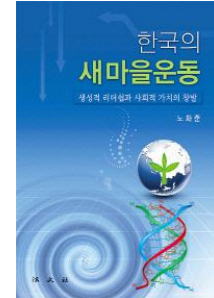


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**Saemaul Movement of South Korea:  
Generative Leadership and Emergence of Social Values**  
*Beommunsa, 2013, ISBN 978-89-18-02395-3*

Book Review by Ki-Seok Kwon\*



The purpose of this book is to explain how the *Saemaul* spirit of diligence, self-help and cooperation was emerging through the *Saemaul* Movement during the 1970s. The central tenet of this work is based on the self-organizing and emergent phenomena of the systems emerging from the feature of the complex adaptive system, which contains various interacting objects. These objects can modify their behaviors by themselves in the hope of improving performance. The emergent phenomena arise in the absence of a central controller. These emergent phenomena are the main analytical concepts of emergence of the *Saemaul* spirit through the new rural community movement that was also known as the *Saemaul* Movement.

The *Saemaul* Movement involves a type of social innovation. The author has studied various insights coming from complexity science regarding how innovation ecologies can be created. Roughly over the last decade, nonlinear science researchers have developed tools and concepts that explain with greater accuracy how organizations operate, how leadership can be effective within them, and how innovation really occurs. The researchers have thereby developed complexity science with regard to generative leadership. The core role of generative leadership is the creation of innovation ecologies.

Ecosystems have several features, such as difference or diversity, interaction resonance, among others. According to research in ecology, the greater the diversity in a system, especially at the micro-level of individual differences and group-level heterogeneity, the higher the potential these differences can be amplified into emergent innovation. The implication of these phenomena is that rural communities should have *Saemaul* leaders who have had developmental perspectives and value orientations that are different from ordinary villagers who have had traditional perspectives and value orientations. Korean president Park Chung Hee asked the Minister of Agriculture to train *Saemaul* leaders as positive deviants who could play the role of catalysts or the facilitators for planning and implementation of village development programs solving rural community problems. In practice, these *Saemaul* leaders played active roles in the village reconstruction process through these planning and implementation functions in rural community development programs.

This proposition is cogent when rural community change or innovation can be successfully driven when mutual influences and cooperation among three entities (i.e. triple helix). Namely, when the president and his *Saemaul* assistants, central and local government officials who are in charge of *Saemaul* Movement, and *Saemaul* leaders of rural communities were high. Based on these observations, the author has developed a community development version of a triple helix model of the Korean *Saemaul* Movement to explain how Korean *Saemaul* Movement could be successful during the President Park Chung

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Hee era. The evidence is based on the author's interviews with not only former government officials who were in charge of *Saemaul* Movement, but also successful Saemaul leaders to acquire the supporting data and materials. However, some critics have argued that the introduction of the theoretical background is too brief in comparison with a number of rich and sophisticated amount of available evidence. Furthermore, the integration of a triple helix model and complexity science needs to be explained in greater detail.

This book consists of five parts. After a brief introduction on objectives, scope, and methodology for this research in Chapter 1, a conceptual framework throughout this book is provided in Chapter 2. Abundant empirical evidence on the role of the government and the education of rural leaders in the process of *Saemaul* Movement are discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 focuses on the emergence of the *Saemaul* spirit based on self-organization in the process of the *Saemaul* Movement. Chapter 5 presents a summary based on a triple helix model as well as lessons for other developing countries' rural community development.