 2012 when the Hongik University janitorial workers secretly visited the campus where she was working to share their successful union organizing stories. Youngjin described the day of the union chapter inauguration in a dramatic way, "I was shivering like aspen trees [*sasinamu*]. Some of us were really afraid of the supervisor…what if he caught us on our way back home after this?" After three years of union work, Youngjin became the second most vocal member in the chapter participating in all the collective bargaining meetings as an assistant for the chapter leader. The rank and file, like Youngjin, had a unique role at the negotiation table. Whenever the outsourcing company employers tried to avoid addressing specific issues, oftentimes lying, the enraged rank and file jumped in telling them specific incidences and cases workers experienced in the past years. Whereas the union representatives maintained a rather reserved manner, the rank and file were the ones who pushed the discussion closer to the real conditions of work and even solutions.

Youngjin's life-story reveals the temporal and spatial politics of multiple social relations and the entanglement of patriarchal and capitalist controls. What she experiences in her fifties

working as a janitor situates her body and memory back in the 1970s, the time when her immature laboring body was treated like a "joke" at the garment factory. What does this temporal and spatial disposition tell us? What exactly do between the janitorial work in the present and the factory job she had about 30 years ago have in common? If what is at stake is beyond the form of labor exploitation, what else does her articulation of feeling *left behind* reveal? By telling us her past experience of labor precarity, which is not fully recognized in the *pijŏnggyujik* movement discourse, Youngjin's sense of *not-belonging to the present* exposes the temporal logic that drives the linear progress of capitalist development - more importantly it exposes how the logic *leaves* certain populations, forms of life, and memories *behind*. As the Korean economy is articulated with the neoliberal temporality - that is, an abstract time of global financial capital adjusted through recurring crises - *pijŏnggyujik* discourse summons Youngjin to speak about her present hardship (a "new" form of exploitation) as an elderly female janitorial worker. However, in the process of speaking as the *pijŏnggyu* workforce, her heterogeneous past is erased or again silenced in the linear progressive logic of time bolstered by persistent capitalist and patriarchal relations – that might have initially put her in the social condition of psychosomatic coma for several months. In turn, this form of erasure and forgetting allows the very social reproduction of co-constitutive gender and class oppressions.

Kiyeon: After 40 Years of Union Work

Kiyeon was the eldest person in the SG union, waiting for her second retirement after forty years of struggle as a veteran janitorial workers' union leader and a single mother who raised three children. After her husband's early death in his thirties, Kiyeon started working at an electric rice cooker factory in the late 1970s. The witty elder Kiyeon recalled the days, "I made

the famous Universal red-colored electric cooker. When you made rice with it, the rice turned to red. I couldn't think of anything like working conditions at that time with three kids. I left them at my parents' house and went to work." A few years later, Kiyeon found a janitorial job at the Yonsei Severance Hospital, the largest university hospital in Seoul at that time. From 1979 to 2006, she worked as janitor moving step by step from rank and file, to union secretary, and then chapter leader. Kiyeon proudly remembered those years when she led the biannual bargaining at the hospital, winning all sorts of benefits and achieving the pay step system [*hobong*] that enabled annual wage increase based on seniority. Janitors of the union chapter received 400 % incentives once, all of which Kiyeon has witnessed disappearing and even becoming unimaginable in the recent years. Kiyeon says, "We humans are emotional animals. I feel really bad (about all the losses). I don't know why the world is turning like this…"

At the hospital, Kiyeon was hired by outsourcing companies from the beginning. In total, she passed through eight companies before her retirement in 2006. The union chapter was a member of the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU), a conservative right-wing national union. The FKTU started unionizing female cleaners working at the large buildings in urban area as early as the late 1970s and pursued little political intervention or engagement with the union chapters, promoting enterprise unionism that allowed relatively independent organizational practices. When Kiyeon retired from the hospital at the age of 60, she did not know how to live without a job.

> I worked there for 27 years. After retiring at 60, I had a one-month break…Really, at that time, (I felt I was) socially over, isolated. I was afraid that I might have had depression if I continued not working Since I worked for so long, I did not know anyone. I used to go to work at dawn and back home at night. My colleagues could easily find new positions at the nearby university. I went to the university campus with a senior colleague's [*sŏnbae*] help. I didn't want much, just to have pastime. Of course I needed money for living, still I emptied my mind; I needed to work. The wage was much lower than that I used to earn.

The Yonsei University campus was located right next to the hospital where Kiyeon used to work, and she ended up organizing a new union chapter in 2008. By that time, the SG Union was targeting several major university campuses with progressive student organizations in Seoul to increase its membership. Kiyeon's experience as a union leader at the hospital, with the support of progressive student groups, made the union organizing at the Yonsei campus possible. Since Kiyeon gained fame among the hospital janitors for her twenty-seven years of hard work and leadership, she could easily increase membership for the union at the university. Unlike her experience at the hospital union as an independent chapter, the SG Union assigned a young union staff member to assist with the university chapter's activities. Kiyeon, in her mid-sixties now, serves 350 members of the chapter - the hospital union had 200 members - and works more hours, participating in recurrent public rallies and the SG union weekly meetings, with fewer material resources and less decision-making power as a chapter leader.

Whereas the progressive body of organized labor, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), and labor scholars define *pijŏnggyujik* as a new form of labor exploitation and imagine a political movement based on this assumption, Kiyeon's experience working as a janitor and protecting workers' rights from outsourcing companies for twenty-seven years contradicts with the normativizing temporality of the new political script. The form of contingent employment and exploitation is consistent in Kiyeon's life history. What is new to her is specified in her everyday struggle, such as the relationship between the umbrella union and the university chapter, different political agendas between FKCT and KCTU, and the overwhelming chapter leadership role with not enough material support. Waiting for her second retirement in the coming year, Kiyeon explained why she had to keep working, stretching her life timeline further back:

> This is my last year. I should work…If I don't, who will pay for my living? People like me never get behind at work. My generation experienced the Korean War, share similar experiences, living apart from family. You want me to write my story? I lived my entire life working with the union, always in tension, being protective because we don't know when the company would beat us. These days, not many people understand this.

Although it looks like new forms of social precarity have struck Kiyeon's elderly life in the name of *pijŏnggyujik*, contingent employment is hardly a new condition for her. Moving from her hospital job to the position at the university, her union organizing and networking skills were utilized for different political causes between the conservative national union FKCT and the progressive KCTU. In the meantime, her stories of old successes and meanings of union struggle were truncated to serve the new political grammar of *pijŏnggyujik.* As a veteran union leader and a single mom, Kiyeon has always been vocal in her life. What makes her last 10 years as a contingent worker politically more meaningful than the rest of her time? The loss she mourns in her narrative revolves around the material benefits her old coworkers fought for so long together and the time of struggle *forgotten* and becoming meaningless in the present labor politics.

Jaerim: Disappearing Labor and Time

Jaerim was famous for the plants she collected to decorate the restrooms she was assigned to clean at the Hongik university campus. She explained, "I picked up those thrown-away plants on campus. For they are living things, I took care of them. Let's say, it was my hobby. It made the relationships (with faculty and students) better…once a story of my plants in the restrooms was covered in the campus newspaper." After closing her restaurant that served nearby local construction workers in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, Jaerim started working as a janitorial worker in 1998. At the age of 23, Jaerim migrated alone to Seoul from a small town looking for job and hoping to get married. She found a job at a spinning and

weaving textile factory in Mullrae-dong in Seoul. The three-shift work at the factory was not easy for a girl like Jaerim who had no previous training. Jaerim explained, "There must have been a shortage of workers at that time. No one in the area was unemployed then. People like us never stopped working. Some older sisters [*ŏnnidŭl*] in the neighborhood brought me to the factory." Jaerim, like, other factory workers sent money to her family who were living in the rural area: "We used to send stuff like red-colored underclothes and Miwon (MSG product). Maybe I was too naïve then, I sent most of the money I earned to my parents."

Jaerim had never imagined organizing a labor union or going on a strike in her life time until she became a janitor in her fifties. When she first came to work at the Hongik University campus, people called her an "outsourced worker [*yongyŏk*]." She learned later that it was a discriminatory term, distinguishing her from regular workers on campus. Like other janitors, Jaerim renewed her contract every year with an outsourcing company. She signed on the contract, holding a resume with only her handwritten name and age, leaving the career history section blank. Every year, her time of labor disappeared, like a reset button pressed by someone.

> There was no interview. I guess there was a shortage of people. Since I was considered young, 49 years old, I thought I would not stay here this long. After the IMF, everything was a mess in the country, I couldn't think of re-opening my restaurant. We, janitors, were controlled solely by the outsourcing companies. There were a few regular workers among janitors then. We were treated differently from them. People called us "outsourced workers [*yongyŏk*]". Our monthly wage then was 480,000 won (approximately 480 USD). I guess the regular workers made twice as much. Since I managed my restaurant for fifteen years, cleaning work was not so hard compared to that. You know, restaurant work is much harder.

Jaerim's experience of running a small restaurant for fifteen years was not considered a career or a skill by the employer when she was hired as janitor. Unlike most formal sector regular jobs, transferable skills and experiences were not accumulated in the value of janitorial work. Instead, age and gender primarily determined her employability, which reveals the social character of a

janitorial job. Becoming a janitor, Jaerim gradually learned the difference in wages, benefits, and the social status between regular and outsourced workers. Restaurant work, although it was much harder, allowed Jaerim to raise her children, feeding them and paying for their schooling. Her husband, who used to work with her at the restaurant, opened a dry cleaning shop around the time Jaerim started working at the university. They are in their late sixties now, still working hard for a living, which is the source of Jaerim's pride as well as her sense of fulfilment as a generous grandparent.

Recording Jaerim's story was perplexing to me owing to her unique standpoint as both a rank and file and the eldest member of the SG Union. Jaerim told me once, "I read in the newspaper that South Korean minimum wage is now the 14th in the world. Isn't it not so bad? I guess it is enough for us." It was not just Jaerim who had similar views. Many of the elderly female janitors I met during my fieldwork expressed that the point of union struggle was not just money. Since the workers organized a union in 2011, janitorial workers' wage had significantly increased, slightly surpassing the national minimum wage in 2014. While the primary goal of the SG Union's annual bargaining was to achieve a living wage, rank and file members like Jaerim in the janitorial sector were asking, "Will there be an end to this wage struggle?" The university started hiring part-time student workers to reduce the cost of hiring full-time janitors. Many janitors were noticing the vicious cycle of struggle - the way wage increase led to the reduction of the number of workers, intensifying their workload and hours. In the process, the eldest members of the union felt pressured to retire early because of the intense work schedule and increased workload. What has been changed after the union organizing was not simply a wage increase. For Jaerim it was about "human relations, people treat us differently…really I feel my work here is respected now."

Jaerim's narrative reveals the link between disappearing labor time among the low-skilled contingent workers who renew their contracts annually and the sense of broken relationships at the workplace where the workers are called "the outsourced." Witnessing the cycle of greedy profit-seeking activities around their labor, the elderly workers started doubting the infinite wage-centered union struggle. The struggle was intensifying hostility and competition among workers as well as their broken relationships with the people with and for whom they work. Jaerim used to take care of lots of plants while working at her old restaurant. The act of collecting abandoned plants on campus and turning the restroom space into a small indoor garden, at first, was treated as an odd behavior for the restroom users. As she continued decorating and working at the building for about 16 years, people started to recognize her and appreciate her labor that couldn't be subsumed entirely by capitalist value expressed in wage. Maybe Jaerim was watering and carefully watching dying plants as a way to recover the *broken relationship* expressed as an "outsourced worker" in her workplace. Jaerim's silent struggle was ended abruptly by the new worksite rotation system the union adopted a few years ago. The chapter leader explained there had been too many complaints about the uneven workload in buildings. The workers were assigned to a new building every three or four years. A year ago Jaerim lost her old garden, just as she lost her restaurant and her favorite hobby that used to give her a *sense of belonging* at work. The union time fails to contain Jaerim's silent struggle and her sense of time, the way she controls her labor and elderly life for non-capitalist value, such as taking care of thrown-away plants and her own grandchildren.

Social Reproduction of the Gendered Class Relations

The figure of feminized factory labor that sustained the developmental state in the 1960s and 70s haunts the present time and the "new" laboring subjects of the neoliberal labor regime. All three life-stories I analyze here bring us back to the speakers' memories of factory work in the 1970s. Youngjin's case shows how the girls' commercial high schools created the low-wage part-time female workers and how patriarchal family relations (both natal and conjugal family) endorsed various forms of contingent employment in her lifetime. Kiyeon's experience as union leader for forty years disrupts the political script of *pijŏnggyujik* by revealing the very same form of contingent labor and exploitation (subcontracting and outsourcing) that has been consistent in her entire career but subsumed under different union agendas (from FKTU to KCTU). Jaerim, pulled to janitorial work in her fifties after closing her restaurant, keeps her hobby of taking care of plants and wonders why the union focuses only on wage when the real problem at her workplace is not simply economic but relational ("broken relationship" and "respect"). Jaerim reveals the surprisingly similar pattern of employment in her twenties and her fifties that she understands as a problem of scarcity: "there must have been shortage of workers." While the term "outsourced worker [*yongyŏk*]" erases her past work experience and everyday labor, she attempts to recover the broken ties with people and her own past through the very work – maybe as a form of giving in her elderly life. What becomes clear in these three life-stories is the ways in which past social relations of gender and class have been reproduced in the present in a different institutional form.

In a macro view, the three life-stories allow us to draw a historical arc between the developmental state's export-oriented industrialization (1960s - 70s), the liberalization process led by the democratization movement and policy makers (the late 1980s - 90s), and the post-

developmental regime completed by structural reforms after the two major global financial crises in 1997 and 2008. Whereas the *pijŏnggyujik* discourse and movement highlights a dramatic shift in employment relations in the post-developmental regime, the life-stories of feminized workers encourage us to rethink the historical framework and temporality of *pijŏnggyujik*. The linear time of the capitalist development of the country's economy contradicts the narratives of *feeling left behind (frozen time)*, *labor struggle as losses (time as loss)*, and *disappearing labor time (forgotten time)* in the life-stories of the feminized laboring subjects. The temporal frame of reference that harnesses the discourse of *pijŏnggyujik* and global labor precaritization silences these stories' disarticulations from the normative time of progress and development.

The developmental state's time of economic growth orchestrated rhythms of social life at home and work through various institutions. Korean organized labor represented by the two national unions (FKTU and KCTU) has been synced to the industrial time of growth and the national time for democratization (e.g. June Struggle and the Great Workers' Struggle in 1987). The global financial crises in 1997 and 2008 left deep scars on emerging middle-class aspirations buttressed by the heteropatriarchal nuclear family norms that operated with the family wage system enjoyed by the male workers in *chaebol* companies and public sector jobs. Labor struggles against neoliberal downsizing and restructuring in the aftermath of the financial crises, especially in the heavy industries (notably automobile and shipbuilding), have taken the form of family struggle enunciated as a "crisis of men," which strengthened both heteronormativity and patriarchy in its class politics instead of weakening them (Kwon 2009, 107). While those male workers lost their jobs and were pushed to devastating forms of labor protest (e.g. 30 workers lost their lives in Ssangyoung Motor Company protest since 2009) in that period, their wives and children were depicted as helpless victims of capital's flight and downsizing. Organized labor

including the progressive national union KCTU and its renewed discourse of democratic union movement [*minju nojo*] in the mid-1990s were complicit with the operation of the national time of growth and the social reproduction of the gendered divisions of labor in the following era. In the following section, I show how the historical figure of female factory workers [*yŏgong*] of the 1970s (the peak time of its size and labor struggle) and the new figure of *pijŏnggyujik* have been made discursively in the 2000s by labor historians, scholars, and activists. This discursive process produces a linear progressive temporality and historical knowledge that distinguishes the feminized factory workers (figures of the past) from the *pijŏnggyujik* (new subjects), which forecloses a radical critique of the reproduction of feminized labor.[16] In effect, feminized labor becomes the dark past that has been overcome in the "developed" Korean economy.

Historical Figuring of Yŏgong (1910-2000s)

A systemic mobilization of female factory workers on the Korea peninsular first happened in the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945). Janice Kim's research explores the complex social arrangements in the colonial period, articulating how young female subjects were mobilized for wartime factories not only in textiles and food processing but also in the heavy industries such as machinery and shipbuilding in the time of labor shortage during the imperial war and the late "total colonization" period (1937-1945) (Kim 2007, 2009). Janice Kim argues that the factory workers' resistance in the feminized sectors, such as sewing, weaving, and rubber-shoe making, and the patterns of their strike in the early 1930s reflect female workers' "personal" life conditions, instead

[16] Two research institutions have recently opened in South Korea: Sungkonghoe University Center for Labor History, which opened in 2002, has produced a large scale labor oral history archive under the theme of the "life worlds of industrial workers" in the 1950s. Korean Oral History Center, which is a private research institute opened in 2008, has joined in the trend focusing on oral history method research and training.

of being affected by the colonial and national ideological contradictions between capitalists and socialists (2009). By framing the female workers' resistance as "revolutions from within" and "more capitalist than socialist," Janice Kim's study assumes *a priory* femininity of the workers in the gendered division of labor by emphasizing the female subjects' lives both in the public and the private realms (ibid 126). Kyŏngil Kim provides a more critical explanation on how the intensity of strikes in the feminized sectors like rubber industry varied in different urban locations depending on the regional ties and resources (1987).[17] The common element of the rubber industry over the regions in which married women in their thirties and forties were the majority was drastically low wage. Both Korean and Japanese capitalists lowered the female rubber workers' wage to an extreme level after the Great Depression with the assumption that the women's labor was only supplementary to the household survival in the colonial economy in the 1930s. Janice Kim's explanation of the "personal" conditions of the female workers does not adequately reflect these workers' "structural" conditions in the 1930s' wartime factories. While the relationship between the capitalist modernization efforts in production and the feminized subjects continues to the post-colonial period, the feminized factory work in colonial period needs to be cautiously distinguished from that of the export-oriented industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s in terms of the liberal state's developmental strategy and adoption of the formal legal rights for workers.

Indeed, what characterized the new relation between capital and labor in the post-colonial era of the first republic Syngman Rhee regime (1946-1960) and the devastating Korean War (1950-1953) was the provision of the "progressive" labor laws including constitutional protection of labor rights in 1948 and the three basic rights in 1953 – the rights to organize, bargain collectively, and

[17] Kyŏngil Kim's study provides characteristics of three regions where rubber factories were located, Kyŏngsŏng, P'yŏngyang, and Pusan.

engage collective action (Nam 2009, 37). Against the view that the labor rights law in the period was a mere copy of the Western model, Hwasook Nam offers a more nuanced explanation on the political environment wherein the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU [*Daehan noch'ong*]) and its leaders like Chŏn Chinhan played significant role in securing "crucial assets for the South Korean labor movement in the following decades" (ibid 38). This view highlights the "progressive" aspect of the initial labor rights law in the post-colonial context, suggesting that the FKTU, despite its reliance to the Rhee government, filled the void of the communist labor organization, the National Council of Korean Labor Unions [*Chŏnp'yŏng*], and the Workers' Self-Management Movement that were quelled down under the U.S. supervision. Still, it pays little attention to the active role played by the female factory workers in the Chosŏn Pangjik (a spinning and weaving company originally owned by the Japanese) in the process of the legislation of the labor laws, in particular in what way the rank and file workers' demands were reduced to the frame of liberal legal protection. From 1951 to 1953, about 6000 female workers waged the most pierce strike in the first Republic, demanding dismissal of the state-assigned owner Kang Il Mae (Yu 2009, 125-6). Through the labor act, not only Rhee government could mobilize the protesting female workers as "nationals" but also established a foundation for liberal relationship with the FKTU by following the UN Civil Assistance Corps Korea's recommendation on the "promotion of liberal labor relations" (ibid 147). Undeniably, the 1953 labor act enactment was an emblem of the compromise FKTU leadership made with the Rhee government. This point provides an important clue in understanding the following period of female factory workers' democratic labor union [*minju nojo*] activism in the 1970s, in particular their relations to the state's control of working class through the rule of law.

Studying the gendered character of the international division of labor in the 1960s and 70s, Helen I. Safa articulates characteristics of the runaway shops' new destinations in developing countries as "low wages, high unemployment, limited natural recourses, low levels of unionization, and politically stable regime" (1981, 418). South Korea under the military-coup leader Park Chung Hee regime (1961-1979) qualified in all respects. The runaway shops from the developed countries - primarily the United States and Japan – relocated to Korea as new destinations for the fresh low-wage labor power. The female factory workers who were mobilized in this period through the state-led economic development plans were concentrated on the labor-intensive export-oriented light industries, such as textile, wig, shoes, and electronic assembly.[18] The phenomenal strikes and protests waged by female workers in the period – to name a few, Dongil Textile, YH Trading, Wonpoong Wool Textile, and Control Data – were struggles against not only capital exploitation but also the pro-government masculine labor unions [*ŏyong nojo*] and the authoritarian state, which was the peak of democratic labor union building movement [*minju nojo*] in the industrialization era. Feminist scholar Hyunmee Kim called this Korean modernization model as "hypermasculine state developmentalism" that operated through "Confucian parental governance" wherein devalued feminized workers' rights to citizenship was largely denied (Kim 2000, 41).

In the 2000s, a group of labor historians reignites a scholarly debate on the discursive and material formation of the figure of female factory workers [*yŏgong*] of the 1970s. Wŏn Kim's book *Factory Girls the 1970s, Their Counter-History* [*Yŏgong the 1970s, Kŭnyŏdul ŭi pan yŏksa*] (2005), leading the debate, poses a set of important methodological questions in the mainstream

[18] Under the Park regime, four successive five-year economic development plans (1st: 1962-66, 2nd: 1967-71, 3rd: 1972-76, 4: 1977-81) were enacted and the growth goals were actualized. This excessive state-planning strategy that defines Korean developmentalism was maintained until 1997. I discuss the shift of governmentality from developmentalism to neoliberalism in the late 1990s in detail in Chapter 3.

historiography produced by the progressive labor activists and scholars in the past decade. Building on Joan Scott's work and Foucauldian genealogy, Kim pays attention to life worlds of the female workers in factories, streets, and intimate spaces that have remained largely understudied, thus, challenging the politicized figure of "*yŏgong*" in the previous studies. Kim's study provides a critique of the lineal historiography that produces a fixed image of female workers. In the same vein, Kyŏngil Kim offers new interpretations on the subjectivity of the female factory workers in Dongil Textile and YH Trading cases. Kyŏngil Kim points out that Hagen Koo's study (2001) pays close attention to the relationship between the female factory workers and church organizations with no interest in articulating how the female workers achieve a situated (gender specific) class identity (2005, 160). Further, he argues that labor scholars and researchers tend to view the subject from the standpoint of intellectuals depending on assumed sets of binaries – economic/political unionism, individual/collective struggles, light/heavy industries, and female/male workers - which results in confining and subjugating the historical subject within the ideological framework of intellectuals. Based on newly collected female workers' oral histories, Kyŏngil Kim finds that the female workers' demands were not limited to wage increases and better treatment but also included gender-specific issues like menstrual leave, maternity leave, and sexual verbal assaults (ibid 172). The gender sensitive class struggle of female workers constituted their unique class identity as workers whose desire to be treated as equal members of society, which generated "liberatory knowledge [*haebangŭi chisik*]" that could challenge the hierarchy and injustice rooted in the gendered divisions of labor (ibid 162). In this approach, the female factory workers' class identity is illuminated as having a differential political potential that is not simply comparable to that of male workers.

Similar intervention can be found in Jun Kim's study on the exemplary workers' essays [*mobŏm kŭloja sugi*] that were published and distributed by the government institutions, corporate organizations, and state-sponsored organizations in the 1970s and 1980s to give awards and motivate workers (2001). Jun Kim argues these essays can reveal: 1) the majority of workers' life conditions and consciousness that might contradict the representations of the *minju* labor discourse; 2) how the authoritarian state produces a model subject of workers; and 3) how disciplinary practices of the state are adopted by the workers and the ways in which the workers are mobilized and policed (63). This approach ironically reveals some of the hidden and untold stories of the workers, such as how the female factory workers internalize the dominant gender role of a dutiful daughter and of mother and struggle to overcome contradictions they face in the factory labor by eagerly pursuing education and dreaming of "escape" from poverty and the "abnormal" life conditions in factories (96). These studies collectively aim to correct the dominant historical knowledge by offering alternative readings and interpretations of the existing oral history archive, which I identify as a critical oral history research or a new historicism in Korean labor studies. I contend that this renewed discursive figuring of feminized labor in the 2000s is a necessary condition for the discursive making of the new category *pijŏnggyujik.* In the following section, I show how this discursive making of gendered laboring bodies continues in the post-developmental regime through different institutional practices and renewals of political ideology and language.

Political Figuring of Pijŏnggyujik

The structural reform era after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis saw an emergence of "new" feminized laboring subjects whose labor relation and conditions were perceived as "unprecedented" in Korean economic development history. The Hongik University janitorial and

security workers' strike in 2011 (henceforth the HU case) is an emblematic site of this new political experiment. Their struggle receives unprecedented media attention and support, which has been interpreted as the beginning of cultural and social media-led labor activism. Kim Yeojin and *nallari*, well-known actress-led supporters, joined in the strike by spreading messages via the social media and attracted a large group of participants organizing unconventional cultural activities in the neighborhood, such as a street bazar in Hongdae streets and movie night events. The Seoul-Gyeongin Branch of Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (hereafter the SG Union), as the umbrella organization, led the negotiation between Hongik University and the workers. However, the actual organizational scale during the strike was not entirely dependent on the labor union's efforts. The conflicting union-centered tactics and new strategies that were organically led by the supporters created both political tensions and new possibilities for broader social movements (I discuss the HU strike case in detail in Chapter 2).

The HU case was the outcome of many years of effort and planning made by multiple labor organizations and social actors to visualize janitorial workers as representative marginal sector workers in Korea. As well-documented in Jennifer Chun's study (2011), the inauguration of the National Korean Women's Trade Union (KWTU) and the Inha University strike in 1999 signaled the burgeoning marginal sector labor organizing in Korea. The first national level research conducted by National Human Rights Commission, released in 2006, reveals accumulated labor abuse conditions in the janitorial sector, highlighting the sector's "irregularity" in terms of labor contract practices and gender specific human rights abuses (National Human Rights Commission 2006). The report has significance in recognizing and politicizing janitorial sector labor movement in Korea in terms of its scope of survey (759 participants) and the first policy recommendations made by the commission. Although the

commission's recommendation lacks legal enforcement, the act of recognition by the National Human Rights Commission functioned as a platform for collaborative actions among scattered civic organizations and labor unions. The director of the Korean Contingent Workers' Center (KCWC) Kim Sŏnghŭi was the chief researcher of the 2006 Commission's report, whom I could meet several times during my fieldwork. Kim decisively described the Center's role of producing national-level data and agenda on the *pijŏnggyujik* at that time was a "political choice."

