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Immobile Women, Mobile Families: *Leisure Women and Travel Advertisements in Developing South Korea, 1970–1979*

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Abstract

This article examines two different representations of traveling women from popular women's magazines in 1970s developing South Korea. The two contrasting representations reveal the social construction of women's autonomy, conventional boundaries, and moral sentiments in an authoritarian society. The Park Chung-hee government sought to regulate and naturalize various obligations for women, cultivating boundaries and moral sentiments according to a developmental compass. This is well represented in the first representation, in images of full-time housewives traveling with their husbands and children in model families. *This depiction is compromised by the second imagery—images of* leisure women *who travel alone or with other women. While chastised by the government, male writers, and the broader society as immoral and dangerous,* leisure women *illuminate how women drew their own boundaries and attempted to carve their autonomous consumer subjectivity. Together, the two portrayals, among other images, provide a historical explanation for gendered dimensions of moral agency, self-determination, and mobility in developing South Korea.*

Keywords: leisure women, model family, moral agency, gender, travel, advertisement

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Introduction

Popular women's magazines render visible the cultural and political positions of women, with their identity and experience expressed in a complex set of representations, both images and texts, in relation to society. While reading South Korea's popular women's magazines of the 1970s, I frequently encountered two different representations of traveling women. One was the image of a happy mother, well-clad and fit, often holding either the hand of her husband and her child, against the backdrop of blue skies and bluer seas, enjoying herself. The other was a different image of women in groups, often in hanbok (the traditional Korean attire), with their faces blurry and the image quality low, even by 1970s standards. In contrast with the colorful photographs and smiling faces of the first type of image, this second type of image would mostly be printed in black-and-white, often accompanied by an essay of a didactic nature.

This article examines these two different representations of traveling women in 1970s South Korean popular magazines, focusing on the social construction of their autonomy and moral sense in an authoritarian society. In popular women's magazines such as *Yeoseong jungang, Yeoseong Dong-A,* and *Elegance,* two distinctive portrayals unfold.[1] The first representation comes from travel-themed advertisements with visual representations of traveling families. In these advertisements, the *full-time housewife* is located at the center and surrounded by her family, with a domestic tourist destination in the background. The basic tenets of these advertisements include three or four heteronormative family members consisting of a father,

1. A note on the selection of these magazines and my sources: I note that *Jubu saenghwal* was also one of the prominent women's magazines of the era with a large readership. While in reality, the magazines do not have critical differences in their page-to-page content, one of the reasons I have excluded *Jubu saenghwal* is because of that magazine's explicitly stated aim as being for housewives with a focus on "motherhood," excluding female college students and working women, thus representing a more restricted readership. The examined volumes include monthly editions of the three magazines in the period 1970–1979 and held in the National Assembly Library of South Korea and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism's National Library of Korea, with a focus on summer and winter months where travel-related seasonal content is easily found.

a mother, and one or two small children enjoying their time together on vacation. In contrast to this first image, the second representation comes from essays and columns that condemn the tourist behavior of "leisure women" (*yuhan buin*) who travel alone or in groups with other women. Juxtaposed with the advertisements, often in the same monthly edition, the essays argue that such leisure women are separated from their families, up to no good, and causing trouble to the larger society.

Both representations of traveling women not only signify historical dimensions of moral agency and self-determination, but are indicators of the many aspects of gender, leisure, and life in developing South Korea.[2] They signify society's vice and virtue. The advertisements portray the social constructs of family and leisure consumption, showing the *appropriate* ways in which people are encouraged to spend their time. Advertisements indicate the social frames that feature assigned roles for women, conveying layers of meanings not only about the leisure activity itself but also about how the activity could be utilized as a gauge of morality designated by the government and broader society. Leisure and travel during the examined period were embedded in the era's developmentalist practices. With the takeoff of industrialization in the postwar period, the Park Chung-hee government generated, both in rhetoric and through various policies, certain social ideals for women to fulfill (A. J. Lee 2021). Even travel-themed advertisements required women to fit the sexualized mold and duties of a *productive housewife*, an image distributed and reproduced not only by government propaganda, but also by unofficial media channels such as popular women's magazines and newspapers.

Unlike the advertisements, articles about *leisure women* illuminate the multifaceted, more complex existence of women, finding freedom and control in travel, by organizing their own time and resources. If the government sought to regulate and naturalize certain obligations for women,

2. While it is easier to find studies on gendered aspects of life from earlier periods of Korean history, such as the Joseon period (1392–1910) or the colonial period (1910–1945), studies focused on the Park Chung-hee period (1961–1979) are relatively few and far between. See Ko, et al. (2003); Molony, et al. (2016); Choi (2009, 2020).

leisure women and their activities signal the spotty, limited nature of such control. They reveal inherent tensions and controversies on the ground. While the government sought to cultivate moral sentiments according to its economic agenda, with advertisements of *model families* and *productive housewives* reflecting this social ideal, *leisure women* were mavericks, outside the grip of the normalized, hegemonic moral constructs of the era.