Since its establishment in 2000, Korean Contingent Workers' Center has produced progressive research agenda and data regarding the size of the *pijŏnggyujik,* the intensity of the discriminatory labor practices, and the labor law reforms. The center's inauguration statement articulates, "*pijŏnggyu* workers' issues are human rights issues and social problems."[18] Aiming to produce more inclusive and realistic picture of the new labor category than that of the government, the Center has focused on two main research areas: 1) defining and specifying the categories of non-traditional forms of labor contract and 2) analyzing labor disputes and discriminatory practices of such labor relations. The has provided a forum for debates and policy discussions for the *pijŏnggyu* labor movement by releasing monthly statistics report and publishing bimonthly journal *Working Voice* [*Pijŏnggyunodong*]. The assumption shared among the progressive labor scholars was that, when they produce a solid set of data and analysis, it would be solidified into a concrete political agenda that can become a platform for a mass mobilization of the *pijŏnggyu* workers. According to this view, *pijŏnggyujik* needed to be congealed into data first in order for it to be a new class identity. Although I focus on KCWC's

activities here, this "political" data production strategy has been the dominant approach in social inquires of the *pijŏnggyujik* formation.[19]

The assumption that progressive research data could provide a platform for political action was largely contested under the consecutive conservative-party-led governments of Lee Myung-bak (2008-2013) and Park Geun-hye (2013-2017). First of all, the focus on critical data production and visualizing the number of the *pijŏnggyujik* have been adopted by the government rhetoric for justification of the neoliberal regime's labor reform. The Park government, in particular, tactically adopted the rhetoric of the labor researchers arguing that since the intensification of contingent labor was causing serious social disparity, regular workers should sacrifice and share their privileges. Secondly, focusing on the size and patterns of expansion depicted the "new" class formation as a homogenous process, when in reality the contingent employment practices were producing vastly heterogeneous subjects and conditions – e.g. automobile, shipbuilding, call centers, internet cable workers, female train attendants etc. Instead of looking more closely at how the contingent working class formation is linked to multiple social vectors of oppressions and differences such as gender, age, education, ability, and sexuality, the progressive labor data has produced an abstract homogeneous figure, *pijŏnggyujik,* and its unique temporality that is distinguished from the previous developmental time as well as the old figure of feminized labor, *yŏgong.*

[19] The tendency was led by a group of labor scholars, to name a few, Kim Yoo-Sun, Lee Byoung-Hun, Cho Don-Moon, and the government researchers in the Korean Labor Institute.

Neoliberal Temporality and the Politics of Forgetting

The emergence of neoliberal Korea in the late 1990s meant ending the time of the developmental state not only by reordering the terms of its apparatus (i.e. state institutions, banks, and big conglomerates) but by reordering social memories and the rhythms of everyday life. The neoliberal space and time ushered in by the dramatic orchestration between the state, market, and the global financial institution (i.e. International Monetary Fund) demanded of its social actors a historical forgetting through which a new sense of time, order, and way of life could be activated. While some masculinized laboring bodies in the heavy industries were "severed" in the process of capitalist renewal of its own temporal norm, the old script of the heteropatriarchal social order remained intact by a new biopolitics that regulated subjects deemed deserving of saving in the time of national hardship (See Kwon 2015 and Song 2009). The crisis was managed by the subtle interplay between policy makers and various social actors resignifying the value of the normative family and the figure of employable male breadwinners (Song 2009). The nation and society have collectively mourned the social death of the patriarchal men laid off, cut-off (from society), and left homeless. This double consciousness of the neoliberal state – both forgetting and remembering particular past social relations and subjects – left other laboring bodies in a temporal coma (i.e. embodying frozen time). Youngjin, Kiyeon, and Jaerim, mobilized as *pijŏnggyujik*, or part of a globalizing precariat, are actively called into the ritual of neoliberal *forgetting*. For the ritual's success, their heterogeneous pasts need to be erased to fully embody the new consciousness of capitalist exploitation and neoliberal time.

Jennifer Chun's comparative study of the marginal sector workers' struggles in Korea and the U.S. provides analytic tools for neoliberal relations of labor and politics (Chun 2009). The "symbolic leverage" erected in the "classification struggle" through "public drama" in my

field site in particular, relied heavily on the old script of *minju nojo* – figure of Chun Tae-il, who was sympathetic to the voiceless young female factory workers, were replaced by some elite university student activists and legal professionals who could represent elderly female janitors (ibid 13-19). The SG Union actively recruited former student activists and legal professionals as union staff and trained them to lead various union campaigns and activities guiding janitorial workers. During my fieldwork, janitorial workers, like Kiyeon, who were vocal and fully aware of their labor conditions often expressed their lack of decision-making power in the SG Union and their inaccessibility to the legal knowledge predominant in the *pijŏnggyujik* struggle. Since the beginning of the union in 2011, the SG Union's male-dominant leadership structure has been maintained despite the growing number of female membership to almost 80 percent. The gendered division of labor and sexual hierarchy, instead of being challenged, have been maintained and reproduced within the labor union. In this sense, the SG Union, which has grown in the period when the *pijŏnggyu* movement was forged as a new class politics in Korea, embodies the double-consciousness of neoliberal capital – *forgetting* the elderly female janitorial workers' heterogeneous pasts but maintaining its renewed heteropatriarchal hierarchy in the present. Indeed, the production of surplus value necessarily entails the reproduction of categories of difference.

Conclusion

This chapter reveals the ways neoliberal temporality operates through the discourse of global labor precarity in the context of the *pijŏnggyujik* formation in Korea since the late 1990s. The three life-stories of elderly female janitors capture uneven and nonlinear temporalities of labor precarity in the current form of global capitalism. Youngjin's feeling of being *left behind*

and *off the time* – that put her in a temporal coma – discloses the form of violence on which the chronobiopolitics orchestrated by the state, global capital, and heteropatriarchal family depend. In a similar vein, it is possible to translate the cultural expressions like hell-Chosŏn and exit-Chosŏn widely used among so-called "IMF generations" – who obtained maximum social capital through college education and student loans with little access to regular jobs – as different forms of temporal coma felt deep among young generations in neoliberal Korea, in which the developmental period is over and the wage is freezing but old social categories of difference continue to be reproduced. Finally, Jaerim suggests a kind of exit from the vicious cycle of capitalist developmental time in complaining about the infinite nature of the minimum wage fight and the narrow goal of the union struggle. As these life-stories reveal, the singular history of global capitalism becomes legible only through *forgetting* – histories of the other, rendered as the figure of the global South in the near past, whose life-stories I disarticulate here from the neoliberal temporality of global labor precarity. This form of forgetting veils the process of social reproduction of gender and class hierarchies in neo-Korea where the dark past is haunting the old and new laboring bodies.

Vignette Two: The strike as a break of capitalist time

(*Hongik University Janitorial and Security Workers' 49-day Strike in January ~ February 2011. Copyright. Nodongjayŏksa Hanne*)

On January 1st, the New Year's holiday of 2011, a group of janitorial workers at Hongik University in Seoul received a text message informing them of the expiry of their employment contracts. The message was from the outsourcing company where they were hired for a 12-month term. It was not even a surprise for the workers, since the closing of the contract was meant to be part of the formal relationship between the university and the outsourcing company. As it had been for many years, the workers were supposed to be assigned to a new company, a renewal of their career record as well as their seniority and the concrete social relations between the owner of the labor power and their liminal lives as workers. After the holiday break, many workers went back to work and found their locker room keys had changed. Most of them couldn't understand what it meant at that time. It took 49 days of a fierce strike in the coldest season of the year, just to find out the meaning of the event. The workers requested to meet the president of the university for an explanation that was never made. No one from the school authorities wanted to talk to them about their layoffs. Many of the janitors in their fifties and sixties worked there for more than ten years, each year renewing the contracts, each year starting over the first year of their "official" career as janitors. Yet, the 2011 layoff meant something new that was *the beginning of their stories as organized labor.*

CHAPTER TWO

Paradoxical Consciousness: Cyclical Time, Strikes, and Workers' Perplexity

> "In socialist theory, of course, it has traditionally been the industrial proletariat (the 'productive' labourers) within the overall division of labour that has been favoured as the vanguard of revolutionary transformation. Bank clerks, domestic workers and street cleaners have never been thought of as revolutionary agents..."
>
> (David Harvey 2014, 114)

> "[W]hereas, in traditional Marxism, labour is treated transhistorically, as constituting the quasi-ontological standpoint of the critique of capitalism, within this [my] framework, labour constitutes the object of the critique."
>
> (Moishe Postone 2004, 69)

Since the 49-day strike in 2011, the Hongik chapter has won a basement union office where Haeson spends her time keeping the space as bright as possible with her collection of recycled plants that absorb daylight through a set of small triangle-shaped windows that face the sloping road outside. Haeson has been the leader [*punhoejang*] of the Hongik University janitorial and security workers' chapter [*punhoe*] since its inauguration and the unprecedented 49-day strike in January 2011. I met Haeson at a cafe decorated with flamboyant wallpaper, located right next to the newly raised gigantic arched gate of the university. We sat for an interview in a room surrounded by glass walls that numb the sound of others. The interview occurred several weeks after Haeson had walked out of a series of union meetings following upsetting disputes with the chair of Seoul-Gyeongin Branch of Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (henceforth the SG Union). Haeson's last abrupt proclamation of quitting the position of chapter leader left everyone in a quandary; they knew neither what her act of quitting meant in a practical sense nor how to bring her back to the meeting. In the middle

of the interview, Haeson spoke decidedly: "We have been like slaves to the SG Union, not having any decision-making power, strolling to solidarity rallies with no idea, not to mention ideology. Maybe we deserve this treatment because of this fact." I was perplexed by this declaration because Haeson was not an avid supporter of the progressive intellectuals' ideology nor of their idea of working class consciousness. Haeson's literal statement of quitting was made repeatedly during the early stage of collective bargaining that year and it revealed both her unwillingness to quit and the fact that she had no other means of making her voice heard in union meetings.

Janitorial workers are unthinkable as revolutionary subjects of the working class in mainstream labor history for several reasons. A traditional Marxist idea of class consciousness assumes a coherent proletarian subject that is achieved through a concrete process of collective actions and cultural practices in a given historical time. Labor historians and sociologists have produced a dominant narrative that describes how a strong industrial masculine working class subject emerged in the Korean development process through the 1987 Great Workers' Struggle.[20] E.P. Thompson notes that "class is a relationship, and *not a thing*…'It' does *not exist*, either to have an ideal interest or consciousness, or to lie as a patient on the Adjustor's table"—a criticism of the common treatment of working class individuals as "things" that have a pre-determined "consciousness" (Thompson 1963, 11 *emphasis mine*). Although inspired by Thompson's work, Hagen Koo's understanding of the 1980s industrial working class in South Korea ends up visualizing a coherent social identity with a set of deeply gendered descriptors - "better organized, stronger, more aggressive, male-led, and relatively independent of the outside

[20] See mainly Hagen Koo, *Korean Workers: The Culture and Politics of Class Formation* (2001) and Cho Don-Moon, *Nodong kyegŭp hyŏngsŏng kwa minju nojo undong ŭi sahoehak* (2011).

intellectual community" (Koo 2001, 185). In this analysis, particular capitalist relations are treated as historical facts and not as reifications that should be overcome through critical consciousness. Simultaneously, the previous era of export-oriented industrialization that produced the docile female labor force is negated or forgotten, precisely to formulate the "present" (the 1980s) as the independent force of revolutionary time. The figure of the masculine working class and the temporality of revolution are fixed as historical facts that are synchronized to the capitalist temporal logic, becoming the very part and parcel of capitalist ideological construction of the historical time determined by labor time.

As a critique of the traditional Marxist understanding of the proletariat's potential to be a revolutionary class, Moishe Postone argues that "the historical negation of capitalism involves the abolition of the Subject and of totality, not their realization" (Postone 2004, 61). The proletariat as the antithesis of the bourgeois class, in Potstone's analysis, constitutes the historically specific capitalist system. In contrast to Georg Lukács' interpretation of the proletariat as a class that emerges through conscious realization of its (human) quality beyond the capitalist quantity (or value) as labor power, Postone does not see the qualitative transformation of the proletarian as an independent willful action within the given capitalist system. Instead, Postone contends that any transformation of labor, whether qualitative or quantitative, is in itself "a form of social mediation expressed by the categories of commodity, value and capital" (60). Social struggle in this analysis is centered not on the realization of the proletariat as a historical subject but on repelling a historically specific temporal domination congealed in the form of labor by which the capitalist society is organized.

> The historically specific and abstract form of social domination intrinsic to capitalism's fundamental forms of social mediation is the domination of people by time. This form of domination is bound to a historically specific and abstract form of temporality – abstract Newtonian time – which is constituted historically with the commodity-form. (ibid)

Here Postone pushes the critical potential of Marxist theory further by articulating the stakes of social struggles in capitalist society, suggesting that the temporal logic intrinsic to capital, rather than simply labor (forms of exploitation) or class relations, should be the focus of the critique in any social movement whose goal is structural transformation.

As an extension to Postone's critical theory and as an alternative to the linear progressive narrative of working class consciousness uncritical of its gendered and racialized formations and erasures in the South Korean context, I undertake a feminist critique of the binary construction of linear and cyclical time in situating the female janitorial workers' collective un/consciousness as a transgressive class not without various forms of vulnerability and injury.[21] Fanny Soderback proposes that feminist revolutionary time should be "modeled on a perpetual movement of return that is meant to retrieve the very body that was repressed in order to construct the linear-cyclical dichotomy and paradigm" (Soderback 2012, 303). The heteropatriarchal linear history of working class formation in the South Korean context has signified the 1970s female factory workers as weak, passive, and uneducated subjects, precisely to construct the later productive, educated, strong, masculine industrial working class that emerged following the rise of heavy industries during the 1980s. Female janitorial workers, newly signified as *pijŏnggyujik* in the 2000s, are forced to forget their past and social relations to perform the new identity, which was made not without their injured bodies and past violence. As Soderback suggests, remembering the past trauma and violence does not simply mean returning to or repeating the same structural conditions; instead, a feminist task should be a "work of recovery, of anamnesis, of unearthing a

[21] See more discussion of the idea of "political injury" in Wendy Brown's *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (1995) and "Agency, Injury, and Transgressive Politics in Neoliberal Times" coauthored by Sumi Madhok & Shirin M. Rai (2012).

forgotten history and silenced stories" (ibid). This chapter charts the moments and attempts of the present janitorial workers to construct their own temporal struggles against the *forgetting*, in particular, of their histories—that differ from those of the normative male heteropatriarchal working class subject in the contemporary *minju nojo* (democratic labor union) movement in Korea.

This study situates the newly unionized janitorial workers' struggle in the national labor unions' organizational restructuring process in the 2000s against the public sector privatization. In order to disentangle Haeson's despair and the impossibility of making her voice heard in the current union structure, I pay attention to the concept of *perplexity* - instead of the traditional Marxist idea of class consciousness - as a way of understanding the complex and contingent capitalist logic of social relations that alienates human actors and limits their capacity to make meaningful connections in global commodity circuits. Priti Ramamurthy traces the shifting conditions of commodity production and consumption in rural South India through the eyes of the peasant farmers who are "perplexed" by the very labor and consumption that is constituted by their choices (Ramamurthy 2014). I extend the concept of perplexity by looking at the ways in which the culturally specific expression of perplexity *exceeds* passive individual experience and how it becomes the site of a structural contradiction where the laboring subjects' complex desires – both individual and collective – are contained and expressed. In the same vein, Haeson's perplexed feeling about her status in the union can be studied as an expression rooted in the historical relations of South Korean capitalist development. This chapter demonstrates how the labor union's heteropatriarchal structure deepens perplexity in the lives of janitorial workers. In turn, Haeson's perplexed feeling reveals the institutional character of the labor union through which the working class subject at stake is constituted and contested.

Firstly, I review how the SG Union started as part of the progressive labor union's restructuring in response to the government's public sector privatization in the 2000s and trace how the public sector janitorial workers have been articulated as *pijŏnggyu* workers in the process. Secondly, I revisit two major strike scenes, the Hongik University strike in 2011 and the Seoul Women's University case in 2015, focusing on the janitorial workers' corporeal resistance and the contradictions rooted in the hierarchical structure of the *minju nojo* movement. Lastly, I examine the paradox of thinking about working class consciousness in the janitorial workers' struggle through the narratives of Haeson, the leader of Hongik University chapter, and Youngjin, a rank and file janitor. Haeson *feels* that janitorial workers have been treated like "slaves" in the union because of the lack of consciousness. Haeson is perplexed by the "choices" she has made - becoming a leader of the union chapter, yet still deeply alienated by the process through which, she had believed, she would be treated as an equal human being, not as a janitor. She faces the contradiction- no matter how the janitorial workers themselves consciously overcome legal and cultural injuries through union activism, they do not possess the same ideology young college-educated labor activists uphold. Paradoxically, the heteropatriarchal leftist ideology that promises to liberate the marginalized female workers alienates the very consciousness of the marginalized subjects in seeking legal and cultural recognition. I argue that the corporeal resistance the janitorial workers forge in the union struggle shapes a paradoxical consciousness that *exceeds* the logic of capitalist relations and heteropatriarchal domination. As the alienated temporal being, however, by remembering their past, the janitorial workers' corporeal resistance holds the potential to form an alternative politics of temporal awakening and becoming.

Organizing Public Sector Janitorial Workers

Haeson's expression "slave" poignantly captures the paradox in the janitorial workers' immediate relation to the internal structure of the SG union and historically to *minju nojo* (democratic labor union) activism in South Korea. In Chapter 1, I reviewed how the historical shift in Korea's economic development - from export-oriented light industry to heavy industry and thus from low-wage female factory workers to masculine productive working class figures - has changed the *minju nojo* discourse. This material and discursive shift negated the female factory workers in the 1970s as anachronistic figures in the current labor movement, especially in the *pijŏnggyu* labor struggle, which rendered discussion of the gendered division of labor as the main characteristic of the South Korean political economy irrelevant in the dominant discourse of labor struggle. The democratic labor movement, represented by the Korea Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) born out of the 1987 Great Worker Struggle, thus *forgets* both the 1970s structural conditions of the economy and the gendered politics of the developmental state. However, Haeson's expression "slave" - not directed to capitalist relations but the immediate paternalistic labor union - actively recalls the historical relation between the heteropatriarchal labor union structure and the feminized laboring subjects in South Korean economic development. From Haeson's standpoint, it is a question about how the paternalistic labor union in which Haeson feels like she has neither voice nor decision-making power can fight against the capitalist domination and violence her life is subjected to. Is this a fight for the janitorial workers or for a historical formation of the new working class, *pijŏnggyu* labor movement? What is the role of the female janitorial workers' bodies in the fight, if the working class consciousness at stake alienates the very vulnerable bodies in struggle?

Public Sector Union Restructuring

The emergence of the SG Union can be explained with two major progressive agendas promoted within the post-1978 democratic union movement. The first is the KCTU's strategic program targeting the growing body of non-unionized *pijŏnggyu* workers starting in the mid-2000s. The SG union was established in 2006 in the midst of the KCTU's first strategic organizing program [*chŏllyak chojik hwa saŏp*] (2006-2008). The ratio of contingent workers was stagnating around 50% of the total economically active population with a deepening income gap.[22] The focus of the KCTU's initial program was on allocating funds to organizing contingent worker unions, up to 30% of its entire annual budget, and on training union activists.[23] The first official leader of the SG union, Park Myŏngsŏk was a trainee of the KCTU program. Park, who led the Hongik University janitorial and security workers' strike in 2011 and started his second term as leader of SG Union in 2016, sums up the process as a transition from enterprise unionism to industrial and regional unionism, "we tried to remove the color of enterprise union by combining the divisions of collective bargaining that separated facility management workers from janitors and security workers…the enterprise union had limits in pursuing social change [*sahoe pyŏnhyŏk*] and in expanding union organizing beyond the shop floor."[24] Park's personal

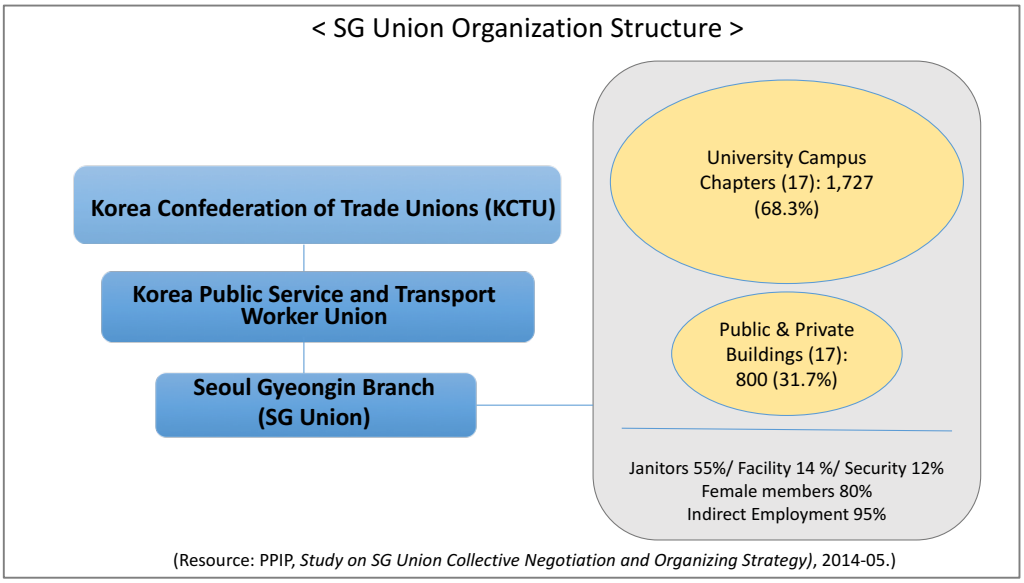
[22] In 2006, regular workers' average income was 2,260,000 won (roughly 2,100 USD) whereas contingent workers make 1,160,000 won (roughly 1,000 USD) (Issue Paper, 2015-02, Korea Contingent Worker Center, p8).

[23] KCTU, *Minju noch'ong mijojik pijŏnggyu chŏllyak chojik hwa saŏp chindan kwa kwaje* (KCTU Unorganized Pijŏnggyu Workers Strategic Organizing Program), Publication #041, 2013.

[24] Interview #20150416. Park's comment on "industrial and regional union" needs to be understood as part of KCTU's effort to change its internal structure in the 1990s focusing on industrial union [*sanbyŏl-nojo*] building and region-based organizing. Kevin Gray's study delineates the South Korean labor movement's turn from "militant unionism" to the struggle against neoliberal labor control as the "integration into the new liberal capitalist democracy" which is distinguished from "social movement unionism" debates in South Africa and Brazil (Gray 2008, 85).

hardship in the Seoul Facility Maintenance Worker Union, from which he ended up being expelled, led him to explore new opportunities, which coincided with the KCTU's effort to channel the growing number of contingent workers into the democratic union structure. A KCTU report on the program estimates that approximately one million workers were employed in the public cleaning service sector, not-yet-organized but strategically well located in public buildings such as university campuses, hospitals, and government institutions. The SG Union emerged through this "strategic" calculation and union leadership training that came out of the old KCTU union structure.

< Figure 1: Seoul-Gyeongin Branch of Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union>



(Resource: PPIP, *Study on SG Union Collective Negotiation and Organizing Strategy)*, 2014-05.)

Park's personal transition from a facility maintenance worker union to the SG Union - where the majority of members are now mid-aged female janitors - reveals how the old KCTU structure has adapted to the challenge in organizing newly recognized contingent workers.

Female janitors have taken up the majority, reaching 70% of the total SG union membership.[25] The janitors working at public and private university campuses were hired by multiple outsourcing companies, categorized as indirect employment [*kanjŏp koyong*] in the *pijŏnggyu* workforce. The Seoul Facility Maintenance Worker Union, of which Park was the leading member before he moved to the SG Union, had the same indirect employment structure. Park's experience with leading annual negotiations in his previous union, where almost all members were skill-based male workers in the building management sector, prepared him to be the qualified leader for the SG Union's collective bargaining with multiple outsourcing companies. Park's charismatic character seemed to be accepted as a necessary qualification for the negotiation. Considering the fact that all the outsourcing company representatives were male, the female janitors themselves never questioned the necessity of a strong male union leader until Haeson started to defy Park's dominance and the decision making process of the SG Union.

The second agenda was the public sector industrial unionization [*konggong sanbyŏl nojo*] effort in response to the privatization of public service sectors enforced throughout two terms of liberal governments and the subsequent conservative-party-led Lee Myung-bak administration (2008-2013). Lee Myung-bak, a former CEO of Hyundai Engineering and Construction, was elected with the slogan "small government, big market" in 2008. Lee's administration promoted the "Public Sector Advancement [*konggonggigwan sŏnjinhwa*]" program, criticizing the previous liberal governments' moderate structural adjustment in public sectors as "software innovation". Thus it meant a "hardware restructuring" targeting budget cuts, mergers and abolition of organizations, and reducing employment in public sectors. By 2010, nineteen public

[25] Public Policy Institute for People, *Sŏgyŏng chibu kyosŏp mit chojik kujo palchŏn chŏllyak yŏn'gu (*study on the SG Union collective negotiation and organizing strategy*)*, 2014-05.

organizations were privatized and thirty-six had merged into sixteen institutions. In the process, 2.2 million public sector jobs were "reduced".[26] For organized labor, public sector industrial unionization was a necessary step for the scattered individual unions - comprising city gas, electricity, water, transportation, postal service, broadcasting etc. The Korean Public Service and Transport Worker Union (henceforth KPTU) was inaugurated in 2011 after a rough four-year process of industrial unionization, combining the Public Union and Transportation Union.[27] The SG Union as a regional branch of the Public Union had the largest ratio of *pijŏnggyu* workers. 93% of SG Union members were *pijŏnggyu* workers, whereas it was 15% of total membership of the Public Union in 2009. The SG Union, though a small branch, gradually became a representative body of KPTU's *pijŏnggyu* movement.

Articulating Janitorial Workers as Pijŏnggyujik

The reconstruction of janitorial workers' social identity as the newly articulated *pijŏnggyujik* was possible through the KPTU's strategic programs. The KPTU launched a public campaign, "The Right to a Hot Meal [*tattŭt han bap hankki ŭi kwŏlli*]," targeting janitorial workers in the public sector in 2010. "Elimination of *Pijŏnggyujik*" has been one of the major goals of the KPTU's struggle, paired with "securing the social public good [*sahoe konggong sŏng kangwa*]" since 2007. The Hot Meal Campaign as a means of organizing *pijŏnggyu* workers targeted female janitorial workers in university campuses and hospital buildings. The campaign included public rallies, meeting people on the first buses and subway in the morning [*saebyŏk*

[26] Cho Sŏngbong, "Yi Myŏngbak chŏngbu konggiŏp sŏnjinhwa chŏngch'aek ŭi p'yŏngga wa hyanghu kwaje (Assessment and Future Direction of Lee Myung-bak government's Public Organization Advancement Policy)", *Kyujeyŏn'gu,* #20-2 (2011.12.).
[27] Public Union with 32,000 members and Transportation Union with 50,000 members was reorganized as a loose confederation in 2007.

sŏnjŏnjŏn], and a Janitorial Workers' Day march in May. According to the description in a KPTU White Paper, it contributed to "revealing the existence of janitorial workers who were treated like ghosts of the city and raising social consciousness on the issue of the elderly female *pijŏnggyujik"* (An 2014, 459).[28] In the following year of the campaign, the KPTU published a report on the Service Employee International Union's organizing strategy, well-known as Justice for Janitors, and comparative studies on the major janitorial and security workers' strikes in the U.S. and in South Korea in the 1990s.[29]

Janitorial workers both in public and private sectors existed long before in the South Korean labor market in various employment patterns. One of my interviewees at Hongik University recalls her experience in the late 1970s when she was hired as a direct employee. She remembers, "There was a small number of janitors on campus hired directly by the university including myself. I heard that the Park Chung Hee government encouraged retired military officers to start up outsourcing companies [*yongyŏk hoesa*]. So, around 1978 or 79, the university tried to end direct employment with janitors. We didn't know how to organize then, we could only go to complain, until students backed us up. It was a time when the student movement on campus was on the rise. They wrote wall posters on campus and fought for us. We could maintain our direct employment like that." I met two direct employees at Hongik University during my fieldwork. Both of them started their work in the late 1970s. They were reluctant to speak about their employment history or their current relation to the university authority. It was clear that they were warned not to engage with outsiders nor with other janitors

[28] An T'aejŏng, 2014, *KPTU (2006-2011) Activity White Paper: Konggong nojo sahoe gonggongsŏng ŭl chihyang hada* (Public Union toward the Social Public Good*)*.
[29] Nodongja Undong Yŏn'guso & KPTU, 2011, *A Comparative Study on CtW(SEIU)-Public Union Organizing Programs.*

on campus by the school officials after the several incidences of disputes among indirect employees and their union organizing in 2010. They tried not to make eye contact with me but briefly answered my questions on the 1970s. She ended her comment by saying, "If I could speak, I'd have to spend the whole night; there are things that I cannot speak about." Since they were hired directly by the university, their salaries were higher than indirect employees while getting the same welfare benefits as administration staff. The labor they performed was not different from that of outsourcing company janitors. However, there was a clear status difference, one group as regular workers and the other as *pijŏnggyujik*, forcing both groups to forget their past connections. The forgetting was being performed through not talking to each other, as if they were working and living in different temporal and spatial dimensions on the same campus.

KPTU's articulation of janitorial workers as *pijŏnggyujik* had a symbolic and rhetorical function in visualizing the "ghost-like" group of workers and seeking recognition by the general public. Proposing the concepts of "symbolic leverage" and "public drama", Jennifer Chun points out, "[t]his includes paying attention to the persuasiveness of rhetoric, symbols, and practices that construct certain types of workers as 'marginalized' and thus entitled to the intervention of broader members of the public" (Chun 2009, 18). One of labor activists made the following statement during the Hot Meal campaign: "Janitorial workers make up 2.3% of the total economically active population. They sweep and wipe floors from dawn when no one goes to work till evening, hidden in buildings. Among those who are called "cleaning ladies [*ch'ŏngso ajumma*]", 81% are female and 41% of the female janitors are in their sixties. They live like ghosts, their existence unrecognized, not to speak of their nonsensical working conditions."[30]

[30] KPTU, 2011, *Right for a Hot Meal Campaign 2010 Activity Report*, p.76.

The KPTU's Hot Meal campaign thus articulated the gendered division of labor in the janitorial sector as well as the social condition of elderly working class life in South Korea. In order to be recognized by the general public and be part of the movement, janitors were called to actively perform this newly articulated social identity, the "ghost-like" female elderly character newly signified as *pijŏnggyujik*. What was left silenced in the process was the actual character of diverse janitorial workers' life conditions, their past experiences in the shifting categories of worker/non-worker, and the emergent working class subject at stake in the new labor movement. If the goal of mobilization through "symbolic leverage" was in raising the consciousness of the general public, whose body is called into the formation of the new class consciousness in the process?

Student-Labor Solidarity

The SG Union started with a few university campus chapters [*punhoe*] where janitorial workers were mobilized in the mid-2000s through the active student movement on college campuses.[31] The Korea University Facility Union [*sisŏl nojo*] was organized in 2004 in close connection to various student-led activist organizations.[32] In the event of Korea University's abrupt closing of the contract with outsourcing companies, about 100 janitorial workers gathered to protest, continuing their work on campus. Since Korea University changed janitorial workers' status as direct employees to indirect employment with outsourcing companies in 1999, disputes around the three-shift system and age-based hiring - restricting employment of female workers

[31] Korea University Chapter (2004), Yonsei University Chapter (2007), and Duksung Women's University Chapter (2007), Yonsei University Chapter (2008).
[32] Activist groups such as In'gwŏn undong sarang bang, Sahoe jinbo yŏndae, Ch'ŏlp'ye yŏndae, and Pulch'ŏl chuya joined in the "Koryŏdae mihwa wŏn hyŏbŭihoe" with about 100 janitorial workers in July 2004.

over 60 and male workers over 65 years old - continued between workers, outsourcing companies, and the university authority. An activist from People's Solidarity for Social Progress (PSSP) recalls that the workers could win through "the labor-student solidarity led by dedicated *Pulch'ŏlchuya* (a student organization), the generous support of various civil organizations, and the joining of Facility Maintenance Union."[33] In the same commentary, the female janitorial workers are described as, "those who were too shy to stand up and speak up, those who claimed that they couldn't be the leader of the union because they could not read and speak well, from now on the mothers and grandmothers would fight for their rights with their own hands and mouths."[34] The young activist clearly recognizes the gap between the student actors and female janitors expressed in the struggle, highlighting the temporal shift from the moment the workers could not speak up on their own to the future movement where the same workers would fight with their own "hands and mouths."

Clearly, the new labor movement targeting *pijŏnggyu* workers in the KPTU and the SG Union adopted uncritically the legacy of student-labor solidarity of the *minju nojo* (democratic labor union) discourse. The KPTU targeted university campuses as strategic locales where politically active student bodies could lead the *pijŏnggyu* labor organizing on campus. The KPTU's strategic program included training student activists who could be hired as union activists in *pijŏnggyu* sectors. In that way, student activists could also be channeled into the progressive labor movement and the KPTU structure. In fact, the SG Union had several former student activists as founding members who were trained in the KPTU program. Student-labor

[33] Song Kang Hyŏnju, (2006) "Pparŭn kŭrŏna pparŭji anhŭn nodong johab ŭi ch'ulbŏm [Quick, but not-so-quick, inauguration of the Union]: Korea University Facility Union," People's Solidarity for Social Progress (PSSP).
[34] ibid.

solidarity is hardly a new theme in South Korean labor history. Recently, You Gyeong Sun published an oral history collection of 1980s student-worker activists' lives as a book, *1980's: The time of revolution, Record of the transition* (2015). Beyond its value as an archive of the1980s college student-led labor movement, the question of the hierarchical social relations between the college students and the working class subjects and of the discursive historical rupture made by student-turned-workers who envisioned a broader political movement distinguished from "the 1970s' corporatism/economism, union-centered attitude, the limit of the light industry [female] worker subject" remains intact in the publication.[35] The narrative of student-worker solidarity prioritizes the dominant ideology and political agenda of the time without questioning the contingent character of the solidarity and heterogeneous social actors as an outcome of the social hierarchy and dominance that shape the movement itself. Similar to the heteropatriarchal linear historical formation of 1980's productive working class, the narrative of student-labor solidarity produces student subjects as saviors of the time through the repression of the bodies of workers, signifying the working class subject at stake as lacking the capacity for its own realization.

Cyclical Time, Strikes, and Corporeal Politics

49-Day Hongik University Protest in 2011

Now I turn to the major strike scenes of the SG Union to show the process of organizing janitorial workers at the shop floor level and to reconstruct the recent two major events through the workers' standpoint. As part of the Hot Meal Campaign in late 2010, the SG Union targeted

[35] Won Kim, "The Historicization of the 1980s through Hakchul (student-turned-laborers)'s life: Yoo Gyeong Sun, 1980`s: The time of revolution, Record of the transition," *Critical Studies on Modern Korean History*, 34 (2015.10), 235-300.

several university campuses to organize janitorial and security workers' union chapters in Seoul area. Haeson recalls, "I heard that a female student was talking to janitors about the possibility of organizing a labor union. Immediately, I felt it was an opportunity for us. When I first met the student, I knew that she was not a student but someone from outside." The SG Union activist, a former student activist trained by the KPTU strategic program, was secretly visiting janitorial workers' locker rooms with union membership documents, introducing herself as a Hongik University student. The activist mentioned, "It took six months to organize the Hongik University chapter. I was meeting janitors with little support from Hongik University students. The situation was very different from other campuses like Korea University and Yonsei University where student support was vital for union organizing." The official student council was not only disinterested in helping the union organizing on campus, but later they ended up aligning with the university authority. In the wake of the abrupt layoff of 170 workers during the New Year's holidays in 2011, the Hongik University student council released their statement that they could not support "the outsiders' campus occupancy."

At inauguration on December 2, 2010, the SG Union Hongik University chapter included 75 janitors, 53 security workers, and 3 facility maintenance workers. Just a month later the university authorities decided to close the contracts with the two outsourcing companies in response to the union organizing. On January 1, 2011 the workers received a text message about the closing of their employment contracts from the outsourcing companies. It was not even a surprise for the workers, since the closing of the contract was meant to be the formal relationship between the university and the outsourcing company. As it had been for many years, the workers were supposed to be transferred to a new company, along with a renewal of their career record as well as their seniority and the concrete social relations between the owner of the labor power and

their liminal lives as workers. The triangular employment relationship between the university, outsourcing companies, and the workers – categorized as indirect employment [*kanjŏpkoyong*]-, had become a new social norm in the sector since the mid-1990s. After the break, many workers went back to work and found their locker room keys had changed. It took 49 days of campus occupancy in the coldest season of the year in Seoul for the workers to figure out the meaning of the event. No one from the school authority wanted to talk to them about their layoffs. Many of the janitors had worked there for more than ten years, each year renewing their contracts, each year starting over the first year of their "official" career as janitors.

In appearance, the occupancy was not a legal strike since the workers already dismissed by the outsourcing companies had no legal connection to the university. On January 3, the workers started a sit-in protest in the hallway of the university president's office asking for an explanation. An emblematic scene was the moment when the president called an ambulance to escape the space siting on a wheelchair, a notorious tactic used by big conglomerate CEOs in South Korea. The president himself embodied the ideal of neoliberal homo economicus identifying himself as an entrepreneur of the higher education institution, copying the tactics of CEOs. The president represented the university authority by demonstrating that they have no "legal responsibility" for the workers whose livelihoods were dependent on the institution and its social relations. The workers moved to the administration building and later to the frozen street under the giant gate of the university. A photo captures the shift of the space, the tactics, and the discourse of the workers' protest. The workers are facing the street outside the campus blocking the main gate of the university, signifying the moment that they now turned to the public. Opposed to the president's behavior managing the higher education system as a private business, the workers sought to reinstate its value as a public good and institution by becoming the living

boundary themselves between the private and the public. The corporeal resistance embodying the public institution and value attracted unprecedented civilian support and alliance.

The Hongik University campus protest was interpreted as the beginning of cultural and social media-led labor activism by many commentators. Kim Yeojin and Nalrary, a famous actress, led young supporters, joining actively in the strike scene, spreading online messages via social media attracting a random audience, and organizing unconventional cultural activities in the neighborhood, such as a street bazar and a movie night event. The group of young supporters, rather than the formal student council group, turned the space of the strike into a community action, providing venues both for the janitorial workers and citizens to meet and be connected in their political desires and expressions. At night, the sit-in space was filled with indie band music, sing-alongs, talent shows and more. Visitors from various civil organizations, college students, and ordinary citizens filled the cold floor of the protest day and night, mingling with the workers. The workers cooked their meals with food and money sent by many different organizations and individuals. One of my interviewees commented proudly on the cooking scene, saying how well they were organized, "We had so much food in our storage that we'd received from everywhere. Every day, two people rotated for grocery shopping and cooking. We did a really great job." Throughout the 49-day protest, the workers became very close to each other, forming a collective subjectivity as organized labor and a loyalty to the union structure.

In the meantime, the SG Union leader Park led the negotiation between the university authority and the workers. The goal was not just keeping their jobs but raising the issues of minimum wage and flexible working hours. Janitorial workers' monthly wage of 750,000 won (approximately USD 700) and a 300 won (three cents) lunch was reported by almost all major news media. The peculiar character of their wage was its timeless fixity. Those who had worked

there for 10 years and the starting laborer on day one received the same amount. The annual wage of the workers was determined by the lowest-price-bidding system [*ch'oejŏ gakyŏk nakch'aljhe*] controlled by the government contract law.[36] When the workers had no legitimate access to negotiate their wage directly with the actual employer of their labor (the university) in the indirect employment relation, their annual labor was contracted at the lowest possible price through the contract between the university and outsourcing companies for many years. After a series of public rallies and media coverage of the inhuman working conditions and low wages, the university agreed to rehire the workers through a different outsourcing company with a 40-hour working week, 8-hour working day, and 4,450 won (USD 4.00) hourly wage.[37]

Haeson remembered the struggle as a "fight against injustice" in which the workers had no other choice but to protest through their bodies, not by any logical calculation or tactic:

> I've never begged or made unreasonable demand of someone in my life, of course, we started a union to fight against unjust things…we grew through the 49-day protest…we worked eleven hours getting paid only for seven hours. I don't know anything but now I've become this big…I don't think my role was big during the struggle. I just remember that I had no other choice but to lie down at the gate of the building to stop the ROTC student part-timers [*hakkundan alba*] who were hired to make up the work. The students cried (in front of me). My role was nothing but being kind, anyone could do that. I became this big only through that…

Here, Haeson reveals her complex feelings about the protest and her five years as the leader of the Hongik University chapter since 2011. She has been participating weekly in SG union meetings where she could hear briefings on the KPTU's activities and related *pijŏnggyu* workers' protests and issues regularly. Haeson also worked as a member of the KPTU women's committee, participating in the committee's monthly meetings where she could meet female

[36] The university would make a contract with an outsourcing company who bids the lowest price for annual service of cleaning, security, and facility maintenance etc.
[37] The national minimum wage was 4,320 won in 2011. Thus, the wage increase was slightly higher than the minimum wage.

leaders in other KPTU member unions. Haeson's expression of "growth" can be understood in this context as being trained initially through the 49-day struggle and participating afterwards in the SG union and the KPTU consultation process shaping monthly and annual agendas and plans. However, Haeson points out that she has not been changed much in the sense that she still fights through her bodily senses, as in the scene of stopping the student part-timers, with clear understanding of the unjust conditions like the actual nine hour working day, by saying "I don't know anything…I became this big only through that." Haeson clearly senses that her identity and the "growth" contradict each other in the union structure. Maybe, she was expected to perform as the ideal janitorial worker - middle-aged, uneducated, mother or grandmother-like figure in society and even within the union. She became "big", learning many things about the union and the current *pijŏnggyu* struggle, but still needed to *be* the figure of a janitorial worker articulated by the KPTU's strategic program such as the Hot Meal Campaign - which Haeson never liked or agreed with as she once scornfully confessed, "I've never begged in my life…we are not beggars at all." It is ironic that those who have always cooked and taken care of themselves and other family members better than any other social actors should come out to the public only to ask for the "rights for a hot meal." Once Haeson started speaking against the SG Union's paternalistic male leaders or the college graduate labor activists, she became someone unfit, unqualified, and even a betrayer.

2015 Seoul Women's University Strike

Now, I situate Haeson in another protest scene in order to contextualize her perplexity in connection to other rank and file janitors and to the general social perception of janitorial work in South Korea. Once when I met Haeson at the local library near Hongik University, Haeson

mentioned that she borrowed many books from the library. Her commute from home to work took about an hour and a half, her dear daily reading hours. Haeson's first job was as an entry level [*9-kŭp*] government officer after graduating high school. She was a stay-home mother after quitting that job to take care of her two children in the late 1980s. Later, she followed her son's dream to become a pro-baseball player, working as a volunteer secretary for the baseball team for about ten years. In the aftermath of the IMF crisis while her son was still on a high school team, she was introduced to a janitorial job at Hongik University by her insurance agent. She couldn't tell her children about her janitorial work before the 49-day protest. Haeson seems to have a unique career path that can be distinguished from her fellow janitorial workers. According to a study, 81.4% of total janitorial workers have lower than middle school education.[38] Discrimination based on education level, specifically having "good university" degrees, is one of the major pillars shaping "social" divisions of labor in South Korean society.[39] Despite Haeson's pride in having worked as government staff with a high school education and as a well-read person, she faced an existential crisis when she encountered the sharp fault line during the Seoul Women's University strike in 2015.

The SG Union started its annual collective bargaining with twenty outsourcing companies to which fourteen university chapter workers were hired in November 2014. The six months long process of negotiation had a unique sequence. In the first two or three months, the union induced outsourcing company representatives to come to the bargaining table through legal order letters and individual contacts - these initial meetings were called *sanggyŏn lye*

[38] National Human Rights Commission. 2006. *Ch'ŏngso yongyŏk nodongja inkwŏn silt'ae chosa* [Human rights report of janitorial outsourcing workers].
[39] Unlike technical and skill-based divisions of labor, social divisions of labor are based on socially constructed differences such as gender, race, class, sexuality, ability etc. (Harvey 2014)

(meaning "bowing to each other"). After the initial period, the main agenda, including the starting point of wage increase level, were set on the table for another month between the union and the company representatives. As the parties reached the final agreement, a number of difficult issues arose regarding the Seoul Women's University chapter. While thirteen other universities' outsourcing companies (19) reached the wage increase level, the Seoul Women's University authorities refused to sign the contract with the outsourcing company who proposed the SG union's collectively bargained wage. The problem was not the company but the university's annual budget plan signed by the university president. The Seoul Women's University chapter went on strike, occupying the main floor of the administration building in April, 2015. The university authorities blamed the government-led university structural adjustment and its guidelines for university budget efficiency. In the previous year, the Seoul Women's University chapter lost 40% of its workers because of the university budget cut. As the contracts between universities and outsourcing companies are generally for one year (the longest is 24 months), indirect employment workers are exposed to the constant threat of layoffs and wage decreases. When I joined the rallies on campus, the workers used to sing a popular song with changed lyrics, such as "good age to strike" and "good season to strike." Synchronized to the cycle of the concrete time of nature but controlled by the abstract time of labor, the middle-aged workers were pulled out to strike in the season with flower trees on campus in full bloom. In many senses, April was becoming "the cruelest month" for workers.

In the middle of the struggle in 2015, two rank and file janitorial workers launched a hunger strike. It was the first hunger strike among SG union janitors. Considering their age and physical condition, even a brief hunger strike could lead to fatal consequences. After the two female janitors were hospitalized, the chapter leader alone continued the hunger protest in front

of the university president's office. While the female leader was lying in the hallway day and night like a dead person, the rest of the workers with SG union activists built a fake paper coffin with a sign "*pijŏnggyujik"* - representing the death of a *pijŏnggyu* worker. The president didn't show up or send a message to the workers until the incident had passed about a week later. One university official reportedly said "even those who have a college degree working at Seoul Women's University make about 1,200,000 won (less than USD 1,200) monthly as *pijŏnggyujik"* – meaning that janitors who have as low as elementary school education should not ask more than the one who has a college degree. The hourly wage negotiated by the SG Union's collective bargain was 6,550 won (about USD 6.00) which amounts to 1,368,000 won (USD 1,300) per month. The janitorial workers first aimed to secure the collectively bargained wage, but the comment about the college-degree holding *pijŏnggyujik* making 1,200,000 won deeply and emotionally impacted the workers.

(Seoul Women's University Janitorial Workers' Strike in May 2015)

Corporeal Resistance and Deepening Alienation

On the seventh day of the hunger strike, there was an alumni anniversary event on campus attended by the president of Seoul Women's University, which escalated the workers' frustration and anger into an unplanned violent confrontation. Knowing that this kind of event could be the momentum to publicly shame the university authorities, the SG Union launched a mass rally in front of the venue with hundreds of workers gathered from other university chapters. Haeson and several other chapter leaders entered the event room with a banner, "Janitors are not ghosts! We are part of the university community!" Haeson shouted in the room "Please look at this banner, we are janitorial workers!" Confused and devastated Haeson later described the scene as follows;

> The people in the room stared at us, the way they looked at us as if we were nothing but troublemakers…if you were there, you could have felt it, you would have been sad (like I was)…It could be just me who felt that way that they ignored us. If I accepted their view, the way they see us as nothing, useless people [*pyŏlbol il ŏpnŭn saram*], would I feel alright? Is it me who is wrong?

It was not an immediate reaction to the events on that day. The comment was made several months later during the last oral history interview I recorded with Haeson. She actively called on me as listener who could share her complex feelings about the event, in particular the way janitorial workers were seen and thought of in contemporary South Korean society – where the very contradiction lies. Perplexity, here, felt and expressed by Haeson, precisely ties multiple individuals and social actors who may or may not share direct structural conditions, but are affected by the contradiction rooted in the social fabric of commodified labor. She also realizes her perspective – the way she thinks of herself as a janitorial worker – and the way other people see janitorial workers are in contradiction, which aggravates her confusion - as in the last sentence, "Is it me who is wrong?"

After the event, the female president escaped the room and hopped in a taxi. The workers who were waiting outside in the rally stopped the car right in front of the university main gate. The chapter leader lay down in the main street of the campus stopping the taxi, still wearing a patient gown, having come directly from a hospital after the week long hunger strike. The rally participants gathered around the car and asked the president to come out, begging for a *talk*. Violently shoving and tugging the union members, the university authorities and staff protected the president. In the process, an unexpected expression burst out from the janitorial workers who were pulled and bruised, "SG union [*chibu*], go away!" Why did the outraged janitors engaged in the violent scene call out the SG union? Are the janitors and the SG union different subjects here? The SG union male activists tried to stop the janitorial workers at that moment. In retrospect, an activist told me that the union leader didn't want that kind of fight; it was not part of his tactics. The union activists worried about the workers who could get injured, which would be a burden for the union in return. However, the outraged female janitorial workers shouted "SG union, go away!" It was, after all, the janitorial workers' fight, their corporeal resistance, even if it was not logical nor tactical in the view of SG union's paternal leadership.

I interviewed Youngjin, a vibrant and passionate rank and file supporter of the union, who recalled the day with a view that resonates Haeson's perplexity of the day;

> People say to us, "be easy, don't get hurt." If you were in the situation, a kind of boiling anger, could *people* [*saram*] ignore other people this way? It really makes me think that, do you really think that we are *people*? We didn't plan to do that, going that far. We just wanted to talk, after the hunger strike. To meet and just to talk…Is that so hard? It doesn't take much time. If we meet, we can talk about each other's position [*ipchang*]. One thinks this way, the other thinks that way. If we are the same people, you and I, we can talk, right? That is…*People*…If you say something, I listen and can agree. We do that, right? Even when we buy stuffs, we negotiate the price. One side has its position, the other has one, too. That they cannot even meet us…We think we are ignored as people. What's wrong with us? They cannot meet, nor talk with *people* like us? (*emphasis mine*)

Youngjin, who shared her past experience as a teenage factory worker in the 1970s and turned from a quiet wife, mother, and informal sector laborer to an energetic labor union member, witnessed the confrontation between the university president and her fellow janitorial workers at Seoul Women's University. She described the scene vividly, full of anger and anguish. What is noticeable here is Youngjin's acute awareness of the gap between *the people* who objectify the janitorial workers and her understanding of *the people* as a general signifier of human beings. She moves from the paternalistic view of the general people who say "be easy and don't get hurt" in the struggle - those who worry about their feeble bodies as middle-aged women not without one or two noticeable health issues - to the bodies in hunger strike and on the street fighting with the authoritative figures of the university. In fact, the workers who were in the confrontation were injured in various ways; some bruises and pains were never fully disclosed in the union meetings afterwards. Youngjin's intense perplexity is expressed in her narrative of "buying stuff". If the labor at stake were a form of commodity, even when people buy *things* with no human flesh, she argues, they negotiate the price. But in what sense, does the janitorial workers' labor not even deserve a negotiation? What a peculiar form of commodity! Similar to Haeson's question, "Is it me who is wrong?", Youngjin asks "What's wrong with us?"

Paradoxical Consciousness

The existential crisis echoed in the narratives of Haeson and Youngjin captures the contradiction in janitorial workers' struggle as part of the *pijŏnggyu* movement. In appearance, the exchange between the university and the outsourcing company has nothing to do with the elusive employment relation between the outsourcing company and the workers. In this sense, the chain between abstract cleaning labor as a unique commodity and the concrete human labor

performed through flesh and conscientious intentions is legally disjointed in indirect employment relations – tossed out at the lowest possible price as an annual service product through government contract law. The university presidents both in Hongik University and Seoul Women's University cases express the legal (social) order by avoiding contact with the janitorial workers by all possible means. The conduit of the legal disjoint has been the social division of labor shaped through multiple vectors of social differentiation. The social order performed by the university presidents is confronted by the janitorial workers who raise the simple question, "Do you think we are people?" The contradiction lies in the corporeal reality expressed by the janitors who sweep, mop, wax, and renew the space repeatedly, producing the use-value of the spatial life itself, but are treated in the legal, abstract sense as a cleaning service commodity whose value is elastic and flexible – *socially* negotiable only through the speculative contracts between the university and outsourcing companies. Not only are the workers in the transaction devoid of human quality, but also the value of their labor is disconnected from concrete daily life as temporal beings.

What, then, is the janitorial workers' struggle about? If not a tool for the tactful negotiation between the paternalistic labor union and the reified form of labor, what else can the workers be? When their anger burst into the violent confrontation in the streets at Seoul Women's University, what exactly were the janitors becoming? Haeson still remembers the scene of her lying on the floor to block the student part-timers - becoming a symbolic barricade between the two different standpoints, the university authorities - who see the strike as an unlawful occupancy- and the workers who confront this view by stopping the labor and revealing the material reality upon which both parties are entangled. In her recent essay on vulnerability and resistance, Judith Butler notes, "vulnerability, understood as deliberate exposure to power, is

part of the very meaning of political resistance as an embodied enactment" (Butler 2016, Kindle location 576). Butler suggests that vulnerability performed in political resistance reveals the power structure it upholds – the system, in turn, is exposed to dismantling in the process of resistance. The corporeal resistance the janitors wage through their own vulnerabilities as gendered, aged, uneducated laboring subjects in the streets reveals the very vulnerable structure of the paternalist labor union and larger social institutions. In this sense, the bodies on strike become the mirror of the vulnerable structure of social institutions where the bodies are subjugated, negated, circulated, contracted, and consumed as a special commodity. The vulnerable subject in resistance, thus, *exceeds* institutional expectations and recognitions, exposing the bodies that are at risk of brutal violence and suppression.

The corporeal *excesses* exposed in the strikes have different tempos that disrupt the social organization of the historically specific capitalist temporal logic. In their oral history interviews, both Haeson and Youngjin start the narrations with memories of their mothers:

> Haeson:
>
> If I boast a little about my mother, she was a day laborer at village farms until she turned 86 or 87 years old. She worked in the hot vinyl greenhouse in summer days, not even thinking about a fan, making bunches of spring onions and spinach. As a skilled worker [*kisulcha*], she never complained about it. My sister used to cry over kimchi in her lunch box. I never made trouble. I was good-natured [*ch'akhae*].

> Youngjin:
>
> When I was little, my mother let me sit on her lap and told me many stories about squandering, a *mansŏkkun* story. I didn't know then, much later I realized that she was a wise person. My family was not average. She said, "I didn't learn much, but I hope you can live a less tough life." I never told her about the fight with my friend, because she always scolded me. "You should behave better first." She was illiterate at that time. Later she went to *han'gŭl* school. Then she could write and keep a household account book. My mom taught me about saving money, not to be wasteful…

At that time, I did not know how to understand their past memories in the context of my inquiry about their present struggles and experiences in the labor union. Interestingly enough, both describe the enduring but somehow compliant character of their mothers. Unlike the present Haeson and Youngjin, their mothers lived through far tougher times but never complained, or did not have means to resist the patriarchal institutions by which their agency was constituted. Despite her mother's wish, "I hope you can live a less tough life", Youngjin went through different but no less difficult forms of hardships than her mother. What exactly are they remembering? Concrete nature's time appears cyclical as Youngjin and Haeson endure no less fierce battles. Through her reading of Julia Kristeva's work, Söderbäck points out that:

> The white heterosexual man is, precisely, associated with progress and futurity, while the man of color, the laboring man, and the homosexual man (alongside women of all kinds) are seen as bound by (cyclical) repetition. Cyclical time, within this tradition, is that which subjects typically associate with it must overcome and transcend in order to gain freedom and equality, since freedom is defined as projection forward. (2012, 307)

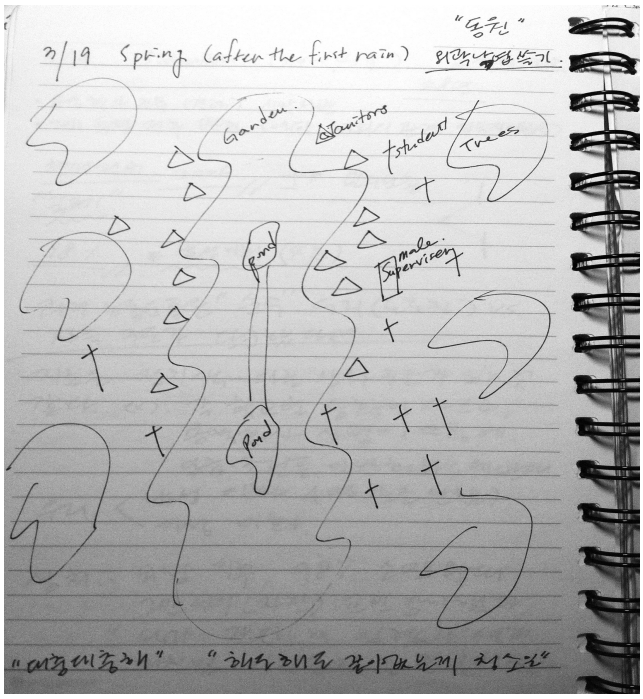
Youngjin and Haeson, from the initial moment they decided to join the union, may not even have wanted to be the part of the heteropatriarchal progressive time the SG union and the *pijŏnggyu* movement together are so closely synchronized with. As their narratives fall back into the past and return to the present with no clear boundary – neither linear nor cyclical -, their struggle has different temporal desires than that of the normative male working class subject whose existence (realization) is dependent on the vulnerability the feminized laboring subjects embody. This paradox of temporal falling back and returning resists the neoliberal capitalist temporal logic that requires active forgetting of one's past, the former violence and forms of exploitation and domination. What Haeson and Youngjin remind us of is the lived recent past their mothers who survived with much fewer means of resistance. They are, however, *perplexed* in living and

facing the different forms of exploitation and domination that clearly remind them of the pains their mothers endured in the recent past. Can this be a form of un/conscious awakening from the forgetfulness of the neoliberal capitalist temporality? Can this paradoxical consciousness as the antidote to progressive working class consciousness break the capitalist and patriarchal domination- their cycle of renewal through inventing different names, tools, and technologies?

Conclusion

By weaving the narratives of Haeson and Youngjin, this chapter reveals their perplexity and impossibility of being a conscious working class subject within the labor union structure and of the premise of the *pijŏnggyu* movement to liberate the legally and socially injured feminized laboring subjects. As a renewed signifier and form of exploitation, *pijŏnggyujik* requires janitorial workers to forget their past and be part of historical progress. Despite their gendered experiences, aging bodies, and the lack of education or ideology, their bodies are subjugated to the new category of worker in the neoliberal time. The vulnerability they embody, however, mirrors the power structure of multiple social institutions, including their labor union. By waging corporeal resistance and reminding us of their mothers' lives, what they succeed in is not embracing the abstract *pijŏnggyujik* identity or consciousness, but giving the complex system of domination a pause - stopping the taxi the university president sits in as the embodiment of the brutal social order and lying on the cold floor to block the student workers who tried to replace the work of the janitors on strike.

Vignette Three: When the law forgets the old patriarchal time



("Mobilization" Fieldwork drawing in March 19, 2014)

On one sunny spring day at the Hongik University, a middle-aged male supervisor with impressive charisma, short and thin with tanned skin and a loud, deep, masculine voice, summoned every single janitor on campus right after the lunch time. The janitors I met earlier that day were excited about the long-awaited sunny weather at the end of cold winter, still worrying about the possible "outside work" on such days – there was a category of work they called "*tongwŏn"* (mobilization). The supervisor was walking around the trails and bushes in the outdoor space of the campus watching over the janitors who were gathering fallen leaves and trashes. Most days, female janitors' labor was strictly limited to "inside" the building, while two male janitors were assigned to the "outside" tasks, such as gathering trash bags coming out from buildings and trucking recycle materials for selling etc. This day was "special" as the strict gender division of labor was reshuffled under the male supervisor's guidance. Within a few hours' labor, lowering their bodies in the bushes, female janitors cleared up the traces of the cold season. The male supervisor's loud voice, echoing in the air from time to time pointing out this and that to the elderly janitors with his long bush stick reminded me of his earlier career as military personnel – I had met him twice before for interviews. The scene transported me to different times, revealing something forgotten, like a moment you found dusted old black and white pictures, as voices fell to silence. When I approached Jaerim, she lowered her voice even further whispering to other janitors, *"do it quickly, there's no end in cleaning, cleaning is endless."* Students were passing by the janitors and the echoing loud voice of the male supervisor, as if their existence did not belong to the archaic time and space *mobilized* on the day of endless cleaning.

CHAPTER THREE

Legal Temporality: Working Day Reforms of the Post-Developmental State

> Basically, Hayek says, it is very simple. The Rule of Law, or formal economic legislation, is quite simply the opposite of a plan. *It is the opposite of planning*.
>
> (Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*)

A few months after the strike on Hongik University's campus in 2011, the university authority (*Hongikhagwŏn*) filed a lawsuit against the Seoul-Gyeongin Branch of Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (the SG Union), demanding reparations (approx. USD 280,000) for the damage caused by the "unlawful occupancy" of the university's private property. Haeson's name was on the list of joint dependents, along with the five leading SG union activists. The university authority claimed that, in the period from January 3 to February 20 (49 days), they had to pay for the electricity and water used by the protesters and hire substitute workers. It also required damage indemnification for defaming the university's reputation, presenting the protest posters put on campus and the news articles whose content, it argued, "slandered" the school authorities as evidence. However, the trial did not last long due to negative public opinions as SG Union activists and the sympathetic supporters blamed the university for its irresponsibility and immoral treatment of the low-wage workers by spreading the news through the social media. After an eleven month-long trial, the court dismissed the case, enforcing the Hongik University to pay the legal fees incurred by both parties. It appeared that the case was a complete victory of the SG union and the workers.

Haeson, the leader of the Hongik University janitorial and security workers' chapter and a fierce realist, later recalled one evening in a series of police interrogations occurred during the trial. She vividly described how one evening, on her way back from the police station at dusk she

was shivering in the cold wind of early spring, "I felt so alone in that moment, asking myself one question repeatedly, "Is this what I fought for?" She was walking to the Mapo subway station, one of the fastest growing areas in Seoul where high-rising officetel (a term combining offices and studio apartments) buildings were darkening the sky and channeling wind from the Han River into a chilling urban gale. Mapo station, only a few blocks away from Hongik University station, is a trendy area where indie bands' concerts and clubbing run 24/7 all year. The growing number of international tourists who flock here, eager to consume local Korean fashion and cultural products, contribute to hyper speculation in the real estate value around the subway line. Since the Lee Myung-bak administration's dramatic transformation of bus lines in the metropolitan area, busy crowds scurry to catch the right bus among the minimum five to six buses approaching the station simultaneously, checking the hectic digitized board that shows arrival time of more than ten different bus numbers. In the urban space, Haeson was far from alone. The male leader of the Hongik security workers was next to her in those tough days of investigation and the labor lawyer assigned by Korea Public Service and Transport Union (KPTU) also backed her up with various documents and legal knowledge. Haeson's loneliness was not about the state of being alone but rather signaled how she perceived the reality and the inaccessible legal logic disqualifying her sense of time. After the 2011 strike, this sense of disruption and loneliness followed her for several years in the form of discursive legal battle.

This chapter examines the relationship between the post-developmental state and the rule of law, in particular the *temporal effects* of the labor law reforms in the process of neoliberal restructuring right before and after the 1997 Financial Crisis. As another main pillar upholding neoliberal temporality, I look at the productive function of labor laws in the neoliberal regime – the ways in which legal knowledge penetrates the rhythms of social life and the old politics of

production/reproduction, reshuffling the institutional foundations and temporal norms of the previous authoritarian developmental state. First, I review the major labor law reforms enacted from the early 1990s to 2010 under the liberal democratic governments and show the link between the labor reforms and patterns of growth and crisis in that period. Second, I analyze the janitorial workers' struggle in the changing legal environment by examining the damage indemnification case filed by the Hongik University and the janitorial workers' working hour dispute that followed. In doing so, this chapter shows 1) how the new set of labor laws, that is consolidated as "*pijŏnggyujik* laws" in the period, has reconfigured the forms of labor resistance and more importantly 2) the process in which legal institutions gain power to regulate socially necessary labor time.

The new legal boundaries and orders place the middle-aged female janitorial workers and their everyday struggle in a realm of infinite uncertainty and indeterminacy as their labor – an emblematic social reproductive labor- becomes increasingly unfit to the temporal order of the post-developmental regime. This chapter demonstrates that this "legal liminality" (Chun 2009a and 2009b) is the *effect* of neoliberal temporality and the struggle against it, not merely a site of social struggle. In other words, the indeterminacy of their labor and struggle is a condition of possibility for the neoliberal temporal order and its politics of producing insiders and outsiders through what Chandan Reddy called "bordering activities" – "through and against which hegemonic forms assemble their frames," creating new subjects and populations as a new governing technology of a neoliberal state (Reddy 2011, 35). The legal professionalization of labor unions reflects this contradiction – the *pijŏnggyu* labor movement trapped in an infinite cycle of legal struggle, not knowing how to escape from the neoliberal regime of law and its new rule of productive time and life. I contend that this new legal temporality makes the old tactics of

struggle and subjects of labor increasingly anachronistic in the reshuffled frames and boundaries of the neoliberal state's protection and welfare policies.

Jennifer Chun defines "legal liminality" as "a state of institutional exception in which workers are neither fully protected by nor fully denied the rights of formal employment" (2009b, 537). As Chun notes, the concept of *liminality* borrowed from Victor Turner's classic article "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage," when applied to labor struggle, allows a culturally specific interpretation of the processes through which a certain prior state – social, biological, and ecological in Turner – is transformed *through rituals* into a new status. Chun situates the new labor struggle waged by marginalized laboring subjects in the liminal space of changing legal contexts in the US and in South Korea, assuming that the processes are comparable and have a general tendency. This approach potentially redirects the focus of labor studies to the discursive dimension of cultural struggle, leaving us to query how culturally specific meanings and relations such as gender, race, class, sexuality and ability may or may not change in the very process of challenging legal boundaries.[40] Chun's study implies that the classification struggles waged by marginalized workers leveraging the existing moral structure and the frame of social justice can be interpreted as a political ritual for emerging social relations and cultural meanings (Chun 2009).

While legal liminality captures the dynamics and contradictions between competing actors in the neoliberal labor market, it has limits in addressing how workers experience and cope with such struggles in their daily lives. In particular, it is necessary to pay attention to the

[40] Chun's study does not take these social differences seriously as important factors in shaping the forms of "symbolic struggle" by limiting the idea of legal liminality to the technical discourse of legal categorizations. See the chapters "What is an Employer" and "What is a Worker" in *Organizing at the Margin* (2009).

temporal contradictions experienced and embodied by workers as their labor and life conditions are redefined, reclassified, and reorganized by the hegemonic legal order of the neoliberal state and capital. My ethnography reveals how the labor struggle compelled by legal categorization – that is, the *pijŏnggyujik* as legal category - fails to challenge the very social hierarchies that produce social differences and marginalized bodies. In contrast to the popular sentiment represented by the mainstream media and the progressive civic organizations that the Hongik University workers' strike was a complete victory, those whom I interviewed had different, complex, and perplexed feelings about the event and its aftermath.[41]

The conditions of legal liminality beg a more essential question on the discursive shift to the rule of law in Korean economic policies since the democratization movement in 1987. Foucault's conceptualization on the "economic-juridical complex" provides a unique lens to understand the specific relation between a capitalist economic order and jurisprudence (2008, 167). Critiquing the tendency of economic determinism in traditional Marxist thinking, Foucault redirects our attention to historically specific processes of how the "juridical gives form to the economy" (ibid 163).[42] I am applying Foucault's set of questions here instead of the historical facts and constituents on which his argument is based.[43] Since the 1987 democratization, South Korean political leaders seek alternatives to the arbitrary interventions of despotic leaders and

[41] If I interviewed the workers right after the strike when they were re-hired, the majority of them would have had positive views on the event. My study focuses on the changing views and what the transitory success and the following reassessment mean in the current context of labor struggle that is connected to the workers' life courses beyond the eventful and spectacular moment of strike.

[42] Wendy Brown extends the argument by pointing out how "law becomes the medium for disseminating neoliberal rationality beyond the economy," primarily undoing democratic political values, sites, and subjects (Brown 2015, 151).

[43] Despite the risk of applying European ideological formations directly to South Korean developmentalism, thinking through Foucault's explication on the rise of the rule of law in late 19th century Germany provides unique insight into similar questions in the South Korean context.

state violence that has sustained the developmental regime's class relations. Dismantling the three-decade long authoritarian military regime in Korea entailed a necessary shift in governmentality from the despotic decision making tendencies in the economic sector to a new form of authority and the regime of truth - that is, what Foucault calls, to "an economic-juridical order." Foucault defines the rule of law as "a state in which the actions of the public authorities will have no value if they are not framed in laws that limit them in advance (ibid 169)." Unlike German ordoliberals' attempt to overcome the effects of capitalism (i.e. "contradictions, impasses, irrationalities") through institutional innovations via the laws, Korea in the post-democratization era faces a different problem of how to upscale the political economy from the developmental state's controlled management to a globally competitive liberal order. The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis precipitated the liberalization process that had been cautiously experimented with throughout the 1990s (Ji 2011). In the following era, we notice that Korean political leaders (both democratic and conservative parties) increasingly seek their authority through laws, particularly labor laws, in finding solutions to the economic crisis and devising the post-developmental state's new technology of regulating class relations and surplus populations.

The Post-Developmental Regime: Liberal Reforms after 1987

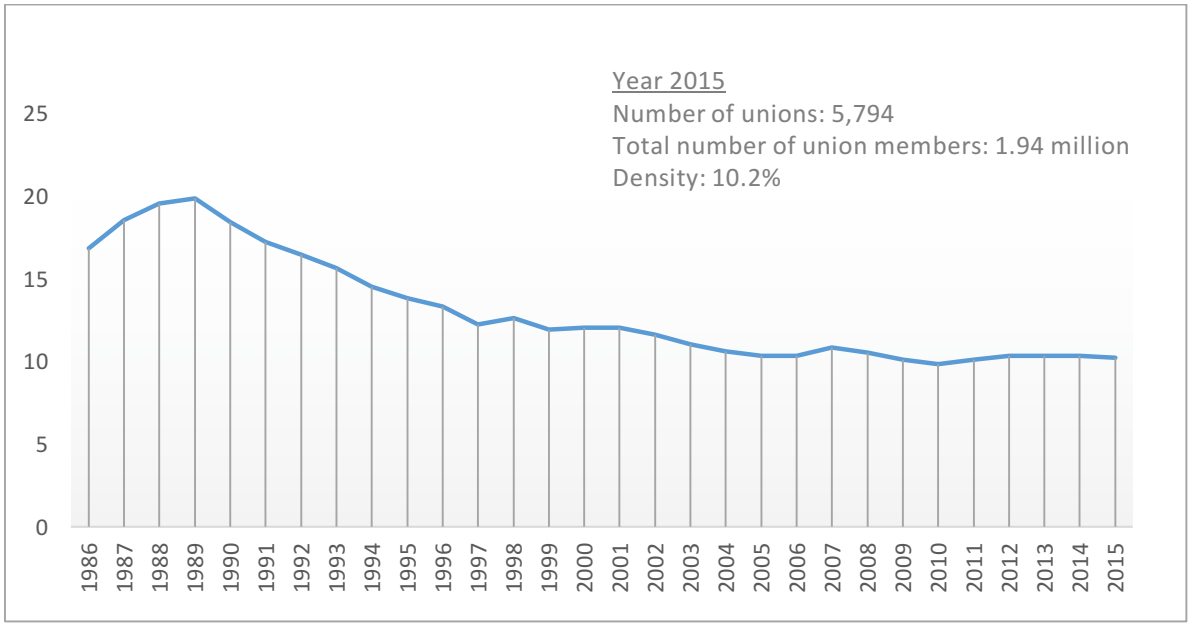
The developmental state, characterized by its tight control of financial inflows and temporal planning of economic growth up until the late 1980s, met a series of challenges at the dawn of the country's liberal democracy in the 1990s. The South Korean political economy shared the "semi-sovereign state" character along with Japan and Taiwan, having seemingly incongruent elements of strong and weak state in the U.S.-led liberal economic block (Cummings 1998). It gradually cut loose its strong ties with the fully blown *chaebol* (big

conglomerates), allowing a "denationalization" of their accumulated capital and granting the *chaebol* capital's desire to be freed from the state control from the early 1990s (Hart-Landsberg & Burkett 2001). The external factors of the shift were the pressure from Japan and the U.S. on South Korean export success and the increased production in Southeast Asian countries and China (ibid). The developmental regime responded to these challenges by opening the domestic stock market to foreign investors in 1992, abandoning the state policy of selectively allocating loans to a small number of big corporations, and abolishing the Economic Planning Board (EPB) in 1994 – a government body that had steered the national economy since 1961. In the same period, the country's foreign debt level rose steeply to $160 billion and culminated in a "liquidity crisis" at the end of 1997 (Haggard 2000). The International Monetary Fund's $57 billion bailout demanded restructuring plans including increasing transparency in the financial sector; promoting foreign mergers and acquisitions of big firms and national banks; and further opening of the capital markets (Cummings 1998).

The events of the early 1990s also added momentum to the state's growing need to revise the balance between the *chaebŏl* dominance in the market and the growing aspiration of labor to increase its share in the post-developmental period. After the nation-wide spread of workers' protests peaked from July to September following the June 10 Democracy Movement [*6.10 minju-hangjaeng*] in 1987, the union density level skyrocketed to 18.6% in the end of 1989, which resulted in inaugurating a new nation-wide progressive labor union association, the National Council of Trade Unions (NCTU) in 1990 that later was succeeded by the Korea Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) in 1995. The labor income share (an indicator of labor's

share in GDP) grew from 52.7% to 63.4% in the ten-year period (1987~1996).[44] Passing through the 1997-8 crisis, however, the figure returned to 53.8% in 2000. These figures reveal how the crisis adjusted the balance between capital and labor by promoting transnationalization of *chaebol* capital and demanding labor's sacrifice in the process of restructuring. Behind this shift in balance between capital and labor in a relatively short period of time – from the era of democratic aspiration (1987-1996) to the time of financial crisis and arrested aspiration (1997-2007) – the state played an important role by reforming its governing technologies, mainly from military-based authoritarian control to rationalized mediation through the rule of law.

< Figure 2: Union Density Level (1986 - 2015) >



(Source: Ministry of Employment and Labor, 2015)[45]

[44] Kim Jŏngu. "Nodong sodŭk punbaeyul ŭi pyŏndongchi wa ŭimi (The trajectory and meaning of labor income share)." *Labor Review* 2005.
[45] Ministry of Labor and Employment, "National Union Density Level" (2015).

In the same period, the desire to be part of the developed world was expressed directly by the country's first democratic government under the changing economic currents of the old developmental state. The shift in the form of governance was made slowly, with well-expected failures and speculations in the transitional period still depending heavily on the old practices through which the state determines the direction of growth, if not its form and content. The difference was the foundation upon which the political leader justified its will for a certain future. The liberal reform started early on during the Kim Young Sam government with the slogan of *segyehwa* (globalization) and its determination to join in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) within his five-year term.[46] The rush to the OECD reveals the nascent liberal state's endeavor to establish its foundation through the global standards and measurements in assessing the "economic and social well-being" of its citizens and the effectiveness of its policies for "productivity and global flows of trade and investment."[47] In the same period, the government promoted broad financial liberalization policy through the New Economy 5-Year Plan - which was less like a progressive growth index of the previous developmental era - but measures to promote "fair competition and autonomy" for economic activities performed by government bodies, business actors, and citizens. Accordingly, the culturally specific labor laws that reflected historically shaped social relations of labor in the South Korean economy needed to be adjusted to meet the basic "requirements and standards" of

[46] The post developmental state's enlightened obsession with global standards as its own governing consciousness was most vividly expressed in public restrooms. Kim Young Sam government's public restroom campaign: summarize here if relevant.
[47] OECD mission statement of the Kim Young Sam government

the International Labor Organization (ILO), which was led not only by the government but also by organized labor.[48]

The Kim Young Sam government responded to the growing need to balance the power between the *chaebŏl* capital and labor with a set of liberal measures: revising the basic labor laws and the labor standards act and promoting broad deregulation of business management, such as banning payment of wage during strike; allowing massive layoffs for the business management purposes; and promoting dispatch work and flexible working hour system. Organized labor – both conservative and progressive unions – immediately reacted to the conservative party-led parliament's rush to the labor reform bills in December 1996 with a general strike. The strike lasted for forty days until January 1997 with the participation of more than 3,000 unions and 3.6 million members, which was recorded as the largest labor protest in modern Korean history. Despite the historic protest, the parliament passed the labor reform bills in March 1997.

While organized labor was deeply perplexed by the surprising coupling of the labor reform bill and the Asian Financial Crisis, the Kim Young Sam government passed an act to establish a new institution that would govern the process of restructuring in December 1997:

> The Financial Supervisory Service (FSS) was established on January 2, 1999, as Korea's fully integrated supervisory authority under the Act on the Establishment of Financial Supervisory Organizations (the "Establishment Act") that the National Assembly approved on December 29, 1997. The Establishment Act created the FSS as a specially legislated quasi-government supervisory authority and charged it with financial supervision across the entire financial sector.[49]

The Financial Supervisory Committee under the newly elected Kim Dae Jung government announced fifty-five major corporations' merger and acquisition plans in June 1998. Daewoo

[48] Since South Korea became a member of International Labor Organization in 19991, organized labor promoted legal reforms for allowing multiple unions in one enterprise and union rights for government officers and teachers.
[49] The Financial Supervisory Service. http://english.fss.or.kr.

group, the second largest family-controlled conglomerate in South Korea, was dismantled in 1999 after major deals with General Motors failed. The massive layoffs following the unprecedented corporate bankruptcies necessitated both the legal basis and broad social consent. The authoritarian state's excessive planning of the national economy in the previous era ended with the anticipation of a different face of the state - not directing the scale of growth in a temporal period, but *policing* the ways economic actors play the game freely for indeterminate futures. The half century old Economic Planning Board (EPB) was succeeded by the Financial Supervisory Service (FFS) - whose actions are governed directly by the newly defined rule of law rather than a strong leader. Whether it was the process of the "deepening of democracy" (Haggard 2000) or the completion of neoliberal globalization (Gray 2008, Pirie 2008), the 1997-8 financial crisis effectively put an end to the era of the state-centered political economic system and heralded a new form of governance. No doubt the financial crisis and the state's adaptation to its mechanism through the IMF bailout program curbed the democratic aspirations expressed by organized labor, unleashing the control of the *chaeböl* capital's flight and opening the domestic financial market wide to foreign investors.

Age of Consent and Commission

The state's symbolic relation to labor laws underwent a dramatic shift under the post-developmental regime. Labor laws under the authoritarian state in the 1960s and 1970s were a "loose control tool" targeting only the upper tier of labor with little to no access for the low tier workers represented mainly by export-oriented female factory workers (Kim 2014, 18). Under the Yushin Constitution that dissipated the possibility of collective action, the state could maintain a "father-like appearance for the individualized workers" through nominal labor laws

(ibid 38). From the early 1990s, the government organized the Labor-related Law Research Committee inviting experts who were deemed to be neutral to both labor and business.[50] The previous developmental regime's "universal subject of knowledge in the order of economy" (Foucault 2004, 172) (i.e. the Yushin Constitution of the Park regime) was now replaced by experts and legal professionals under the name of government commission. It was under Kim Young Sam government that the committee consisted of government, business, and labor, promoting the "new labor-business relations principle" that encouraged "participation, cooperation, and responsibility" (Y Kim 2004, 60). However, in the environment in which the competing actors of FKTU and KPTU coexisted, there was little potential for organized labor to lead the negotiation with a coherent strategy and position in the formal setting against government and business. In consequence, this early stage of tripartite committee only revealed the internal weakness of organized labor with little political gain, which eventually made KPTU walk out of the position and rely on a mass strike strategy on the street.

The second stage of the tripartite commission under Kim Dae Jung administration had a straightforward political goal. The commission, not a strong political leader, was expected to find a viable social contract for the 1997-8 financial crisis. Despite the two leaders' different political backgrounds, the content of Kim Dae Jung government's labor reform bills was on a continuum with the layout of the Kim Young Sam administration. Instead of comparing the effectiveness of their seemingly different policies, here I propose looking at how the form of governance has shifted in the period from the strong leadership-based developmental state model to a neoliberal form that disqualifies a universal subject in the economic decision-making process. Labor

[50] The experts called as "public representatives" represented 12 of 18 members of the committee (Kim 2004, 58).

flexiblization was presented as an irrevocable policy goal at the bargaining table in the middle of the unprecedented financial downfall. The government and business required organized labor's formal consent on the terms and conditions of mass layoffs and the dispatch work (temp agency) act. Organized labor, however, was over-represented by regular workers of big conglomerates who had better access to the then little to non-existent social safety net provisions and welfare benefits compared to the outsiders of normative employment relations (Song 2014, 149). Despite the government's careful calculations from studying Japan's failure in the process of labor market liberalization since the 1980s, targeting first the insiders of the major *chaeböl* firms and then expanding its policy effect to the outsiders had little impact in alleviating deepening inequality and dualism in the labor market (ibid).

What has not been fully addressed in the previous studies on the function and effectiveness of the tripartite commission is the complex reality of diverse workers whose voices and shares have been preempted in the formal negotiation. One representative case is the Hyundai Motor Company (Ulsan factory) layoff deal that was made after a 36-day strike in 1998, which ended up dismissing 277 workers that included 144 female cafeteria workers. The initial agreement between the company and the union targeted the 276 entire cafeteria employees, among which 132 workers ended up accepting the company's compensation for voluntary resignation. The Hyundai Motor Company still pushed the union to accept the initial deal of 277 layoffs. The average age of the female cafeteria workers was 47 years old and 70% of them were the main household income earner (Cho 2000, 304). The laid off cafeteria workers were re-hired by subcontractors with 60% lower monthly wage.[51] They continued their protest by any and all

[51] Three years of their struggle were recorded as a film *Pap. Kkot. Yang* [Rice, flower, and the scapegoat] (2001), revealing the complex relationship between the heteropatriarchal male

means available, "naked holding knives and scissors," waging hunger strikes, and cutting off their hair (*Labor Today* June 2, 2000). Their unfinished corporeal struggle can be summed up in a quote, "Do I have to dance naked on the cafeteria table to prove our intimacy?" - a female worker's response to a male union leader's comment that the union had less intimacy with the cafeteria workers than the male manufacturing workers.[52] Cho Soon Kyung points out that the male breadwinner model as an ideological construction tends to strengthen in the economic restructuring process by the silent cartel between the state, male-centered labor unions, and capital (2000, 303). The organized labor's participation in the tripartite committee was a platform for an enlightened patriarchal labor politics that would produce new definitions and social conditions of normative laboring subjects.[53] The commission was an effective governing device for the post-developmental regime in finding answers for the following questions while maintaining its democratic appearance; who are going to remain insiders in the shrinking labor market?; and based on what criteria and social values will the line between the insiders and outsiders be redrawn?[54]

Emergence of Pijŏnggyujik Laws

1) The Dispatch Law (1998)

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manufacturing workers – their wives and children joining in the strike – and the middle-aged female cafeteria workers.

[52] The female cafeteria workers continued their protest "in naked holding knives and scissors," waging hunger strikes, and cutting off their hairs, asking the Hyundai company to directly rehire the dismissed workers (*Labor Today* June 2, 2000).

[53] KPTU resigned the position both in 1996 and in 1999 at the last minute the commission reached to an agreement and organized mass strikes against the labor reform bills.

[54] I discussed in the previous chapter the developmental state's dependency on the heightened gendered division of labor and organized labor's compliance with and silence about the particular condition of growth in the 80s and 90s.

On February 6, 1998, the tripartite commission signed on the "Social Compact to Overcome the Economic Crisis" reaching an agreement on the legislation of the Act on the Protection of Dispatch Workers (hereafter Dispatch Law) and reforming the Labor Standards Act that included legalizing mass layoffs under urgent management needs.[55] Dispatch Law listed both the areas in which labor dispatch is allowed (known as a positive listing method) and those that are not (a negative listing) with legal definitions of the major terms including dispatch agency, user [*sayongja*: employer], and dispatch worker. The legislation of the Dispatch Law meant the broad deregulation of labor market intermediaries that have long been limited in the feminized informal sectors such as mainly domestic work, restaurant work, and care labor.[56]

It is worth noticing the ways in which the form of dispatch work, in a broad sense job brokerage, was regulated in the earlier developmental regime. Since its first Labor Standards Act reform in 1967, the developmental state's regulation of labor intermediaries was ambiguous and strategic. The 1967 reform under the Park Chung Hee regime included deregulating labor intermediaries that were initially banned under the "Job Security Law" by the first post-colonial government in 1961.[57] The number of private job brokerage agencies increased from 80 in 1967, peaked at 411 in 1974, before falling to 296 in 1980.[58] Cho et. al. points that the majority of the job brokerage users were females who were exposed to various forms of low-paying informal

[55] The commission's official agenda included broad restructuring issues beyond labor flexiblization such as *chaebŏl* reform, management reform, union rights of teachers and public officers, and allowing labor unions' political activity.
[56] Still domestic workers are not recognized as formal laborers in the current Labor Standards Act (Article 11. "this Act shall neither apply to any business or workplace in which only the employer's blood relatives living together are engaged, nor to servants hired for the employer's domestic works").
[57] Cho et al. *Sarajŏ bŏrin sayongja ch'aekim (disappearing employers' responsibility),* 2013: p.161-162.
[58] Ibid.

and insecure jobs.[59] The growing size of the female workforce in the nascent developmental state formed the legal boundary through which the modern labor law could be established, provisioning exceptions and excluding the extreme labor conditions of feminized job sectors. The female factory workers' extreme surplus working hours, beyond the eight-hour working day, was the main characteristic of the growing export-oriented light industry in the early stage of the developmental regime, which was in sharp contradiction to the developmental state's endeavor to be a modern state through the establishment of modern labor laws. Feminized labor was not only the border that modern law could draw its boundary around and define its ideal subjects of protection, but also a necessary condition for the advancement of labor rights in the harsh economic condition of the early developmental state.[60]

The size of the labor intermediaries that subsisted mildly throughout the 1980s started to increase sharply with the implementation of the Dispatch Law in 1998 and the subsequent reform of the Job Security Law in 1999. The number of job intermediary agencies including subcontracting and outsourcing companies in public and private sectors reached 7,000 in 2010.[61] Along with the government policy of distinguishing a "central task" from "peripheral work," the Dispatch Law largely contributed to deepening hierarchical divisions of labor both in public and private sectors. The law articulates its main targets broadly as the areas in which professional knowledge, skill, and experience are required and substitute workers for the "vacancies due to child birth, an illness and injury."[62] Its main characteristic is the specific time period temporary

[59] Ibid. 164.
[60] Distinguished from my argument on the productive function of the law through bordering and creating legal subjects and exceptions, Jun Kim points that legal sociologists identify this tendency – exclusion and exception - as the "gap or slippage" between the established laws and the real social conditions (Kim Jun 2014, 14-17).
[61] Cho et al. 2013: p.168.
[62] National Law Information Center: Act on the protection, etc. of temporary agency workers.

workers can be hired in such areas, limiting an employment contract from a minimum of three months to a maximum of two years. What is noticeable is not only the specific temporal regulation of labor itself but the way in which the law becomes a social device producing a particular labor and capital relation in terms of labor time. Further, following the Act on Prohibition of Age Discrimination in Employment and Elderly Employment Promotion, the Dispatch Law allowed indeterminate extension of temporary employment for elderly workers. In consequence, the protection frame of the female workers burdened by childbirth and low-wage elderly job seekers deepened the existing gendered divisions of labor across all job sectors. From the early 2000s, janitorial labor in public institutions started to be categorized as "peripheral work" and taken over by outsourcing companies. The Dispatch Law redefined janitorial jobs as a non-essential task proper for outsourcing and legitimate for infinite extension of a contract based on its social character – a sector where elderly females are concentrated.

2) The Temporary Work Law (2006)

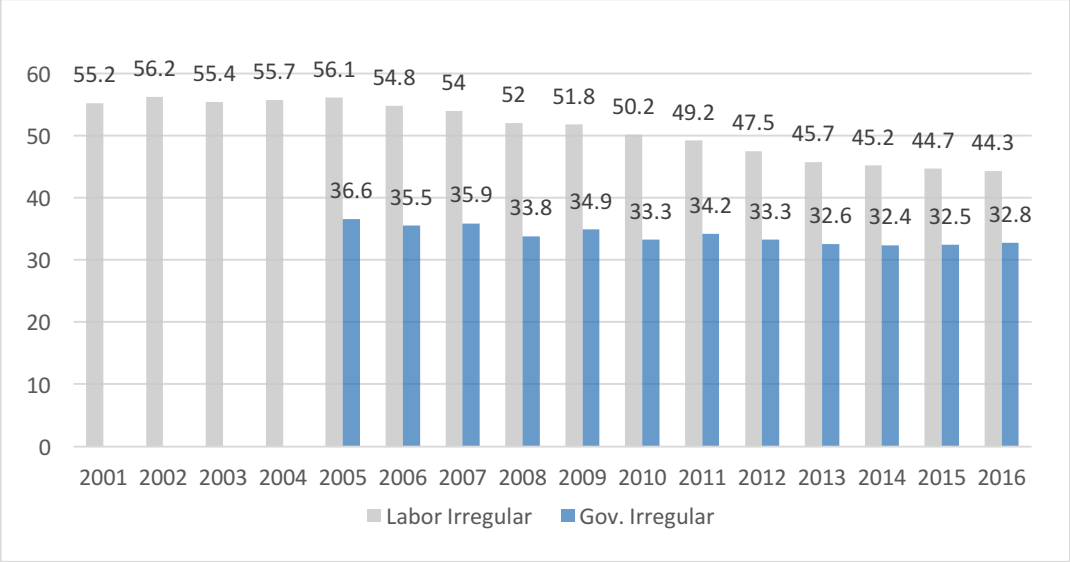
While the Dispatch Law deregulated labor intermediaries which led to proliferating triangular employment relations, abstracting and lifting primary employers' legal responsibility, the implementation of Act on the Protection of Fixed-term and Part-time Workers (hereafter Temporary Work Law) in 2006, under the former human rights lawyer Roh Moo Hyun, completed "the legal foundation of neoliberal labor relations" in South Korea.[63] Despite the Temporary Work Law's stated purpose of "protecting" those workers whose employment term is fixed, the real consequence of the law was largely increasing the number of temporary workers

[63] Seoul Headquarter of KCTU Labor Law Support Center, *Labor Law Lectures for Workers* (2015), p.19.

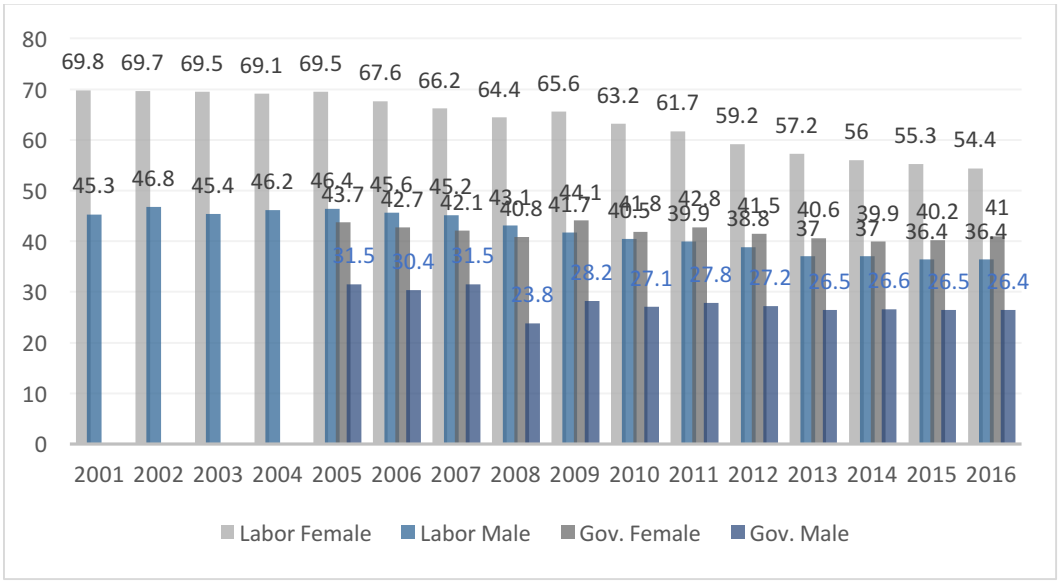
across all job sectors. The Temporary Work Law stated that "Any employer may hire a fixed-term worker for a period not exceeding two years," specifying the maximum length of temporary employment to four years – allowing one time renewal of the initial two year contract.[64] Already marginalized workers who have few skill sets and resources, such as low-tier female workers, young first-time job seekers, and elderly people, were congealed into the newly defined legal category, *pijŏnggyujik.* The establishment of the main two neoliberal labor laws unarguably functioned as the new governmental reason for the state, market, and workers in regulating and articulating the contingent workforce in South Korea. In the following period, two year fixed-term hires and contract based short-term jobs have become the dominant and almost only available form of employment, especially for already marginalized workers. As the following figures show, the law itself neither increased the size of contingent workforce nor intensified its gendered characteristics. Instead, the reform of the existing labor law needs to be understood as a new form of governmentality that is in opposition to the previous developmental state's excessive planning and control of labor.

[64] National Law Information Center: Act on the protection, etc. of fixed-term and part-time workers (2006.12.26).

< Figure 3: Size of Contingent Employment (%) >



< Figure 4: Composition of Contingent Employment by Gender (%) >



(Source: Korean Contingent Workers' Center, "Statistics of Korean Pijŏnggyu Workers," Issue Paper 2017-1. Korea Labor Institute, "Pijŏnggyujik Employment and Working Condition" *Labor Review,* 2017-1.)[65]

[65] The figure shows difference between the progressive labor organization's data and the government statistics.

Not only did the *pijŏnggyu* workers' immediate material conditions including wage and working conditions deteriorate drastically, but also severe discrimination and ill treatment against those workers became a common social phenomenon. *Misaeng* (2014), a popular TV drama based on a comic book series, depicts the structure of feelings that saturate contingent work and society sympathetic to such reality. The neoliberal labor law changed the material conditions of the target workers as well as the popular mindset toward the employment-related social hierarchy that was seamlessly woven into already existing categories of social differences such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, level of education, and ability etc. What David Harvey defined as the social division of labor - distinguished from the technical division of labor- was materialized and articulated as the new governmentality of the post-developmental state by the neoliberal law establishment in Korea.

Workers' Embodiment of Legal Liminality

The legal-economic order expressed in the process of structural adjustment at the turn of the century in South Korea made an impact primarily on organized labor, in particular, the organizing strategies of the labor movement. During my fieldwork, I was introduced to several labor lawyers and unionists who hold a labor attorney certificate. Legal knowledge and professionalism deeply penetrated everyday discourse of labor struggles from weekly union meetings, rallies, strikes to collective bargaining processes. Upon my visit to the KPTU legal team, I interviewed the representative lawyer who led the Hongik University litigation in 2011. Woo brought me to a meeting room packed with dusty boxes of files and books in the old KPTU building. The office had about seven desks full of rather disorganized papers and books, far from the polish of fancy, profit-thirsty law firms, with no sign of hierarchy among the lawyers in terms

of spatial organization. Woo prepared the files of two lawsuits related to the Hongik branch union on the desk for me to look at during the interview. She was the main attorney for the damage indemnification case. From the first sentence, Woo seemed little hesitant, uttering in a low voice, "I didn't think the case was the union's triumph at all." Woo described the case as follows:

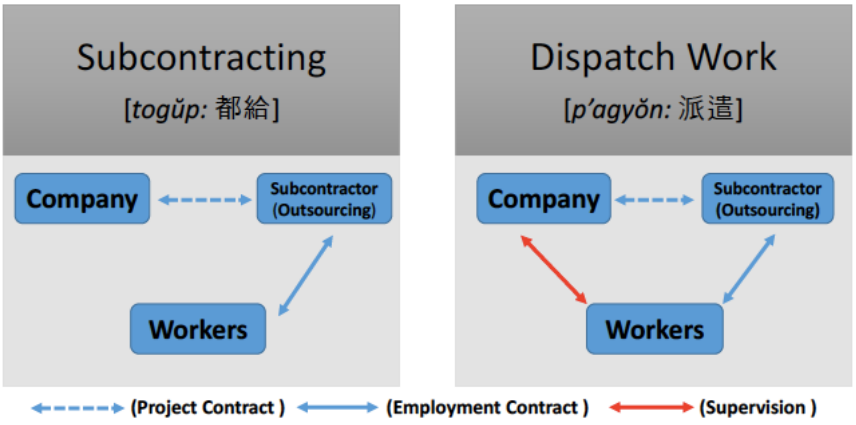
> The case was unique in the sense that there was almost nothing we could do under the current legal system. Strictly speaking, it was beyond the legal boundary since the workers occupied the workplace after the employment contract was over. The gap between the general expectation that the employment should be continued and the legal reality was deep. Cleaning service has long been considered as the legitimate sector for subcontracting [*togŭp*] in the current law. It was not an illegal dispatch [*pulbŏpp'agyŏn*] case, either. Unlike Hyundai Motor Company (Asan factory) illegal dispatch case, cleaning service is considered as self-evident subcontracting sector in the current law. This view has been dominant since the wide spread of the idea of management rationalization [*kyŏngyŏngamnihwa*], outsourcing[*oejuhwa*], and the dispatch work law. There is no illegality in outsourcing cleaning service under the current labor law.

Woo made a clear distinction between subcontracting [*togŭp:* 都給] and dispatch work [*p'agyŏn:* 派遣]. In February 2015, the Supreme Court took sides with the subcontracted workers against the Hyundai Motor Company by categorizing the case as dispatch work. Under the current dispatch and temporary work law, the Hyundai Motor Company was ordered to hire the subcontract workers who were consecutively employed for two years as "regular" workers. The decision was hailed as the major victory in the *pijŏnggyu* struggle for its symbolic dimension as the representative manufacturing sector that has steered the developmental state's growth in the 1980s. As Woo described, cleaning service was far from the skill-based manufacturing sector in its legal and social dimension.

The following table shows the major differences between the two employment categories. Under a subcontracting relationship, the primary company [*wŏnch'ŏng*] has no legal relationship with workers. Subcontractors or outsourcing companies make employment contracts directly

with workers with full supervisory duty. Dispatch or temp agencies do make employment contracts with workers, however, in this case the workers are supervised directly by the original company. The red arrow in the table shows the legal and supervisory relationship between the company and the workers, which has become the primary focus in court disputes. Whereas the Hyundai Motor case was considered dispatch work in the 2015 court decision, janitorial work has been categorized as "traditional" outsourcing work, otherwise known as contract work. Cleaning service, according to this legal categorization, can be completed by the subcontractors with no direct contact with or guide by the company that purchases the service.

< Figure 5: Legal distinction of subcontracting and dispatch work[66] >



The KPTU legal support team, a group of labor lawyers, had to decide which practical goal the case should aim for considering the gap between the *de jury* view on the cleaning service sector and the *de facto* condition of the labor. In a formal sense, they had two options; 1) contending that the university was the primary employer of the workers, thus proving the case as either illegal dispatch[*pulbŏpp'agyŏn*] or disguised subcontracting[*wijangdogŭp*], or 2) focusing

[66] Source: KCTU Seoul Head Office Law School, *Labor Law Lecture for Workers.* 2015.

on the infringement of the basic rights, arguing that the university terminated the contract in order to suppress the unionization of the workers. After a series of discussions, they concluded that the illegal dispatch and disguised subcontracting argument had little potential to win in the current legal environment. In order to argue the first, they needed to prove that the university was the primary supervisory authority directly controlling the workers' daily work process, simultaneously revealing fake identities of subcontracting companies, such as not having proper management resources and independent business. In that case, the court dispute would depend on the evidence that could prove the university's actual relationship with the workers. However, Woo recalled, it was a risky option for the experienced labor lawyers in such disputes. If they lose, they feared, it would affect similar future cases in the sector negatively. Even if they could gather a great deal of evidence showing the direct relationship between the university and the workers, the fact that the cleaning service was a legally sanctioned sector for outsourcing was the major road block that could not be easily uplifted, which led the KPTU legal team focus on the second option. After the debate, the KPTU legal support team prepared a lawsuit against the Hongik University focusing on its infringement of the workers' basic rights, which could prove "partial responsibility" of the university as the primary user based on the current labor union act. Aerim Yoon, a labor law scholar, acutely argued this approach as the "actual power relation model" that should be considered more widely in court disputes in order to secure the basic rights of the temporary, dispatched, outsourced type of workers.

Woo's unsettling confession that she never thought of the case as a victory can be understood in this context that the lawyers were reluctant to challenge the already-set legal boundaries and categories. Interpreting the lawyers' attitude as timid and dispassionate only blocks questioning what structural conditions exist behind the issue. Woo explained,

> In the past, we fought for the primary employer's responsibility to prove it as illegal dispatch or disguised subcontracting. Once we won in the initial dispute and lost in the second court – the court said cleaning and security work was different from Hyundai Motors case (automobile manufacturing). Kunkuk University campus security workers' case and Chung Ang University janitors' case followed the similar pattern in 2014. The result of the fight was criminalization of the union leaders (as dependents). The SG union leaders now have multiple similar criminal records, which is another big burden in court dispute. Judges see the person who has multiple similar criminal records as habitual offender. This has happened in the past ten years since 2000. Challenging the legal framework (labor law revision) is necessary in the long run, which requires more resources. For now, we are focusing on practical gains, such as employment buyout between outsourcing companies or university's responsibility to guarantee succession of employment.

The series of legal disputes somehow disciplined both parties; the lawyers and the workers to find more practical gains in the process even if they were short-term benefits, and the universities (primary employers) to protect themselves from such court disputes by removing all the supervisory connections with janitors and security workers. I found several incidences of these practices during my field visits. Supervision for janitorial work, even if it was a minor one, was given by an official document from a university official to an on-site outsourcing company supervisor. A supervisor – ironically all the outsourcing company supervisors I met in several college campuses were all middle-aged males – passes orders to janitors. In this way, the employment and supervisory relationship between outsourcing companies and workers was consolidated, completely removing the primary employer's liability in the relation. The labor laws and the court cases constituted the social reality by actively disciplining differently situated actors to meet the legal intent – in this case, cleaning work as a "proper" form of labor to be outsourced, disposable, and replaceable. While the new *pijŏnggyujik* law forgets the past it was born out of, the old patriarchal social relations were silently buried in the new legal code.

Janitors' Six Hour Working Day

The second litigation was made by the janitors and the KPTU legal team against the outsourcing companies in August 2011. This time the claim was about the compulsory three-hour break time in janitorial labor contract. Unlike security workers whose waiting time is included in working hours, janitors' three-hour break except for a one-hour lunch time was not included in their wages for many years. The following table shows the official working hours specified in the subcontract document between the university and outsourcing companies.

<Figure 6: Working Hours in the Contracts between the University and the Subcontractors>

	Janitorial work	Security work (male only job sector)
Weekdays	08:00-18:00	Daytime Team 08:00-20:00 (6 days a week) 24hour Team 07:00-07:00 (every other day)
Saturdays	08:00-16:00	

Unlike the subcontract document, the employment contract between janitors and outsourcing companies had a phrase specifying a three-hour waiting time, "Break Time: 1) 10:00-11:00, 2)12:00-13:00, 3) 15:00-16:00."[67] By specifying two extra hours as a compulsory break (except the lunch hour), the outsourcing companies could lower janitors' full day wages significantly, reducing the real working day to 6 hours instead of the normative 8 hours. Forty-nine janitors working at the Hongik University requested wage remuneration for the unjust two extra waiting hours in their employment contract to two respective outsourcing companies. The lost wage amounted to 309,175 won per month (approximately USD 250) for each janitor. This case took thirty-six months in total, whereas the first damage indemnification case took only eleven

[67] The law suit document (Case No. 2014Da45690 Wage).

months. In the three-year period, a number of janitors needed to participate in nitpicky police interrogations by the court's request for evidence.

Haeson was at the center of the second dispute. Once she was nominated as the chapter leader during the 49-day strike, Haeson was the first person who complained about the compulsory two-hour break in contract. She claimed, "If necessary, they could reduce the working day to 6 hours officially (08:00-16:00), so that we can go home early or find a second job, such as dish washing at a nearby restaurant in the evening." According to Haeson, the unpaid two-hour break was limiting opportunities for extra income for many janitors who could not make ends meet with the bare minimum wage – at that time 815,000 won per month, approximately $800 USD in 2011. However, Haeson and the KPTU legal team were not very confident about the working hour dispute for a reason similar to why they could not fight for the primary employer's responsibility. The court reflects common sense social attitude and norms - in this case the value of cleaning work at home and outside. Both the first and second trials dismissed the case taking side with outsourcing companies, asking the janitors to pay the incurred lawsuit cost for both parties. Haeson showed me the final supreme court ruling that had Haeson's name on the front page in the first line as a single plaintiff that was made obviously by the appeal of the outsourcing company. The lawsuit charge was almost the same amount as the janitors' two hour lost wage, 309,175 won per month. Haeson interpreted it as punishment for her actions to challenge outsourcing companies and indirectly the court and the society.

The court ruling reads, "Even if the plaintiffs were requested for extra labor during the two-hour break occasionally, it is *necessary and inevitable given the character of cleaning work*, and the plaintiffs knew this character of the work when they signed the employment contract

with the dependents (*emphasis mine*)."[68] The court's preference of concrete evidence was another barrier in this case. Whereas security workers' hours were recorded and documented in specific terms with detailed information of tasks and locations, janitorial work did not have such recording system. The language of custodial work order in contract documents was subjective and indeterminate such as "*thorough* hygiene and clean environment should *always* be maintained…supervisors are required to check the space more than three times a day….all sorts of trash and contaminated conditions need to be taken care of *whenever* they are spotted (*emphasis mine*)."[69] The social character of cleaning work – *intermittent, repetitive* - was reflected in the legal interpretation that justified reducing janitors' working day to six hours with the two hour wage loss. Through the court's legitimization, the old social character of cleaning work rooted in unpaid domestic work was seamlessly transmitted to the neoliberal labor market. The middle-aged female workers who were assumed to have enough knowledge in cleaning work – even if there were no specific description of the condition in the employment contracts – was recognized by the court as an independent subject who "consented" to such working condition. While the knowledge embedded in the culturally specific gendered division of labor was socially constituted, the court recognized an individual legal subject who can make a rational choice independently. In this way, individual workers become a constitutive element of the neoliberal market. Haeson, who never consented to such socially accepted knowledge and had gritted her teeth against it for many years, was left *alone* to process the court's ruling and the "damage" - maybe entailing some harsh judgement about her leadership from the coworkers as

[68] Lawsuit Doc. No. 2013-0031558342-25DD1
[69] Case No. 2011Ga-Hap10181-Wage

well as the fellow union activists. In this way, Haeson was "failing" to embody the court's legal consciousness.

Legal Professionalization of Labor Unions

The labor law reforms in the late 1990s have fundamentally changed the forms of labor struggle and the qualifications of unionists. Whereas the previous form of labor struggle aimed to leverage labor's share in the gross national product (GNP) constituting the broader social process of democratization in South Korea as delineated in the previous section, the struggle against neoliberal economic restructuring required new strategies and knowledge of the changing governance of the state and capital. While KPTU revised its earlier naïve slogan of "Repeal Pijŏnggyujik Laws" to "Elimination of Discrimination against Pijŏnggyujik" in the late 2000s, progressive labor scholars and activists gradually become versed in legal rhyme and reason reframing labor struggles as the stakes of unions through legal procedures and knowledge. Court decisions absorbed general public attention in major struggles, to name a few, the Hyundai Motor subcontract workers' case (Supreme Court decision in 2015), the Ssangyong Motor layoff workers' case (Seoul High Court in 2014), and the KTX female attendants' case (Supreme Court decision in 2015). For many, Hyundai and Ssangyong Motor cases were hailed as major victories of organized labor, while the nine year-long fight of KTX female workers, still ongoing, and their legal defeat gradually faded from the spotlight. Beyond the pragmatic question of whether new legal knowledge and governance can be useful tactics for workers or not, instead I suggest looking closely at the quotidian process of how differently situated laboring subjects are summoned to the new legal knowledge and orchestration of the new social order.

A prominent experience during my fieldwork was observing the process of annual collective bargaining between the SG Union and twenty outsourcing companies, which lasted from November 2014 to late April 2015. There were, in total, eleven official bargaining meetings during the six-month period. The first two months were wasted on various administrative issues, such as the absence and ill-preparedness of the company representatives. Bringing all the company representatives to the negotiation table seemed to be the major task in the SG Union collective bargaining model. This form of aggregated collective bargaining between one umbrella union and multiple outsourcing companies was another outcome of the proliferating *pijŏnggyu* labor relations.[70] As the SG Union represents fourteen university campuses, representatives of outsourcing companies always outnumbered the union representatives. In order to match the number, the union leaders invited the rank and file to sit behind them. As a result, the room was packed with about forty or fifty people, sometimes including student supporters and observers like myself. Sending legal notices and warnings to the negligent companies who ignored and attempted to avoid official negotiation took several months. Only by late January could the "real" conversation start setting up major agendas and the scope of the negotiations.

After several weeks of circular conversations as the company representatives utilized all possible means to distract and delay any progress, an alarming voice abruptly set the stage anew. Kiyeon, the oldest female member of the SG Union, who made a remarkable career choice from a retired janitor at the Y University hospital to a contingent job at the same university campus, stood up in the middle of conversation between the parties, saying, "Do you people think this is a

[70] The SG union officials called their model as *chipdan gyosŏp*, distinguishing it from the traditional expression, *tanch'e gyosŏp* (collective bargaining). The former can be translated as an "aggregated" form of collective bargaining.

joke? You think we are here for fun? You have no respect for us, old workers like me, right?" Since Kiyeon never uttered a word until this day, people in the room were not only surprised by her loud and determined voice spurting out of her poised body but also alarmed by her comment on the idle conversation. Kiyeon's brief speech shook the entire room out of their entranced attitudes, quieting the banal language utilized by the company representatives to discourage workers.

Kiyeon's voice ironically invited a more professional language to flourish on the negotiation table. Effectively ending the earlier tension-building process between the parties, it encouraged the representatives to reveal their positions explicitly with feasible solutions for contentious issues. Since both renewing collective agreement document and wage increases were on the agenda in that year, the Union leaders were waiting to hear the companies' views on the revised draft of agreement. It was hard not to notice that the two male unionists trained as labor attorneys were leading the direction of discussion.[71] Often in the middle of debate, both the Union leaders and company representatives requested clarifications on certain law reforms and trends to the legal specialists. Their calm, stern, rational voices were sharply juxtaposed with that of Kiyeon's rather emotional tone.

Among the wide range of revised clauses, sexual harassment and menstrual leave policy took center stage as part of the newly inserted section titled as "human rights protection" in the collective agreement. According to one of the male legal specialists, if they could collect enough sexual harassment incidents from the rank and file, the union could gain more leverage in the wage bargaining. Since sexual abuse and harassment cases against the middle-aged female

[71] One was holding a labor attorney certificate and the other was in the process of taking the national exam. I, too, depended heavily on their explanations during the negotiation whenever I couldn't understand the point of debates and conflicts.

workers could easily escalate to public condemnation against the companies, drawing the media attention, the union leaders were eager to collect such cases from the rank and file. The rumor-like stories at the workplace were collected by the union chapter leaders. Despite the fact that most of the elderly janitors were confident enough dealing with sexualized language and interactions with supervisors and co-workers such as male security workers, the collected stories depicted the female janitors as helpless victims solidifying the legal definition of sexual harassment. In some sense, the universal definition of sexual harassment in the law was reproducing sexual hierarchy and normative gender roles in workplaces as the union uncritically adopted the legal language without considering differentially situated sexualized subjects. Menstrual leave policy invited even more contentious debate during the collective agreement revision meetings. Since the majority of female janitors have experienced menopause, many of the workers were using the one-day paid-leave benefit for their increased care roles as grandparents. The outsourcing companies and the SG Union leaders failed to find a solution for the discrepancy between the legal benefit and the workers' differential needs. The debate only revealed the workers' "inappropriate" use of the legalized menstrual benefit, which only resulted in the companies' heightened surveillance at the workplace. Both the legal knowledge of sexual harassment and menstrual leave, instead of increasing workers' sexual autonomy at the workplace, were indeed becoming "effective leverage" for the union's pre-determined goals of wage increase and job security.

The legal professionalization of shop stewards and labor activists was not simply the consequence of the neoliberal labor reforms since the late 1990s. The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) inaugurated seven major legal auxiliary offices in Seoul (4), Daejeon (1), Kwangju (1), Ulsan (1) between 2002 and 2009. The role of legal offices ranged from providing

legal support for increasing legal disputes during strikes, responding to legal reforms and organizing a network of legal scholars and professionals, and collaborating with political parties for pro-labor reform bills, to "educating rank and files in everyday struggle."[72] The KCTU Seoul Legal Support Center alone provided annual and biannual legal schools thirteen times for shop stewards and the rank and file in Seoul area since 2007. The class I joined as a participant observer in 2015 had about fifty participants, and lasted for two months. Three different labor lawyers provided evening classes from 8-10 PM twice a week. The content of the class covered a historical overview of labor law reforms in South Korea since the 1987 democratization and dispute agendas such as wage, working hours, layoffs, the labor union law, collective bargaining, and strikes. Most of the SG Union chapter leaders also took the class once during their leadership terms. Legal knowledge, penetrating everyday language and activities in union meetings, was deepening the gap between the union leaders and rank and file. For the female janitors, some of them barely literate, it was almost impossible to raise questions or doubts in major union gatherings and meetings, unless they had clear understanding on the legal agenda including wage calculation, benefits, and job security. The rank and file's dependency on the SG Union activists, who were mostly young and college educated, did not stem from the elderly workers' ignorance but precisely from the organized labor's agile adaptation to the neoliberal market rule and the new legal social order.

When the Law Determines Socially Necessary Labor Time

Postone in the chapter titled as "the dialectic of labor and time" in his book, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination,* argues that "the historical dynamic characteristic of capitalist society, as

[72] KCTU. "A Report on KCTU Seoul Legal Office"

analyzed by Marx, is *not linear* but *contradictory*" (1993, 298 *emphasis mine*). The contradiction, Postone is articulating here, is between the present socially constituted labor time, and the progressive dynamic intrinsic to capitalist development. The present, as an abstract labor time expressed by the time necessary for capital - that is, *socially necessary labor time* – is compelled to be negated by the new value attached to the ever becoming present. Postone writes,

> The producers not only are compelled to produce in accordance with an abstract temporal norm, but must do so in a historically adequate fashion: they are compelled to *"keep up with the time."* People in capitalist society are confronted with a historically determinate form of abstract social necessity whose determinations change historically – that is, they are confronted with a socially constituted form of historical necessity.
>
> (ibid 301 *emphasis mine*)

The "drive toward ever-increasing level of productivity" propels constant shortening of the socially necessary labor time, which compels both the producers and workers to "*keep up with the time*" renewing their old patterns, relations, and institutional practices (300-301). For Postone, thus, the drive of historical progress and social transformation in capitalist society is neither the working class consciousness nor simply the hardship workers confront by the constantly decreasing socially necessary labor time. Rather, he suggests, the form of development, growth, and progress defined by the capitalist logic leads the *temporal* movement in institutions, organizations, and social relations of labor – that is, the "contradiction is *within* these "institutions," spheres, and processes" (303).

Similarly, Foucault's argument on the "economic-juridical order," as discussed above, captures this institutional shift in neoliberal capitalist expansion. The legal institutions synced to the form of development, growth, and progress defined by the post-developmental regime and its capitalist logic, I contend, have become the determinant force of socially necessary labor time. The law not only fixes the terms of socially necessary labor time but also becomes the *raison d'être* that determines social relations of labor producing the newness and new meanings out of

the old social institutions and practices – namely the interaction between the normative heteropatriarchal family and the labor market. However, Haeson's failure in *"keeping up with the (legal) time,"* demanding a "normal" working day without the two-hour compulsory break, precisely reveals the arbitrariness of the legal consciousness. Instead of becoming an arbiter between capital and labor, the legal institutions reproduce the hierarchies and inequalities accumulated in the social terms and relations of labor. This institutional reproduction, in turn, constitutes the condition of capital's pattern of "growth" (Postone 1993, 302). The workers' embodiment of the legal liminality, as well as their failure, thus, becomes the site of contradiction between the present terms of socially necessary labor time and its overcoming. Pushing Postone's work further, my ethnography reveals how the contradiction is felt and expressed by the constituted social actors as the peculiar commodity that contains the past and present value of its labor in living form. In this sense, I argue that their corporeal experience and memory as the only available force of "looking back" or feeling "left behind" hold the potential of *slowing down* or *break from* capital's becoming and progress.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the concept of legal liminality through the everyday struggles of female janitorial workers whose legal status and the terms of their working day have been redefined by the growing power of legal institutions in the post-developmental regime. I highlighted the shift in governmentality from the developmental era (1960s-80s) to the current neoliberal labor regime in South Korea. Whereas the developmental state through dictatorship and the Yushin Constitution determined social relations of labor - in particular socially necessary labor time and its gender differences - the post-developmental neoliberal regime becomes more

and more dependent on establishing a neoliberal legal order. In the latter, the terms of labor time are no longer dependent on the authoritarian individual will or a set of planned development goals but determined by the new legal order. Organized labor responded to this institutional change by fortifying its resources with auxiliary legal offices, recruiting labor lawyers, and providing legal education for workers. This legal professionalization deepens the hierarchies and inequalities already existing within the heteropatriarchal labor union structure, silencing voices of rank and file who do not have socio-economic resources such as college education, opportunities of extra training on union activities and legal knowledge. It also suggests that the labor unions are intensifying the legal control and power of fixing socially necessary labor time, instead of weakening them. Haeson expresses this form of alienation instituted both by the court and the union's dependency onto it. In everyday life, the middle-aged female janitors confront the perplexing reality in which their union gains recognition for its successful strikes and activities while their voices are muted by the persisting patriarchal gender norms and hierarchical control in their workplace. Precisely because the indeterminacy of legal liminality reproduces existing structural hierarchies in society and within labor unions, I contend that it is becoming the condition of possibility for the dominance of neoliberal temporality articulated by global financial capitalism and its universalizing legal order.

Vignette Four: A story written over a meal

(Teresa's Space. This photo was taken on the first day Teresa and I met in summer 2013. Virgin Mary "Lady of Perpetual Help": for those situations nobody can help. Copyright. Hee-Kang Suh.)

On the day I joined in Teresa for a full-day labor process participation, though slightly uplifted by the clumsy assistant/ethnographer, Teresa still could not hide her dull motions and pained facial expressions when extra strength was needed, such as lifting the collected trash bags or mopping and wiping steps and handles simultaneously as she went down the stairs. Teresa's entire body was covered with heavy sweat, yet she had an unfathomable smile on her face when we sat together for lunch. I could not even touch the sandwich in my bag, blocked by her swift action setting up a "proper meal for a visitor." Half the floor of Teresa's locker room was taken up by six or seven different side dishes with two warm rice bowls. In retrospect, it was impossible for me to link the KPTU's slogan "the Right to a Hot Meal" to the unexpected scene. Teresa poured hot water into her rice bowl from a thermos, complaining about her toothache. She had failed several attempts to find affordable dental treatment in the past few weeks. The side dishes were all pickled, fermented, lightly seasoned vegetables which my upset stomach particularly favored with no digestion anxiety. I gave up recording our conversation on that day with the gut feeling that it might be worth more than data in my life. *The intimate space created by the meal between Teresa and I was worth more than data.* Teresa patiently explained where the dishes came from, who gave what, when, and how she made them. After a delighted conversation about the food, Teresa revealed the difficulties caused by her ailing teeth, skipping meals for several days, and continuing work both at home and on the job with little calorie intake. Despite the carefully fermented side dishes, that day, that meal, and that story were the toughest *things* I tried to digest in the two years since I had met Teresa.

CHAPTER FOUR

Navigating Spatial Intimacies for a Radical Politics of Care and Solidarity[73]

> Social Reproduction is at the heart – in every sense of the term- of the creation of surplus value and capitalist accumulation…Too many Marxists still like to keep their class lines clean.
> (Katz et al. "Demanding Life's Work")

> [I]ntimacy builds worlds; it creates spaces and usurps places meant for other kinds of relation.
> (Berlant 1998. "Intimacy: A Special Issue," *Critical Inquiry*)

> Like virtual particles in a quantum field, multiple futures pop in and out of possibility: third nature emerges within such temporal polyphony. Yet progress stories have blinded us.
> (Anna Tsing 2015. *The Mushroom at the End of the World*)

Teresa and I walked into her locker room, a half-floor basement space surrounded by uneven damp walls with no window. The morning round took about two hours, which could be four hours of labor if done by Teresa alone. Usually the janitors at the Hongik University make three rounds a day: the longest and hardest first toil in the morning, the second round after early lunch, and the last final round after 3 P.M., each time emptying trash and recycling bins and maintaining "clean" restrooms. Depending on the building, the intensity of the workload varies. Some newly built ones full of countless classrooms are far more challenging due to the fast ebb and flow of students who leave their traces in the space. In such new buildings, a team of relatively young workers in their forties and early fifties are assigned under unique and secretive work ethics and disciplinary tactics. Teresa's building was located at the fringe of campus, known as an elementary school building. The university transformed the old school building on

[73] I thank the organizers, Priti Ramamurthy and Vinay Gidwani, and participants of the *Subaltern Life-Worlds Workshop* held at the University of Washington in 2017 for providing insightful questions and comments on the earlier version of this chapter.

the outskirts of campus into a community learning center, offering non-degree art classes for the public. Since I first met Teresa in the summer of 2013, she had moved from the center of the campus to its periphery, from the business school building in which she worked for ten years to the start-up building for one year and again to the community learning center. Teresa injured her left ankle several years ago in the business school building when there was no union, which gradually transformed her posture and gait in the following years. Teresa's injured body was considered undesirable for "visible" janitorial work by the university, the outsourcing company, and later the union as well. A local magazine interviewed Teresa in 2011 right after the strike when she was working as the media representative for the newly organized union. The interview covered Teresa's life history briefly, her passage from the owner of a small manufacturing factory to becoming a janitor, and her experience of the strike. The article had a photo that captured her favorite tree over the window in a tiny nook she discovered next to a men's restroom in the building she had cleaned for many years. It was the scene Teresa wanted to share on the first day we met. Around her little recycled table there used to be an open Bible and papers. She was drawing people's faces in those days. In the new building at the fringe of campus where I met Teresa again in 2015, there were no trees, papers, or pencils around Teresa.

The urban life cycle in the post-developmental regime runs through multiply demarcated bodies that are exposed to fractured and sometimes uncontrollable labor time, easily noticeable after midnight or 4 A.M. on the subways and in the metropolitan bus lines. Most of the janitors I interviewed commuted a minimum of one and a half hours in the morning to start work at 7:00 A.M. The SG union's main strategy to recruit new members is called "The Dawn Campaign [*saebyŏk sŏnjŏnjŏn*]" - the union members and activists take the first buses or subways at 4 or 5 A.M. where they can meet the early morning commuters. The normative time of the private,

family, and social reproduction is not simply shrinking but crossed multiple times a day. A cold breakfast is eaten at the workplace right before the first morning round. The two compulsory unpaid break times between 1 and 3 P.M. can be used by workers for a quick hospital visit, errands, and missed sleep. Still the workers' bodies need to be alert in case of an unexpected call from supervisors or their indirect employers whose sense of working hours is in deep contradiction with the material worlds of the workers.

This chapter introduces the concept of spatial intimacy as a way to reveal multiple spatial and temporal contradictions through which the lines between the private and the public are negotiated and contested in the everyday expressive struggles of multiple social actors. In other words, the abstract spatial divisions of the public/private, paid/unpaid, and formal/informal are controlled by and become legible through sets of temporal controls such as working hours, annual contracts, ideas of productive age and aging, and the socially necessary time for reproductive work and care. In turn, workers' bodies produce not only the capital value of the working day by performing labor but also intimate material knowledge of the space itself and negotiate the various forms of violence that maintain the spatial and temporal hierarchies.

I attend to the ways in which crisis-driven neoliberal conditions of precarity reconfigure and resignify the old gendered divisions of labor at home and in the market. The metaphor of "keeping it all together" (Gorman-Murray 2015, 66) in the moment of crisis implies, not simply accommodating material needs out of shrinking resources, but also maintaining the temporal and spatial orders that are tied to particular historical processes of capitalist development. I track the ways in which aging female laboring subjects are situated in the chain between the roles of paid laborer and caretaker at home, and more importantly how they contribute to the crisis-driven economy and the neoliberal state through surplus value creation, channeling the realms of

production and reproduction. By doing so, I show how the "new" forms of precarity are instituted and acted upon the laboring bodies through the social reproduction of the old forms of gendered divisions of labor.

I reorganize several intimate encounters through which I have gradually made sense of the worlds surrounding various social actors in my field site. The janitors' numerous acts of making and remaking space are oriented by countless objects such as toilets, tables, chairs, stairs, floors, flowers, plants, pencils, papers, paint, stains, dust, and above all *waste*. During my fieldwork, Teresa's story of her tree and the loss of it has long been a dilemma in my initial inquiry that mainly focused on the new class politics and the labor union-centered struggles in contemporary South Korea. This chapter willfully deviates from the labor union's imagined space and time in which the narrow meaning of labor (value) is defined and from the chronobiopolitics in which the labor movement is synced. First, I briefly review the concept of disarticulation in global commodity chain analyses and how it applies to the elderly women's lives once articulated as a productive labor force for the export-oriented industrialization and disarticulated in the current neoliberal regime as "newly disposable" bodies. Secondly, I explore what the life-stories of the elderly women can tell us beyond and against the tendency in Marxist studies and labor struggles that reinforces arbitrary binary constructions such as production/reproduction, work/home, and public/private. In so doing, I use life-stories as a method for feminist inquiry that aims to avoid reproducing a normative tempo, space, and desire for the deepening gendered and racialized divisions of labor in neoliberal capitalist society. Lastly, via the elderly female janitors' life-stories and the materiality of spatial intimacies their stories emanate, I search for ways of imagining alternative politics of care and solidarity beyond and against the hegemonic time of finance, the market, the state, and heteronormative family.

Dis/articulation and Disposability

In previous chapters, I demonstrated how the process of social reproduction of feminized labor force and the discursive making of "new" labor category (i.e. *pijŏnggyujik* and global precarious labor) went hand in hand. This simultaneous process can be best explained by the concept of articulation and disarticulation. Focusing on the question of "how connections across space and time are forged through processes of disjuncture and disruption that selectively transform, or disarticulate, existing social relations and forms of production," Jennifer Bair and Marion Werner explain disarticulation as key dynamic in the reproduction of the uneven geographies in global commodity production (2011, 989). Further, they argue that the disposability of women workers is "an ongoing outcome of reproducing capitalist relations of production within specific historical contexts that are shaped by social difference" (ibid 991). The female factory workers, who once were articulated to the global production - such as textile, garment, and wig - in the export-oriented industrialization process in the 70s and 80s in Korea, are now largely disarticulated from the global commodity chain. My study reveals how this process of expulsion has also entailed new forms of articulation in both discursive and material level. Narratives of global labor precarity and the *pijŏnggyujik* actively erase this process of social reproduction of feminized labor claiming that such process of dis/articulation is a "new" phenomenon. This seemingly progressive labor discourse precisely veils the real accumulation process of global capital that has produced Korean feminized labor's disposability in the past and the present.

A crucial limit of the disarticulation analysis in global production is its inability to explain the function of the reproductive realm in the process of social reproduction of the capitalist relations. The question of how disposability is reproduced is inevitably related to the

inquiry how such disposable populations (re)produce their life worlds and continue to participate in reproducing capitalist society, if they don't disappear as the term "disposable" symbolically denotes. Against the dead-end disposable labor for capital accumulation, how do they resist to use-up their life energies and instead spend their "life-times" (Tadiar 2012) to build spaces for different forms of intimate relations and for activities of alternative life-making? Neferti Tadiar's concept of "life-times" illuminates these different possibilities in the lives of Filipina domestic workers whose labor-times (in contrast to "life-times") are contracted for the profit maximization precisely through the uneven geographies that construct the global North and South (Tadiar 2012). Tadiar explains "life-times" as a "concept for reckoning with the diverse array of acts, capacities, associations, aspirations in practice, and sensibilities that people engage in and draw upon in the effort to make and remake social life in situations of life-threatening hardship, deprivation, and precariousness" (2012, 1). Further, excavating cinematic representations of the figures of disposable labor and life from financial capital's ruins, Tadiar redirects our attention to *heterogeneous temporalities* lived by those subaltern subjects making and remaking global surplus populations that are both the effects and excesses of the "uneven times of the global project of neoliberalism" (2013, 42).

In line with Tadiar's inquiry of "life-times" enacted by subaltern populations of financial global capitalism, I propose the concept of spatial intimacy in order to highlight the ways in which the subjects of disposable labor travel the reams of production/reproduction acting against capital's production of time (value). As discussed in detail in Introduction, spatial intimacies as an analytic concept allows us to trace how laboring subjects negotiate and contest sexual violence and social hierarchies suturing the realms of production and reproduction. In turn, this form of spatial resistance performed by the laboring subjects in both realms disrupts the

boundary making activities of capitalist society that produce precisely the discourse of disposability and disposable human life. These kind of spatial intimacies rarely become primary sites of struggle in traditional labor movements that tend to reproduce the binary of production/reproduction by treating reproductive activities (e.g. workers' own reproduction of their life energies) as secondary issues. In this chapter, I introduce stories of Teresa and Jaerim that invite us to dwell on alternative possibilities of politicizing the dynamic relations between the sites of production and reproduction (i.e. their seamless entanglement) and the many forms of "boundary struggles" (Fraser 2017, 35).

Life-stories Beyond Labor

Teresa

At 5:00 A.M. Teresa starts her day preparing meals for herself and her sick husband who has just fallen asleep after the routine overnight fight with the enduring effect of cheap alcohol. This routine has gradually developed since he lost his small factory, which once employed ten to twelve workers. Teresa used to spend her day as the factory owner's wife whose hands always surpassed other employees in precision. Their small factory produced containers for watches and flags in an old downtown area of Seoul where small manufacturers like Teresa's husband gathered and survived throughout the country's development era. Teresa remembered the time as a prosperous moment in her life, although she was working at the factory alongside other employees with no wage, cooking meals for the workers, volunteering at the local cathedral at night, she still managed to raise two children. She mentioned, "if I demanded my wage at the factory, I would have earned more than what I make here now (as janitor)." In Teresa's calculation, her reproductive labor including cooking at the factory, taking care of children at

home, and her voluntary community work were not even included for the wage she deserved as an informal full-time worker. Her working day never had clear spatial and temporal distinctions between the public/private, paid/unpaid, formal/informal, and visible/invisible. "The business was going down because of my husband's naïve character. He got orders from clients with no initial payment. When he delivered the final products, I used to follow him. I grabbed the money from the client and ran away…that way I could secure living cost for my family. He never brought regular income." In the aftermath of the 1997 Financial Crisis, some of the major orders made by clients were never paid, leaving uncontrollable debts for the small factory owner. After several failed attempts to find a stable job in the tough times that followed the loss of her husband's business and mythical breadwinner status, Teresa started working as a janitor at Hongik University in 2002.

Jaerim

The restroom in the business school to which Jaerim was assigned was famous for its collection of plants. "I collect the plants thrown away by the faculty. Once, a spring orchid bloomed! You know, orchids look like they are dying every year. In fact, the roots survive for more than 10 years," Jaerim boasted. Her husband was a tailor before they opened a restaurant for construction workers. They raised their children at the restaurant without worrying about meals. As the construction workers lost their jobs due to the downfall of the construction industry after the 1997 Financial Crisis, Jaerim's restaurant could not survive. Jaerim found janitorial work at Hongik University in 1998 and her husband opened a laundry shop in the nearby town. Jaerim claimed that they were making "enough" money, since both of them had jobs and their daughter sent money time to time. She says, "Still, there are so many things we

need money for, such as our grandchildren's birthday, buying snacks and making side dishes for them whenever they come to our place." Her two daughters-in-laws bring their children every weekend, always leaving with their hands full of side dishes. "I make things like stir fried kimchi, marinated lotus roots, and kalbi…that is my happiness. They like to eat my food…" Jaerim asserts that "many of us (janitors) do not want to raise our wage, this much money is enough for us…Of course, utility bills are so expensive these days. We are paying 500,000 won (approximately $500 USD) per month. Our wage is 1,300,000 won per month ($1300 USD). I read in the newspaper that the minimum wage ($6 USD) in South Korea is ranked as the 14th in the world. I think it is not so bad."

Teresa's body situated in the chain between the paid-labor and the caretaker role at home, contributes to the crisis-driven economy through double surplus value creation in both realms. As the South Korean government speculates on welfare policies in the aftermath of the recurring financial crises, Teresa's relatively "healthy" body has become the most secure asset for her family as well as the major barrier in their qualification as a low-income household. Teresa's husband, with no pension benefits, went through a downward spiral after losing his small factory. Battling severe alcoholism, her husband was living between hospital and home. Teresa also was struggling between union duties and the compelling workload at home and work. Unlike Teresa's dire condition, Jaerim thinks she is earning "enough money" to make their ends meet and feed her four grandchildren. Jaerim's narrative begs a question: when and how is the value created in both realms subsumed seamlessly to the capitalist value system? The happiness and pleasure Jaerim expresses in her narrative - taking care of thrown-away plants, decorating public restrooms, and the weekend's chores for grandchildren – complicates the thin boundary

between commodified labor and non-commodified work. Where exactly does surplus labor end in temporal and spatial sense in these two starkly different stories?

Simply arguing for the entanglement of the two abstract realms does not give any better explanation on how then the entanglement is embodied, negotiated, and contested by differently situated social actors by and through multiple temporal relations. A tougher question for me has been about those workers' material sense of their life worlds within union activism. Whereas the SG Union has a clear set of goals in the highly politicized discourse such as, the living wage and job security through legal protection, Teresa's everyday struggle in the workplace and home does not have such clear boundaries. As multiple contradictions shape the relations of class and gender, and productive age, her struggle is more complex than the SG Union's political goals of organizing contingent workers in the marginal sector. How can we reimagine labor activism through the life-stories of Teresa and Jaerim? How can we make the clean class line messy and fleshy reflecting the concrete social worlds of gendered production and reproduction?

Expressive Worlds of Teresa

Intimacy when viewed not only as exchanges between human subjects but also interactions and relationships felt with and through non-human materials opens a new horizon in articulating complexities and multiple contradictions that shape the life worlds in which social actors reside, find comfort, and aspire to live a better life. Spatial intimacy binds social relations to the space where a particular event, encounter, or violent exploitation happens in the most mundane ways but always can be full of surprises. The incidences of sexual harassment, physical and verbal abuse, the complete erasure of certain labor performed by invisible workers, and the prevalent loss and death of unrecognized laboring bodies in the public scene are all too

common but always alarm society only momentarily. In contrast, the domestic space and its institutionalized privacy produce channels of voyeuristic desire for normative sexuality and its deviants as well as its failure and flourishing violence in the name of intimacy. Teresa's body travels through the two realms divided by imaginary differences, values, and temporalities. Instead of compartmentalizing Teresa's everyday experience and struggle through those abstract boundaries, here I attempt to capture the *expressive world* built upon the intimate bonds between Teresa's relationship with her ailing husband at home and the story of her tree and many other objects at work.

The Home vs. Shelter

The narrative of marital love and bonds overshadows Teresa's story. The only fault of her husband was his too generous and naïve character that drove the factory to bankruptcy, on top of the unpaid orders of the old friends and some lies from new business partners. As Teresa described it, "No one in the neighborhood knows about his alcoholism. When he is sober, he goes out to collect recyclable papers and sell them in the local recycle center. People (neighbors) think he is a very nice guy." Teresa highlighted that because he used to have good reputation in town during the time he owned the factory, the debt collectors did not bother his family after bankruptcy. "The lenders trust him and believe that he will pay back the money at some point," she added. In the first few years when her husband started to drink, Teresa took care of him alone with little knowledge of alcoholism, while working at various part-time jobs. The mythic male breadwinner's downfall reoriented the quotidian rhythms of normative nuclear family life into the realm of secret, silence, and violence. Teresa's two married children stopped visiting and making phone calls. Teresa's body and her ailing husband went through wordless disputes every

night that only ended by 5 A.M. when Teresa could run from the space of domestic intimacy to a nearby cathedral for the reproduction of her body and emotional stasis. At the cathedral where she used to volunteer for many years with her versatile talents (teaching dance routines synced with hymns was her specialty!), "Angel" was Teresa's nickname among some intimate friends who knew about Teresa's "secret."

Shelter for those who have a place called *home* is a contradiction both for the policy makers and social practitioners. The terms of providing a public shelter is predetermined by the optimism in domestic intimacy that the person in need of protection should "return" safely "home." The home as a space for marital intimacy and presumed safety thus easily precludes those who do not fit in the scale of normative love from social protection both in private and public realms. Teresa reached out to a police officer once and ended up staying at a nearby shelter for one night. The promise of finding an alternative long-term shelter never materialized. In turn, the ideal home and heteropatriarchal intimacy could not be materialized without Teresa's body bridging the public and the private spheres. Teresa philosophized about her condition saying "My body is insurance for my family. My life as the only remaining wealth is protecting them. Since we do not have anything else and I am the breadwinner, this is the only way my family can survive. I cannot quit my job." She repeated with unfathomable smile on her face, "My life itself is insurance!" It was far from an exaggeration. In fact, she got a housing loan and recently moved to a new place where she was paying almost half of her monthly wage for the interest payment and mortgage .[74]

[74] In 2015, the janitors' monthly wage at Hongik University was 1,300,000 Won (approximately USD 1200). Teresa was paying 500,000 Won for the loan interest and rent per month.

The Restrooms

In the old business school building, Teresa used to cover three floors including six restrooms. Teresa's ten years of cleaning the same building, floors, and restrooms reoriented her body and desire to unexpected experiences and encounters, in most cases against her will. "At that time I could work a whole day without talking to anyone, like a shadow," said Teresa. Without a union nor a place to gather or chat in those days, janitors were isolated in their assigned sites, corners, and shadows of the buildings. Teresa described the all too common happenings in the restroom she cleans: A male walked into the restroom when she was cleaning toilets. He unzips his pants saying "We are like family, right?" Teresa's immediate emotional response was "humiliation" although she never expressed it in that space. Her use of the term "a man" was replaced with "students" and "some old faculty members" in our conversation, implying that the scene was not a single incidence. Most janitors preferred working when the restroom was unused. Unlike classrooms that run through a fixed timeline, it was harder to maintain the "clean" condition around the clock in restrooms. The union advised janitors to use a sign to block the restroom use during the cleaning time. The sign not only gave more pressure for workers to speed up but also was easily ignored by impatient intruders. Like many elderly female janitors, Teresa learned gradually not to feel too bad about the people who simply did not care about her presence. The shadowy character of toilet cleaning work was embodied by the elderly workers muting their voices in the space of intimate labor in public.

Desexualization of female bodies in the manual labor scene is a recurring theme in feminist inquiries into performative embodiment of gender, race, and sexuality in labor relations.[75] Teresa's anecdote provides a new insight on the process by which the feminized

[75] Eunsil Kim and Won Kim on Korean context "factory girls" and Tithi Bhattacharya (2017).

bodies that are mobilized through the old gendered divisions of labor in the public/private spheres are reoriented to different spatial hierarchies through which their desires are regulated, nullified, and undone in order to fulfil the *intimacy built in the space of labor*. The humiliation Teresa felt is the effect of the *special intimacy* built in the public restroom where the heteropatriarchal desire is given more visibility, voice, and power. In other words, the gendered cleaning labor performed at home and in public activates the form of intimacy that regulates the bodies, emotions, and desires. The intimate violence felt or remembered by Teresa is further complicated by the verbal confirmation, "We are like family, right?" Again, where exactly does the temporal and spatial boundary between the public and the private exist in the line? Not only Teresa but the m*e*n who unzipped their pants in front of her crossed the line multiple times in that moment. The lasting question then is whose *memory* dominates the scene and the desire enacted by the seamless spatial hierarchies? In turn, in what ways does Teresa's body remember or *forget* the traces of heteronormative domestic intimacy saturated with ordinary violence? [76]

The Wooden Panel

The spatial intimacies regulating desires and disciplining laboring bodies are hardly felt or sensualized only between human actors. As labor exploitation is often materialized between human bodies and machines or technologies, laboring bodies interact with numerous objects, tools, infrastructures, and environments. After Teresa finished cleaning restrooms, she continued

[76] In my field sites, janitors were recruited through the strict gender divisions of labor that there were no male cleaners inside buildings. Male janitors were assigned in the outdoor spaces like playgrounds and gardens, mostly as garbage collectors. My analysis is significantly limited to the heterosexual hierarchy and normality experienced by female-identified janitors who clean gender-segregated public restrooms.

her morning round in the hallway where she shared with me her intimate knowledge about the wooden window panel.[77] Elegantly wiping the panel on the side wall in the hallway, Teresa complained, "People never ask us (janitors) when they fix or replace certain materials in buildings. We clean the materials, like this window panel, for many years. We know the best which materials last and which don't. They replaced the old wooden panel to this steel a few years ago. The old wooden panels used to look shiny and nice after cleaning. Stains in this steel don't easily go away and it is rusty already. It won't last as long as the wooden one." The intimate memory of the old wooden panel was stored in Teresa's body through her repeated touch and sensuous caring of the material that survived many years and recurring seasons in the building. The conversation stood out to me for long not because of its uniqueness but precisely because it helped me interpret numerous other interactions with the janitorial workers. Every single janitor I met during my fieldwork had one or two special spots she hated or loved for various reasons. Despite all the faults and losses - like the loss of the wooden panel in Teresa's experience-, most of the workers showed me how they maintained their relations with certain materials or particular spaces meaningful and endurable. In some sense, the janitors were *closer* to the spaces and non-human entities than they were to the people who seemed to be the direct beneficiaries of their labor.

[77] As part of my ethnography, I conducted labor process observations joining in full day work routines of the janitors in the Hongik University. I observed Teresa's half day work process once in summer 2013 and conducted a full day labor with her again in 2015. The conversation about the wooden window panel was made in 2013.

(Teresa holding her own painting is standing in the hall way.
The steel window panel behind her was captured in this photo taken in 2014.
The original photo capturing Teresa's torso was modified
by the photographer for "Hand Project" exhibition in June 2014.
Copyright. Hee Kang Shu)

The finite nature of non-human materials like wood, cement, steel, glasses, porcelain, tiles, and plastic was easily transmitted to janitorial workers' weary bodies having equally finite energy and life. The replacement of the wooden material meant for Teresa that the sensuous relation she maintained by cleaning the material for many years was lost. It meant that the *intimate knowledge* Teresa obtained in the long process of working on the same material was gone. I am not interested in romanticizing manual labor nor making a point on the process of deskilling in Teresa's experience here. Instead, Teresa and other janitors have encouraged me to think about how human bodies interact with non-human materials in various labor processes, not only to make a particular form of human living possible but also sustaining durable relations with non-human materials on which human bodies are dependent. The concrete and finite nature of both human and non-human entities was being negotiated, sustained, and balanced in the

repeated process of socially devalued cleaning labor. *Spatial intimacy seen in this light allows us to rethink the centrality of human actors in our political imaginations of livability and aspirations for a better life.*

The Nook

The small nook attached to the male restroom discovered by Teresa in the old business school building had a versatile character. Classroom chairs and thrown away materials like stopped clocks, water bottles, containers, and electronic fans were taking up the small space where two persons could barely sit together. After the hurried morning round, Teresa brought me to *a room of her own* for our first interview in summer 2013. I did not have any interview questions since the purpose of my field visit at that time was "exploratory." At least in my mind the conversation had no predetermined directions to go, which allowed Teresa to skillfully lead the conversation. What Teresa wanted to show me on that day was *the interior of herself as* I came to understand several years later, the spirited personhood that could maintain balance, stability, and a playful mind despite all the tough challenges in her life course.

We started talking about the bible on the small recycled table. She told me about her various volunteer activities at the cathedral, about her renowned talent in singing hymns and dancing. I asked her where the energy came from after all the hard work at the job. Teresa's response had many layers that again I gradually came to understand after the second interview made in 2015. She replied then that the volunteer work brought her lots of strength instead of draining her energy. "I read bible here whenever I can. Although I don't have time beyond my volunteer work at the cathedral, I want to learn drawing these days. It is difficult to find affordable evening classes nearby. Recently I am practicing sketching human faces by myself.

Here's one I draw a few days ago (she showed me her drawing). You know, it is too hard to draw a person's nose!" Teresa never fully explained to me why she wanted to learn drawing. Unlike other buildings where I conducted labor process observations, like in the art school buildings, I couldn't find any art pieces in the building Teresa was assigned. The building was almost colorless surrounded by all gray-toned cement walls except the somewhat disorganized secluded room in which Teresa might have been able to seek colors and lights in dark times.

The Table

Thanks to the photo taken on that day, the materials on Teresa's table "appear" to me timelessly as "objects" from the background (Ahmed 2006). The union chapter leader Haeson in the morning introduced me to a student who became close to the janitorial workers after the 49-day strike in 2011. Hee-Kang Shu, the photographer of the image, was the only student who stayed with the protesting workers for the entire strike. Hee-Kang joined us in the middle of the interview still standing outside the small room, a few steps afar from us, quietly listening our conversation, holding his large camera with a protruding professional lens. Behind the postcard of the Virgin Mary, some books are hidden pressed under a file of paper and a small crucifix. I cannot tell which one of the three clocks is the correct one since they are all directing different times. The three clocks were not in my view at that time. Only *now* do I wonder why Teresa kept them all in her view. She might have known which one was working and which one was not. What interests me in the present moment is Teresa's futile effort to make all of them "alive" despite the fact she doesn't need three clocks around her table. Maybe my idea of *alive time* needs a serious revision if I fully accept the chaos Teresa allows to flow in her view through the

abandoned old clocks whose use value and exchange value stop fascinating the eyes of willful human beings.

Capitalist ways of life constantly produce files of meaningless materials in order to maximize the formless surplus value. In certain moments and spaces, humans or those populations who are relegated to the state of less than human face piles of wastes, abandoned materials, and wholesale products that are endlessly distanced from the private space of intimate use and contact. Even in distant space and time, aren't we affected by the existence of forgotten waste, abandonment, and overproduction? Why did Teresa keep the three abandoned clocks *around her table*?

The Tree

Showing me the magazine in which her story was featured, Teresa proudly pointed out a tree outside her window. I was just as fascinated by the story of her tree at that time as the random readers of the local magazine. After the phenomenal strike in 2011, the Hongik University janitors' stories were published in various locations. *Uriga Poinayo (Can You See Us)* (2011) has been an invaluable document in my research because of the intimate stories it tells and still other stories behind the stories. Teresa's story was also featured in the collection of workers' life histories of the book. As the purpose of the publication was to commemorate the historic strike waged by the janitors who had traditionally been marginalized in the mainstream labor history in South Korea, despite its careful weaving of the complex life histories of the workers, the stories were about histories *of labor*, not about histories *of people*. Similarly, the local magazine narrated Teresa's hardship as a janitor who happened to be friends with a tree, resting at the secret storage room. "At first, I was fearful of losing this room when the story was

out," said Teresa. However, it was a time when the school authority and the outsourcing companies were intimidated by the growing power of the union and media interest after the strike. At that time the union chapter was negotiating with the school for a proper union office and enough locker rooms for the workers.[78] Teresa's room and her story about a tree gained meaning only within *the sphere at work*.

It is impossible *now* for me to reduce Teresa's story to the realm of paid labor. For Teresa, the tree meant more than a brief respite required after the labor of the morning and afternoon rounds. Teresa continued, "I talk to the tree whenever I feel it difficult to continue this life. It is surviving out there throughout all the seasons in rain or snow. Like me, it is alone, yet still strong. I have not been lonely here for the past years since the tree has been my best friend." The layers and untold stories slowly unfolded during my fieldwork as I could deviate from the predetermined directions and plans. I couldn't sleep well the day before I joined in Teresa as a coworker in March 2015. I had gained full access to the SG union meetings by that time and was getting ceaseless collective messages via my smart phone chatting application notifying me of detailed public rally or union meeting information. One of the largest KPTU public rallies was scheduled on that day. I heard from Haeson, the chapter leader, that Teresa was not doing well recently. I needed to choose between another historic rally organized by the leading national union or a day I could spend with Teresa. As young healthy bodies were preferred in the public rally, I knew that Teresa would stay and cover double workload on the day like that, letting her coworkers go to the rally. The story about her tree could gain the layered depth beyond my immediate fascination only when I disoriented myself from the familiar paths and lines.

[78] Stories about janitorial workers who eat their lunch and snacks in the restroom were the most common script told and politicized in the labor union campaigns in the period.

Productive bodies were making the historic scenes at rallies on that day, while the reproduction of productive social relations both pertaining to commodified work and the political resistance confined within it are dependent on the "expandable" bodies rendered unproductive.

Contested Time and Sites of Struggle

The mystic realm of paid labor, as a capitalist spatial politics, misleads us to imagine the time of laborers is nothing but the absolute time for production, that is, the process of capital valorization. The absolute time, as Mark Rifkin writes, "presumes a singular timeline in which everyone moves in synchrony, rather than attending to prospectively relevant frames of reference that provide the basis for understanding lived temporalities" (2017, 21). Deviations from the labor processes set by the managers or authorized break times are seen as simply a loss of capital value caused by workers' delinquency in the fantastic hidden abode of capital. Thinking with Rifkin, it is possible to see Teresa's spatial and temporal occupancy of her secret room at the workplace as *a way to live the capitalist absolute time and space differently*. Frames of reference, in this sense, allow us to articulate "qualitatively differentiable processes of becoming that have no inherent, neutral means of being articulated to each other, instead requiring complex processes of *translation* in order to be made mutually intelligible" (Rifkin 2017, 25 *emphasis mine*). Multiple frames of reference exist in contradiction, in Rifkin's word, requiring *translation*. The sphere of work, made up of complex social relations in actuality, is also a place where *a life* is sustained and, when the workers are organized, people gather together for political activities to challenge the seemingly absolute vision and time of capital. What life is supported when the organized labor excludes the life world Teresa aspires to build, bridging her shaking home and the workplace through the tree and the room of her own? Teresa's table reveals a

moment of excess or the limit of the frame of reference that upholds the hegemonic time of capital, the state, the market, and heteropatriarchal family.

The loss of Teresa's table and tree reveals another complex layer of contradiction in the relation between the labor union and capitalist temporality. After the 49-day strike in 2011, the Hongik University chapter of the SG Union gradually gained its power in the triangle relations between the university authority and the outsourcing company. The public attention grew through various media resources after the dragging lawsuits made both the university and outsourcing company back off from confronting the union and workers directly. During the brief interim period, the newly organized union chapter enjoyed relative independence and started to deal with accrued internal conflicts and complaints. One of the most common complaints among janitorial workers was uneven workload. Depending on building condition, size, and classroom rotation cycle, the majority of workers, especially those who are relatively young, demanded a building rotation system that requires each worker move to a different work site every two or three years. Without any pressure from the university and the outsourcing company, the union decided to start the worksite rotation system. In 2013, when I first met the workers including Teresa and Jaerim, the system was unimaginable. Everyone seemed very proud of their worksites where some had worked for more than 10 years, as in Teresa's case. Jaerim was quite famous for her lively restroom gardens in her building where she worked for 15 years. I couldn't help questioning how such a decision that obviously disadvantaged older workers who had stayed in the job longer could be made by the union and the workers themselves. As the union gained a little power, the power struggle within the union chapter also has grown. The worksite rotation could standardize the work process and hours by making comparison between workers easier and more visible. Under the guise of protection and sympathy from other young and healthy co-

workers and customer students, Teresa's injury relegated her to a startup building on the outskirts of the university.

Teresa used to cover three floors in the business school for many years, whereas in the new building alone had to cover 7 floors. The startup building with one elevator was not like the other university buildings, having small offices and even some bedrooms for some innovative all-nighter workers and students. When I visited Teresa in 2014, she invited me to her eighth floor penthouse. In the half-size bedroom-like place, Teresa boiled water for our tea. Teresa complained about the new building, in particular how difficult for her to use the elevator while working knowing that other people use it all the time. She slowly moved up from the 1st floor to the top wiping the floor and staircase railings, checking restrooms and waste bins. After the morning round around 11:30 AM, Teresa was panting and covered with heavy sweat. After the short tea break, she brought me to the rooftop area. Beyond a heavy door on the eighth floor, there was a large space where dozens of different plants were absorbing the late summer sunlight. It was an unlikely peaceful space where Teresa could briefly breathe in fresh air after successfully work and walking the eight floors. She explained that it's not she who collected that many plants at the rooftop. It was one of the two male janitors who collected recycling materials at the outside gardens of the university. Some plants, Teresa explained, were rare ones having some delicate flowers and strangely shaped leaves. It was like a secret garden no one on campus knows about except the male janitor and Teresa. Teresa even warned me not to tell anyone and said how fussy the owner of the plants could be if he found anything went wrong. The day's visit left me worried about Teresa's irregular panting.

Union Time beyond Labor Time

The union time is never given for free in capitalist society. The time for organizing and empowering workers entails high cost and risk dangerously challenging the valorization processes of capitalist time. As the workers at the Hongik University chapter experienced through the 49-day strike in 2011, the time for union work was created out of the condition originally initiated by the university's sudden closing of the contract threatening the workers who attempted to organize a union. The space and time for strike was the immediate outcome of the contradiction in the social relation between the university and the workers, in which a new power balance was explored and sought for by the workers. A new sense of community was felt reaching out from various participants who joined in the struggle by sending money, food, blankets, and letters far beyond the inner circle of workers who sat together on the floors in buildings and streets. Capital's time seemed to be defeated during the days and nights when the protesters reproduced their own space and time of struggle, rotating caretaker roles, such as cooking, serving food, and cleaning the site. The elderly workers sang popular songs tweaking the lyrics, danced together, and slept warming each other's bodies on the same floor in the coldest season of the year. The union time appeared to be created out of sync, amid the cacophony of competing views and desires, against "capital's tyranny."[79]

Organization theorist Byung-Hyun Shin laments the disappearing political space and time for the working class in South Korea as follows:

[79] The Hongik University chapter leader, Haeson, stated in her oral history interview that "the 49-day strike was against capital's tyranny." In chapter 3, I discuss in detail Haeson's contradictory view on the ways female janitors were depicted during the strike including the "The Rights for Hot Meal Campaign" and the sympathetic image of protesting janitor in tear holding a broom stick. Haeson's narrative acutely expresses her doubt on how the workers represented as such can fight against the "tyranny of capital."

> We talk about labor politics with no time for political action. As the name, laborer, is disappearing, so are the time and place for working class politics. Standing next to factory assembly lines, seating at locker rooms after lunch, gathering after work in the evening, workers used to debate and sing the songs of the dialectics for democratic union building, labor liberation, and revolution, all of which are gone. (Shin 2006, 58)

Shin's essay "Workers' Time Disappeared" discusses the long-sustained democratic union building movement from the 1970s and its digression in "neoliberal Korea" where the majority of workers are interpellated as *pijŏnggyujik,* those who are shifting between multiple and intermittent odd jobs. In-between irregular employment, many people lose the legal status of worker including welfare benefits. Shin describes today's grim political condition with the nostalgic gesture recalling the factory regime in the 1970s and 1980s where a large number of workers was organized both by production lines and by the democratic union building efforts on the other side. In this view, precaritization of work means that the boundary between labor time and reproductive time (including free or leisure time) is more than simply blurred. Shin argues, labor time has colonized the space and time of everyday life itself (ibid). Irregular workers' life time is subsumed under the infinite stretch of labor time, in the sense that their everyday lives are organized by the cycle of short-term employment and maximized indeterminacy. Labor time disciplines people's bodies and everyday performances to maximize future employability even in the times of unemployment. What becomes clear in Shin's argument is the end of the old *minju nojo* politics and its space and temporal dynamics, which foresees a new politics that has not yet arrived.

In the same light, *pijŏnggyu* workers' strikes and protests can be understood as being subsumed by the process of labor time's penetration into everyday life. As I discussed the increasing legal power in labor relations and movement in previously chapter three, the space of illegal protest, as in the case of most *pijŏnggyu* workers' strikes, is part of the mechanism

through which the legal framework organizes and disciplines its target populations. A direct example of this is how the time of strike increasingly becomes a critical site of legal dispute. In the case of the Hongik University lawsuit, the university authority charged the union the cost of water and electricity used by the workers during the strike, the wages paid to the replacement part-timers, and the university staffs' overtime wages. Although the Hongik University workers and their union won the case over the period of two years, the extended legal battle overshadowed the critical period in which workers could cultivate and establish internal democratic rules and culture strengthening solidarity after the strike. Individual workers were threatened by the fear of losing the lawsuit and having to collectively bear the cost, which put enormous pressure on the chapter leaders. In *Uriga Poinayo (Can You See Us)* (2011), the authors point out that, despite the Hongik University workers' consciousness being significantly enhanced during the 49-day strike, the damage indemnification lawsuit that followed ended up creating tensions between workers and the university, leading to another protest in the same year (216-17). As Shin depicts, the time and space for dialectical thinking and praxis for "democratic union building, labor liberation, and revolution" were consumed by and reduced to the legal language of damage and loss.

Entangled Sites of Social Reproduction

If we accept the view that *minju noj*o politics has expired in the neoliberalized Korean economy, what alternative forms of political opposition can we imagine? What does the belated emergence of these elderly female janitors' in the labor movement scene in the mid-2000s signal? Or can we revive the *minju nojo* spirit and replace the figures of the 1970s female factory workers with those of elderly female janitors? The developmental state's mode of production

that was dependent on the cheap gendered labor power has been renewed in the form of the *pijŏnggyu* workforce. As I argued in previous chapters, the "newness" of *pijŏnggyu* labor or precarious work in global production can be achieved only through forgetting and erasing the subtle historical process of the reproduction of a gendered subordinate workforce. I suggest looking at the site of janitorial workers' struggle in two radically different ways. Firstly, when we read the workers' life-stories carefully, we can find traces of hidden historical connections between the old social relations that organized their life worlds and the current forms of oppressive conditions. Put otherwise, the struggle of the elderly female janitors can occupy an important site of emergent oppositional politics in which the hegemonic process of reproduction of oppressive systems can be analyzed and contested. Assessing the *pijŏnggyu* movement as a new form of class relations without such historical specificity fails to articulate the very process of reproduction of the co-constitutive systems of gender and class oppressions.

Secondly, it is equally dangerous to compare or simplify the fundamentally different conditions and contexts of labor and capital relations in the 1970s and the current mode of global capitalist production. As the developmental regime dependent on export industries faded out in the 1980s and financial liberalization was accelerated by the democratized governments in the 1990s, the gendered division of labor that sustained the production era was also adjusted, not by the invisible hand but by the post-developmental state's reconfiguration of labor. Whereas the majority of female workers were employed in the light industry in the developmental era, female workers in low-income households are now working predominantly in low-wage service sector jobs. As the form of labor performed by the same generation of female workers has changed from the production sector to reproductive work on the macro level, low wages and indecent working conditions are carefully maintained by government policies and legal interventions. In

this sense, the precarious character of feminized labor is hardly a new phenomenon nor an unintended economic consequence in South Korea. Rather, gendered labor precarity has been the major mechanism through which the state has aided transnational capital and global capitalism. Thus, I suggest rethinking the elderly female janitors' struggle as an emblematic site of general contradiction the South Korean capitalist development model has bred.

The reproductive labor performed by elderly women at home and work sustains the poverty-stricken working class family structure and communities ruined by compressed development and the impact of recurring global financial crises in Korea. When we see both realms of work and life through the forms of (paid-unpaid) labor these elderly women perform, it becomes clear that society is facing a crisis not of production, but reproduction where the dignity of human life is pushed to its limit. In other words, the particular form of the relationship between production and reproduction is becoming the major site of contradiction and contestation in the present day labor politics in Korea. As feminist scholars of social reproduction have articulated in multiple instances, the contemporary crises of capitalism have increased the dependency of the realm of production on individual households, public educations, hospitals, and voluntary community activities (Mitchell et al. 2004; Meehan & Strauss 2015; Bhattacharya 2017). Crises of financialized capital have been overcome through the maximum extraction and depletion of social energy and resources in the realm of reproduction. Reproductive work sustains not only the reproductive cycle of labor power (i.e. class relations) but also the life worlds of the working class population, whose living conditions and life potentials are dependent on the realm of commodified labor.

As an extension of the recently renewed feminist discussion on social reproduction theory, I propose rethinking the realm of wage labor as well. As in the stories of Teresa and

Jaerim, the workplace can be an important site in which the visions and desires of the most vulnerable workers and communities can be expressed and articulated as concrete political strategies and actions. Marxist social reproduction theorists tend to generalize the conditions of vastly different societies and communities into a highly abstract theory – in most cases they end up essentializing and reproducing the existing categories of analysis and frames of reference (e.g. the centrality of the western model of growth and modernization). For instance, in the reprinted book of Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women* (2013), Susan Ferguson and David McNally revisit Vogel's contradictory view on surplus value creation in the realm of unpaid domestic labor. Ferguson and McNally correct the view by stating that "individual capitals here benefit from *social practices* that do not form any of their necessary costs" (xxxiv, *emphasis mine*). The *social practices* in this line of theoretical analysis include various forms of unwaged work, traditionally known as domestic labor mostly done by women, while necessary costs simply mean wages. In Marxist thinking, this argument seems accurate and somewhat reflects the concrete reality of capitalist society. However, when we ask a set of questions on historical specificity - such as who the worker is, what type of work she does, in which location on the globe, and under what political economic context -, such abstract argumentation loses it political potential and import. Further, it tends to reproduce a normative figure of a worker (i.e. a full-time male worker and the heterosexual family behind him) and the ahistorical boundary between production and reproduction.

Conclusion

Thinking through Teresa and Jaerim's life-stories, in this chapter I attempted to articulate how multiple forms of spatial intimacy discipline laboring bodies and maintain hierarchies of

desires. Spatial intimacy operates through and is maintained by the abstract ideology of two realms, such as the private/public, unpaid/paid, and home/work. The assumption that workers' bodies and hours in the workplace are somewhat free from the dynamic of domestic labor and sexual violence is possible only when we depend on the normative figure of worker living in vacuum (free from social oppressions other than labor exploitation). Far from a neutral space in terms of gender, race, sexuality, and ability, the "hidden abode" operates through various forms of oppression valorizing social differences for capital accumulation. Spatial intimacy allows us to look more closely at how sexualized and gendered bodies are valorized (i.e. wage gap) and performed in the workplace and how the abstract spatial boundaries are easily crossed for reproduction of the oppressive system in both realms. Both Teresa and Jaerim also challenge the traditional idea of the workplace as a site where "free" individuals sell their labor power to capitalists. Teresa and Jaerim *refuse* to use their working hours only for profit. By decorating the public restrooms, collecting thrown-away plants, and spending time reflecting on the labor process (e.g. Teresa's table and wooden panel), they create radically different meanings and ways of life in their inhumane workplace.[80] Their stories reveal ineffable ways of surviving, and

[80] Kathi Weeks' article on precarious work (2017) captures the new ethos of work in contemporary Western society about how the mysteries of individualized love and happiness are becoming a dominant narrative and affect at work. My analysis here differs from Weeks' use of the "love and happiness at work literature" in two critical ways. First, my field work reveals how the workers in the low-wage gendered service jobs are regulated by the opposite kind of rhetoric, that is, a narrative of *distance* and *detachment* through various forms of irregular contracts and employment arrangements. Unlike high-tech information white color and innovation-driven jobs, those feminized job sectors like cleaning (also think of sex work) are expected to be emotionally detached from their labor and worksite relations. Secondly, against the societal stigmatization of their particular labor, historically, janitors have fought for value and meaning of their labor in their struggles for recognition and redistribution.

making and remaking the livability of their life worlds, by talking to a tree, rescuing dying plants, creating a secret garden in excess, and painting with waste materials in dark art studios.

To go back to the two epigraphs with which I started this chapter, intimacy also builds worlds for this third nature (the odd intimacy between Teresa and the wooden panel, stopped clocks, unopened books etc.) and spaces for multiple futures (the plant garden plotted by waste pickers) beyond its original stories of progress. What keeps disappearing from our view is the complex expressive worlds of contradictions and desires, which render human actors and cooperating materials into a scene of capitalist development and growth. A worker's individual story, her capacity as storyteller, may be not enough for a general theory of labor or a concrete new political framework of labor struggle. In what way then can the space and temporality of capital and modernity be lived otherwise beyond its reality and violence, if we cannot listen to these stories and see the background of progress?

CODA

Storytelling as Spatiotemporal Technique for Expressive Struggles

> The storytelling that thrives for a long time in the milieu of work— the rural, the maritime, and the urban— is itself an artisan form of communication, as it were. It does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again.
>
> (Walter Benjamin *The Storyteller*)

In the late winter when the collective negotiation meetings had exhausted all their energy and hope of reaching an agreement without another strike and occupation, one rank and file female janitor who had always been reticent uttered one brief sentence upon leaving the room, "We are the tail section of *Snowpiercer*." The meeting ended so late at night that people couldn't catch the last train before midnight. The excessive urban transportation which shuttled people around the metropolitan city, Seoul, was a double-edged sword that allowed them to freely move nearly 24/7, but on the other hand, pushed the limits of laboring bodies' mobility and strength around the clock. The annual collective bargaining that started in December and continued until May ended with another strike and occupation at one of the university campuses in spring 2015 (see the Seoul Women's University strike case in Chapter 3). During that six-month period, the fourteen university chapters of the SG Union hosted bargaining meetings rotationally. Each week, the elderly union members struggled to navigate a different maze-like university campus and buildings for the meetings. While multiple subway lines were crossed and numerous digitized bus timetables were scanned, the hyper-mobilized laboring bodies created an urban landscape covering the entire city and its fringes with their sweat and staggering steps. That brief expressive statement that the elderly janitors see themselves as confined in the tail section of a runaway train like "Snowpiercer" (which broadly denotes Korean society or more narrowly the

conditions of the cycles of collective bargaining around the bare minimum wage) brings us to the crux of this dissertation. In the previous chapters, I argued that the category of *pijŏnggyujik* (also the precariat) only makes sense in the framework of absolute universal time according to which time only moves forward. The elderly female janitors' stories I introduced in this study help us to see the world beyond the forward running train and violence of its speed and temporality.

The Cut: *Snowpiercer*

Snowpiercer (2013), a post-apocalyptic fiction, offers a vivid critique of the hidden rhythms and speed of a capitalist way of life. In the ending scene of the film, the fierce revolutionary figure who removes all barriers in his pursuit of truth – that is, foundational knowledge (the eternal engine) that has propelled the train and its way of life – realizes that his revolt is part of the design or history of the eternal engine, the life cycle of the train itself, that represents humanity or humanity's progress. As the train is designed to run non-stop circling the frozen earth known to be unlivable for humans, the bloody revolt in the train waged by the lowest-rank population, the free-riders, whose life conditions have been pushed beyond human limits only ends with the realization (knowing as action) that the tempo of their struggle is also synced with the speed of the train. Walter Benjamin's description of the image of Angelus Novus, who is compelled by the storm coming from "Paradise," overlaps with the heroic masculine figure in the film who stands against the force of the future (the train engine as well as revolution) staring as "the pile of debris before him grows skyward" (Benjamin 1986, IX). Curtis, the main character representing the oppressed in the tale section of the train, literally walks over piles of dead bodies as the revolt progresses, passing through compartment after compartment of the train until he faces the engine (the system) alone. Bong Joon-Ho, director of

the film, says in an interview that "humans in the train are also *running forward* like the train itself (*emphasis mine*)." The dramatic ending - the train explodes, removing all the forces of human progress including the revolution itself - produces a sensational cognitive break from the violent speed of the visualized world of a runaway train. Beyond this storyline, here, I suggest paying attention to a unique storytelling technique of the film in order to better understand the janitorial worker's point of view.

The movie was released in 2013 in Korea, about two years after the Hongik University janitorial and security workers' strike in 2011. Bong Joon-Ho in his interview mentions more than once that he found and read the original French graphic novel at a small bookstore near Hongik University in 2003 where it deeply thrilled him. He carried the story for ten years, allowing him enough time to creatively revise the original text. The decade between 2003 and 2013 was also the period when the *pijŏnggyujik* laws were passed in the middle of intensifying labor protests across the country. Juik Kim, the Hanjin Shipyard leader, killed himself in 2003 after his 129-day solo protest, though the devastating struggle in Busan was continued. Jinsook Kim, a female welder, protested for 309 days in 2011, living in the No. 85 crane stretched up to the sky, which was only the beginning of the radical social justice protest called the Hope-Bus movement. The Korean economy was undergoing a major shift with restructuring plans for both capital and labor. Bong says that he wanted to add "speed" to the original story that was rather "tedious" and too "poetic." Bong delivers his message clearly through filmic technique, visualizing the eye-catching details of machine and the politically charged image of five-year old boys' bodies seamlessly inserted into the train engine as well as the racialized body's liberation in the final scene. What the story successfully delivers is strong emotions that are closely tied to the speed of the machine, the monstrous reality of the capitalist system, dissecting human bodies

and lifetimes into classified divisions of labor and specialization – or "preordained roles" in the train designer's words. Through the screen filled with contrasting colors - as the revolt moves from the tail section to the front engine, the color also changes from filthy dark tones to brighter shiny immaculate machine beams - the viewers experience shock, terror, thrills, and indeed deep anger. The speed of the eternal engine and the bloody revolution might have made a deep and quick shock in the eyes of the female janitor who had been drained by the late night collective bargaining meetings year after year in the serpent-like time and movement in which her voice kept being muted. The janitors scream in the *pijŏnggyujik* movement. They chant the same old slogan written in clean-cut prints over and over again in every rally they are invited to as special guests, such as "*pijŏnggyujik ch'ŏlp'ye* (eliminate irregular job)" and "*chikchŏpkoyong chaengch'wi* (win direct-employment). The time of labor movement moves forward like the runaway train against which it aims to fight, while other voices keep being cut.

Haeson, who became the leader of the Hongik University chapter right after the 49-day strike in 2011, is now cleaning two buildings alone since her solitary protest in January 2018. I heard from her that she was no longer a member of the SG Union. She was laid-off in the middle of the outsourcing company's outcry over the "steeply increased" wages of the janitors that ended up reducing the number of janitorial workers in the university. Haeson was one of the four janitors who were laid-off. Since Haeson was no longer a union member, she fought alone for a month to get her job back. The company hired back three of the four laid-off janitors. Haeson, for obvious reasons, was assigned to cover two buildings that used to be cleaned by two workers. The SG Union didn't fight for Haeson this time. During the rallies that I joined, Haeson used to say "They feed us only when we cry, I know, that's the rule here." Haeson deeply resented this rule. She also wanted to be part of the secret negotiation between the SG Union male leaders and

the outsourcing company representatives or the university administrative staff that usually happened in the final stage of the extended formal collective bargaining meetings. The branch leader, in that way, could close the deal, which was hailed as his negotiation skill and expertise that most elderly janitors were lacking. Male leadership structure could be reproduced in the SG union through this kind of special skills and expertise. From time to time, the female chapter leaders like Haeson received orders from the SG Union branch leader, asking them to collect cases and stories of rank and file janitors who were mistreated or sexually harassed. Intimate stories and experiences narrated by rank and file female janitors were collected in the SG Union leader's personal documents as "tactical" resources that could be effectively used during the negotiation. Too often Haeson fought back, complaining about the branch leader's ideas during the collective negotiation meetings and weekly union meetings, which left her alone most of the time as someone who did not get along well with others or "lacking" the capacity to follow the rules everyone agreed upon. For Haeson, the progressive time of the *pijŏnggyujik* movement is still being lived backward. A more ironic aspect of her current situation is her labor time. Without any technological advancement, her body covers two buildings – one building is now cleaned in a half day. While the technical sense of socially necessary labor time is consistent, the political condition of her labor has been changed. This political force that adds extra elasticity to the socially necessary labor time by which feminized bodies become expandable labor power is the condition of possibility for the reproduction of gendered class relations in Korean society. I insist that such elasticity does not stem from the type of labor, cleaning or caring. The time of labor (expressed in wages) stretches precisely through feminized bodies that are regulated by various forms of power struggles in factories, offices, schools, restaurants, and homes.

(Wall poster from the archive of Hongik University janitorial and security workers' strike in 2011, Copyright. Nodongja yŏksa Hannae)

(Wall poster from the archive of Hongik University janitorial and security workers' strike in 2011, Copyright. Nodongja yŏksa Hannae)

New Figures and Ghosts: *Cart* and *Factory Complex*

Cart (2014) and *Factory Complex* (2015) show mastery of different storytelling techniques, thus producing different political effects in representing Korean feminized labor. *Cart* reconstructs the E-Land Homever female cashiers' strike case in 2007. As the new Temporary Work Law (see Chapter 3) was to be effective on July 1 in 2007, E-Land Company terminated 1,000 irregular workers' contracts on June 17. About 500 workers launched a strike on June 30, which lasted for 511 days. *Cart* was released in Korea in the winter of 2014 when I established a routinized fieldwork schedule between the Hongik University union office, the SG Union office, and the Korean Contingent Workers' Center (KCWC). KCWC offered me an office space where I could access the center's resources and research materials as well as a space from which I could see janitorial workers' issues in relation to the larger *pijŏnggyujik* struggle. The director of KCWC, Namshin Lee, was one of the union leaders who led the E-Land strike in 2007. After the center was led by Namshin Lee, the focus of the center's major activities was significantly changed from data-based research production to activism and political solidarity building among *pijŏnggyu* workers. Indeed, he joined in every single site of the *pijŏnggyu* workers' struggle. His staunch support for the *pijŏnggyu* workers challenged my view, which often left me with conflicting feelings of awe and guilt that my critique of the SG Union was too impetuous. I have been profoundly influenced by his view of various sites of *pijŏnggyu* workers' struggle, including his astute criticism of his own experience leading the E-Land union strike, calling it a "failure" without a doubt.

The film *Cart* tells a different story since the medium has a different political function attracting a random audience and generating popular images beyond static political opinions. *Cart* is recorded as one of the most successful films dealing with politically sensitive labor issues

like female *pijŏnggyu* workers' struggle. What does the unprecedented media-interest in the 2011 Hongik University janitorial and security workers' strike have in common with the success of the film *Cart*? Both sites of labor struggle show the sharply gendered divisions of labor in the Korean labor market, janitors and super-market store cashiers. In 2007, the full-time Homever female cashers made 800,000 KRW (approximately $800 USD) per month, the same wage as the full-time janitors in Hongik University in 2011. In the film, Sun-Hee, a single mom, retorts to the company representatives that "We come here to make a living, not for extra money for side-dishes." *Cart* spotlights various female characters' lives of all ages who collectively become targeted as an easily downsized workforce in the ever growing retail industries. The director Boo Ji-young focuses intentionally on these female characters, minimizing the role of the few male workers' in the storyline. Through this strategic angle, the audience hear the stories not in the form of information or historical fact, but as a microscopic lens through which the contradictory social milieu of feminized labor is amplified. The space of the supermarket stores the young and old low-wage female workers occupy is filled with lavish consumer desires that are expressed in the form of preponderant social hierarchy, arrogance, and violence. The camera lens seamlessly moves through multiple boundaries from dark locker rooms to shiny supermarket aisles, and to the messy living room and kitchen the main character Sun-Hee shares with her practically abandoned two children. After the workers occupy the store, the bright store lights are turned off as the company cuts the electricity. In the dark, some candles are lit and the workers' intimate stories start to be shared, which brightens their nights for singing and dancing.

Unlike the reality-based spatial technique of *Cart*, an experimental documentary film, *Factory Complex* blurs the boundaries of space and time as well as the sense of reality in telling the real stories of female factory workers in the 1960s and present day reminders of them in

Korea and Cambodia. The cinematography of the film fractures the narratives of the old and young female interviewees with sudden changes of angle, light, and sound. With the recurring ghostly female figure in factory uniform with her eyes blindfolded, dreamy spatiotemporal images overwhelm the reality the narratives pursue to carry on. Time in the film is either stuck or repeated. The camera becomes the computer monitor screen through which a female laboring body's working hours in the retail warehouse are checked, sending color-coded warning signals from yellow, blue, and green, to red. She runs as the color of the camera screen changes. Sudden darkness filled with the shadows of human figures stops the flow of time and the expansion of space. Darkness in *Factory Complex* is linked to the view of the female figure with her eyes blindfolded. As she moves without looking, touching walls, her body circles around the ruins of her old factory dormitory. The space quickly expands to other places, such as grocery stores, call centers, airplanes, warehouses, and different kinds of factories in the present day, that are filled with different figures and stories. The darkness interrupts viewers' sight repeatedly as the blinded female figure moves slowly in the same building without an exit. As the figure is stuck in the time and space of the ruins of her factory dormitory, the audience feels claustrophobic too.

Both *Cart* and *Factory Complex,* released during my fieldwork period, can be read as subtext of this dissertation. *Cart* situates the present day low-wage female workers' lives in the context of the emerging *pijŏnggyujik* movement shaped by the *pijŏnggyujik* law enactment in 2007. This static political view predetermined every single move and observation I made in the earlier period of my fieldwork. Interviews and random conversations in the period were organized predominantly around the questions of the *pijŏnggyujik* law and union strategies. As we do not know much about the elderly character (janitor) Soon-rae's history in the film *Cart*, I was less interested in those voices and stories whenever my interviewees deviated from my

interview questionnaire, especially when their stories were stretched to their past memories. After meeting Youngjin and hearing her story in the break time of the collective bargaining meeting by chance (see Chapter 1), a scientific idea of history and absolute time became the central site of critique in my study. People often gathered around her to hear her story in those short breaks and the streets where people rallied idly chanting the same slogans for hours. Youngjin was a true storyteller. In the first surprising encounter, she not only brought my mind to dwell on her childhood memory but also messed up my sense of time by saying "I felt like I was still living in the seventies." The more I hear the countless episodes and anecdotes in her life, the blurrier the lucid reality of the *pijŏnggyujik* became. I saw Youngjin in the artistic imageries of *Factory Complex* in the winter. Although we cannot hear the ghost-like female figures' words in the documentary *Factory Complex* – they talk to each other into their ears -, throughout this dissertation, I have attempted to tell Youngjin's stories. Or the other way around, this dissertation is *the thing* brought out of Youngjin's expressive storytelling technique.

Constellating *Spatial Intimacies* in the Ruins of Growth

Prevalent premature deaths keep sending warning signals of the life-threatening speed of economic growth in Korea today. In this section, I attempt to draw a possible cognitive map of various forms of *spatial intimacies* expressed by differently situated laboring bodies that are abandoned, fractured, severed, and deceased in the post-developmental regime. This will help us to see the janitorial workers' struggles I examine in this dissertation not as a special case but as a general contradiction the high-speed growth regime continues to rely on for its own reproduction. Sun-Hee, the leader of the Mart protest in the film *Cart*, resolutely says, "We are abandoned. We are not *kukmin* (citizens)." The legal temporality expressed by the *pijŏnggyujik*

law has drawn new boundaries between the sphere of labor and those expelled from the organized space of belonging through the web of employment, familial life, and citizenship rights. After ten years of struggle, a young single mom who was fighting against the Korea Train Express (KTX) killed herself, devastated by the Supreme Court decision made in February 2015, which ordered the workers to return to KTX the wages they were originally paid according to the Seoul High Court decision in 2008. Launching the high-speed train running 305 km/h, KTX hired 351 female attendants through an outsourcing company in 2004 promising them regular employment for a two-year term. The twenty-something fresh college graduates made 1,300,000 KRW (approximately $1,300 USD) per month during that period. The female attendants have continued their strike since KTX broke their promise in 2006 after the two-year term. They too say, "We are fighting against the state."[81] Since their employment contracts were terminated, they have been fighting in the streets and major train stations across the country for twelve years. While the high-speed train circulates the industrial infrastructure and railways, transforming the sense of national time and space, the present day figures of the feminized labor in the old developmental regime are contracted in and out. The express train attendants' feminized bodies in protest of the neoliberal temporality of the developed nation, like the janitors' bodies in the streets of the affluent university campuses, represent another puzzling contradiction that the Korean capitalist development has engendered. What kind of spatial intimacy can we see or imagine in the ways the KTX female workers occupy public space, such as train stations and streets, as the site of their corporeal resistance, outside the high-speed trains? Still bold and young, the patient protestors pray in the Seoul Train Station and stare at the fast-moving passengers with their eyes wide open.

[81] "KTX attendants are still there," *Sisain*, No. 508. June 13, 2017.

(KTX Attendants' 108-Bow Rally in the Seoul Train Station. January 25, 2018. Copyright. Korea Public Service and Transport Workers' Union.)

Another premature death shocked the passengers in Guui Seoul Metropolitan Subway station on the evening of May 28, 2016. The body of a nineteen-year-old maintenance worker who belonged to a subcontracting company was unnoticed both by multiple security cameras and the Seoul Metro regular workers who were supposed to check every single human being who passed the entrance to the railways. While he was fixing the screen door designed to enhance the safety of "citizens" in the railway, the fast-moving subway ran over his time of unnoticed labor. The dead young man's mother in an interview blamed herself that she taught him wrongly to be too diligent. In his contract, there was a sentence that read "you should behave knowing your status [*punsue mkke*]." While the set social order made the recurring premature deaths in the subway railways almost too mundane, nameless people posted their letters to the young man at the very screen door he was fixing alone. Whose bodies are protected by the high-tech safety doors? What kind of walls or boundaries do they become when they both kill certain bodies and also become the very site of social mourning? I find deeply contradictory spatial intimacies in

the social relation between the dead man and the mourning citizens that were expressed through that thin-transparent screen door. What will transform such spatial intimacies to radical political demands that could tear down the (in)visible walls between them?

(Guii Station 9-4 Platform, June 2, 2016. Copyright OhMyNews, Woosung Kwon)

The last site of reference for a collective imagination of spatial intimacies I want to connect here is the No. 85 crane wherein Jinsook Kim protested, mourning her dead comrades Juik Kim and Jaegue Kwak, for 309 days in Youngdo, a small island in the port city of Busan. Hanjin Shipbuilding in Youngdo, the largest shipbuilding company in Korea, was downsizing production in Korea since the company had launched Hanjin Subic Shipyard in Philippines in 2006. In winter 2010, the company released a 400 worker layoff plan, which made Jinsook climb up the crane alone – the same crane in which Juik Kim struggled through his death. In the middle of the year-long "sky protest" Jinsook Kim met a very different sort of protesters called the Hope-Bus Movement. I want to focus here on the shift in the spatial politics of labor struggle in the period. Jinsook's 100th day speech reveals both her fear of losing union support and her unquenchable desire for livability,

> To celebrate the 100th day, I planted lettuce, chicory, cherry tomato, and strawberry here in this crane. Up here against the strong wind, I look at their fragile swinging bodies, endlessly trusting the power of their roots. My root is you, comrades. Even though our leaves are shaking, let us hold tight our roots. We will survive together. In order to farm, we might need to transform this crane into a tractor….[82]

In the period, Jinsook noticed the members were growing exhausted by the endless protest, suffering from the trauma of losing the two previous union leaders through the same tactics of life-threatening protest. Devastated Jinsook started to post messages in Twitter. A growing number of random Twitter users in this period countlessly retweeted Jinsook's messages. I should mention that it was exactly at the same time when the Hongik Janitorial Workers strike drew unprecedented public attention, forming the civilian supporter group "Kim Yeojin and Nalrary" who changed the traditional union strike scene into festivals and venues for various social actors' gathering. They transformed the site of the strike into a new kind of community of care and intimacy. Jinsook Kim's desperate but awakening messages were shared with the same group, Kim Yeojin and Nalrary, which was based in the Hongik University area with a number of young artists and student supporters. The first Hope-Bus arrived at Yeongdo on June 11, which deeply moved Jinsook and eventually led her to see beyond the politics of mourning and to envision a labor movement outside the shipyard, the union, and, maybe in the following period, beyond labor. Jinsook's tiny nook, wherein a different way of life was only a dream often ended with a nightmare, enlarged to meet the collective bodies of nameless protesters who formed a new kind of public space through their unarmed bodies. In my view, the collective bodies "acting in concert" eventually turned the No. 85 crane into the mobile tractor Jinsook had

[82] Video Footage of the 100th day speech made by Jinsook Kim. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEHhxQPdfeo)

spoken of, enabling her to spread different seeds of intimacy and care beyond the exploitative labor relations at the other sites of social movements (Butler 2015). Later, she became a nomad activist whose main source of activism is undoubtedly storytelling - weaving her own life experience with many different stories of *the others* whose lives rarely become the center of history.

This dissertation sheds new light on the complex life worlds elderly female janitors are struggling to build in the post-developmental regime where the high-speed development system has left behind multiple forms of social ruin and abandonment. Even if the revolutionary goal of eliminating *pijŏnggyujik* is achieved, the dominant time of capital and the way of life will continue producing and reproducing those bodies that are consumed unnoticed or expelled from the crisis cycle of capitalist production. The sites of struggle I attempted to draw a cognitive map of in this section might allow us to imagine different forms of *spatial intimacies* and political demands. I also highlighted techniques of storytelling for collective dreaming and imagining as political practices and processes through which different desires and demands could be expressed not in harmony but in cacophony that can make noises and discordant rhythms in the seamless social reproduction of capitalist and heteropatriarchal social order and time. Throughout this dissertation, Youngjin, Jaerim, Kiyeon, Haeson, and Teresa sang different songs generating such discordant rhythms. Still, I think they are all connected to the other figures of the *pijŏnggyujik* whose life conditions in turn are tied to the frantically moving Korean economy. Instead of treating the female janitorial workers' struggles as an exceptional case, I argued that their struggles reveal the general contradiction that the old developmental regime and its sharply gendered system of social reproduction have engendered. The process of feminization of labor has been intensified as the precarious laboring bodies are marked through the new categorical

system, *pijŏnggyujik.* The life-stories the elderly janitors share in this study not only slow down our processes of political imagination for social transformation but also demand we dwell on different political spaces for radical care and intimacy.

Contributions and Implications of this Study

In the final few months of my writing this dissertation, the #MeToo movement heated up the already volatile political environment under the Moon Jae-In administration while Donald Trump and Kim Jung-un were escalating their nuclear war threats in the most hideous masculine language. After the bold JTBC evening news testimony of public prosecutor Seo Ji-hyun, what really interested me was the interview with the forgotten poet Choi Young-mi that followed. Long before the public interview, Choi had published a riddle-like poem titled "Monster." When asked if the poem is more than a satire, Choi responds that the initial inspiration may have started with one particular figure or event but, in the process of writing, a poet "receives" many different things coming into her mind. By using one letter "En" from the name of a powerful male poet, Choi made her point clear that the poem was not about one particular individual but about the milieu of literary work where she was consumed and forgotten. Choi's poem ends with this line: "After raising a monster/ How can it be caught." Obviously, she was not just accusing the male poet who could occupy the space of the literary circle, absorbing the energies of young female writers through his eccentric performance of sexual desire in the public space. Instead, the poem demands we look at the social institutions and the environment where the monster is raised. I hope my study is not read simply as a testimony or an accusation of a particular job sector and a labor union. Through the medium of life-stories, I was able to situate my research object in the larger system of oppressive social relations of gendered labor and to focus on the more important

question, how the system has been reproduced over several decades. Choi's poem, too, laments the cycle of the violent system with the vital question: how can it be stopped?

Sexual harassments testified by elderly female janitors have been widely reported in the past years by the Korean media. Stories vary from everyday sexual control (e.g. mandatory sexual harassment training offered by male supervisors in my field site) to vivid descriptions of sexual assault at workplace or after work evening gatherings etc. Korean MeToo campaign in 2018, in particular the ways the mainstream media has reported major accusations, is oblivious of the fact that heteropatriarchal sexual control has been the major mechanism through which feminized laboring bodies have been consumed at various workplaces for decades in Korean society. The representation of feminized laboring bodies in the current MeToo campaign tends to reproduce the very oppressive conditions by focusing young and well-educated female bodies in the selectively visualized sites of contestation (so far, artist communities, politicians, government institutions, entertainment industries). Precisely because it has targeted a few powerful male figures, the campaign's expected political outcome is limited only to raising public awareness for the "deserving" female bodies - otherwise could be "useful" and "successful" in certain occupations. In what ways the #MeToo campaign can go against this neoliberal hailing?

This dissertation does not include any discussions of Korean feminist movements or feminist labor organizing because my field site has little connection to any existing feminist organizations. In 2011 when the 49-day strike at Hongik University was going on, I was working as an activist at Korean Women's Association United (KWAU). After internal discussions, we decided not to go support the strike for various political reasons. In part, my dissertation research started from that contradictory moment with the question: in what ways a progressive politics chooses to support certain political agendas that always entail producing certain narratives of

"deserving" bodies for political recognition. KWAU actively led the KTX female attendant protests between 2006 and 2007. For this research, I decided to go the other direction rather than choosing to focus on young female subjects whose futures were seen having more value than the bodies of elderly janitors. In completing this study, I have found connections between the young and old feminized subjects whose life potentials and desires are much more closely related and similarly situated in the political and economic conditions in Korea.

This dissertation critically engages with feminist theories of social reproduction, Marx's critical theory of labor time, and the burgeoning debates on labor precarity and alternative forms of working class struggle under global financial capitalism. By highlighting continuity between the developmental state era and the post-developmental regime in contemporary Korea, this study contributes to Korea Studies and in particular the fields of labor history and labor studies. I show how the social relations of gendered labor have been reproduced across the developmental era (1960s-1980s) and the post-1997 Asian Financial Crisis regime by critically rethinking the category of *pijŏnggyujik* through the life-stories of elderly female janitors. In a global context, this study offers new insights on the contemporary labor movements that are preoccupied with limited political options such as the minimum wage fight and universal basic income. I suggest, in this dissertation, reframing the central question from how to maintain balance between labor and capital to how the violent domination of capital's time can be subverted by what kind of social imaginations and political agenda. Today's labor actors have to confront the fundamental contradiction between capital and nature by critically rethinking labor's role in it. The South Korean development model has produced a generation of feminized labor whose life energies and desires have been consistently discounted and devalued in the process of the "miraculous" capital accumulation and social progress. The life-stories of elderly female janitors I weave in

this study can be read as alternative storytelling that encourages us to see beyond capital's time of accumulation and heteropatriarchal time of domination. When labor movement actors start to tell different stories like Teresa, Youngjin, Haeson, Jaerim, and Kiyeon, different kinds of political imaginations and radical activism can be set forth, which is beyond this dissertation's capacity.[83] Teresa has taught me, throughout our prolonged *ethnographic dialogue* from the summer I met her in 2013 and to this moment of writing, that a radical imagination and way of life can arise in the most unlikely places and moments where alternative praxis of *spatial intimacies* gives different meanings of *care* and *being in time* out of the ruins of human-centered progress and capitalist development.

[83] During my fieldwork, I was interested in collecting cases of alternative forms of labor organizing among the *pijŏnggyu* workers. The Hope Solidarity Union [*hŭimangyŏndaenojo*] is the closest model I have imagined throughout this dissertation. The Hope Solidarity Union (HSU) started organizing subcontracted internet cable workers in the low-income neighborhood areas in Seoul in 2010. Based on social justice unionism and village making model [*maŭl mandŭlgi*], the HSU experimented with many different alternative labor organizing such as small reading groups (people study various social issues from labor, environment, feminism, and sexual minorities), collective childcare practices for low-income households, community art studios, collective healthcare and therapy spaces, and global solidarity activities (School building project in Nepal) etc. The HSU's organizing stories are published in a book *Village and Labor Tied with Hope* [*maŭlgwa nodong, hŭimangŭro yŏkta*] (2016) co-authored by Kim ŭnsŏn & Cha Jaemin.

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APPENDIX: List of Interviews Approved by Human Subject Review

N	Initial Date	Interviewee	Status	Total Min.
1	2014.12.29	Haeson	Janitorial worker-1	120
2	2015.01.07	Bokyung	Janitorial worker-2	40
3	2015.01.08	Youngjin	Janitorial worker-3	130
4	2015.01.22	Jaerim	Janitorial worker-4	80
5	2015.01.22	Kiyeon	Janitorial worker-5	40
6	2015.02.05	SG Union leader (Current)	Union leader	110
7	2015.02.05	Sunju (Hospital janitorial worker)	Janitorial worker-6	28
8	2015.02.12	Juyeon	Janitorial worker-7	48
9	2015.03.18	Teresa	Janitorial worker-8	48
10	2015.03.19	Janitorial Work Supervisor	Onsite manager	45
11	2015.04.02	Male Janitor 1 (Hongik University)	Worker-9_male	10
12	2015.04.02	Male Janitor 2 (Hongik University)	Worker-10_male	10
13	2015.04.03	Labor Lawyer	Lawyer	43
14	2015.04.08	IBS company manager	Outsourcing Com. manager	47
15	2015.04.16	SG Union leader (Previous)	Union leader	110
16	2015.04.30	SG Union Staff (Organizer of the HU strike)	Union activist	45
17	2015.05.08	SG Union leader (Previous)	Union leader	70
18	2015.05.27	Shu Heekang	Student	40
19	2015. 06.20	Namshin Lee	KCWC director	60