Leisure women, while appearing in popular media first during the colonial period, evolved and made frequent appearances in media and sociocultural imaginations during the 1960s and 1970s, mostly in a didactic context (D. Kim 2001). These were women who had time and money to spend outside the household (*yuhan* means having free time and resources), resulting in their idle behavior. This often culminates in leisure activities such as long-distance domestic travel. For these trips, women would leave their families at home, something that magazine contributors and editors repeatedly chastise in the essays, columns, and field reports (*reuppo*) of the women's magazines. The traveling *yuhan buin,* as such, created a relatively understudied, yet fascinating cultural trend with acute transformative potential, located at the height of the developmental growth period of South Korea.

While didactic essays, often written by male contributors, condemn the behavior of the *leisure women*, the instructive attention given to these women reveals the social anxieties and constraints that they faced when pursuing their own choices and consumer life outside the *appropriate* behavior of family life prescribed to them during the 1970s. The phenomenon represents women negotiating their own identity and life experiences, creating space, although liminal in nature, for their trips and *events* where rules governing a normalized family and everyday structured life did not reach them for a while.[3] In other words, leisure women, by

3. I borrow the use of the term "event" from Tani Barlow, who claimed the political momentum and potential of the word in a gender-related context. According to Barlow (2022), an event is a politically inspired action that installs a newly discovered truth. A traveling *event*, when distanced from everyday domestic situations, also often exposes the underlying, sometimes unspoken, gendered expectations that shape society (Romeo 2020).

traveling alone or with other women rather than with their families, were testing their decision-making capacity in consumer activities, exploring new possibilities and diverse narratives for women, rearranging their purpose and their place in modernizing South Korean society.[4] Dismantling existing stereotypes, leisure women opened the boundaries of self-will and determination, against the vocal force that obligated them to become good wives and wise mothers.[5] Their travel represents buoyant temporal moments of escape through experiences of mobility, not only in a geographical sense but also in a social, cultural, and political sense. Adding a sense of liberation, leisure women signified those who wished to move away from their daily life constructs, in a temporary break by the construction of their own narrative space.

While the contrasting images serve as a departure point for rethinking experiences and expressions of cultural meanings and social dynamics during the Park Chung-hee era, they are by no means exclusive representations that preclude various existences as isolated sets. The images are not designated to present a binary. With cultural paradigms and images being porous, pervious, and multi-dimensional, with ever-shifting boundaries, both representations constitute permeating complexities and inherently embody ambivalent forms. The reader is encouraged to tap into different possible readings of the images and essays and to consider and imagine different roles of women who lived during this period, not treating them as depictions with confined meanings. In this sense, the portrayals can be read as mediatory images that substantively represent clusters of appearance, accentuating and illustrating different embodiments of mobility and agency that have burgeoned in modern South Korea, but by no means

4. In making this claim, I acknowledge the social capacity and social shaping of individual women's choices, as the choices are not only their own, but also a conglomerate of social forces and imaginative factors influenced by and influencing society, including who they think they are, who they want to be, and who they are perceived to be by other people. See Nancy Abelmann's study on women and their surroundings, including family members (Abelmann 2003).
5. For more on the "good wife and wise mother" (*hyeonmo yangcheo*) model and the depiction of femininity, see Choi (2009) and the next section of this article.

exclusive or categorical.

Located at the intersection of families, leisure, and a blossoming tourist industry, this article ponders the meaning of traveling women and their gender, power, and capitalist transformation in developing South Korea.[6] The first part of the article illuminates the tropes of family and gender in the context of touring *model family* advertisements, to be deconstructed in the second part of the article where women travel outside the protected bounds of this normalized *model family*. The conclusion will compound the two consequential representations by deliberating autonomy and self-will for women, located at South Korea's paths to industrialization and capitalist transformations. The section highlights the responsibilities of women constructed against the backdrop of a modernizing nation, as capitalism requires its citizens to perform certain roles for both work and leisure. Together, the article provides a critical analysis of gender norms, moral sentiments, and cultural obligations of women in developing Korea, aiming to broaden our understanding of the political, cultural, and social nature of different gender dynamics in a rapidly transforming society.

More Travel and Model Families in 1970s South Korea

If a popular South Korean women's magazine wanted to print advertisements targeting a *model family* headed by a breadwinner husband and a *full-time housewife*, the 1970s was the prime moment to do so.[7] Jang Migyeong, examining the gender politics of housewives within women's magazines in the 1960s and 1970s, noted that this was the period when full-time housewives became a systemic, stabilized norm in industrializing South Korean society, both in discourse and in practice. Before this, full-time

6. I use "gender" in the sense of Miyako Inoue's description, as "a system of ideological representation, allocating meanings and positions to concrete individuals and rendering them gendered subjects as men and women." As such, gender includes systematic beliefs practiced by attaching certain cultures and roles to individuals (Inoue 2006, 13).
7. For the formation of small patriarchal families as a modern family ideal (during the colonial period), see S. Lim (2018).

housewives as a social phenomenon became increasingly visible in colonial-era media, but not with the same frequency or importance as in postwar society. Jang also notes that many of the women's magazine's editors and writers were men, including named contributors and elite figures of society. Notwithstanding exceptions, their overarching influence shaped the patriarchal discourse of the magazines, indicating its conservative, moral overtones condemning women. Popular magazines often portrayed the *good wife, wise mother* figure as the ideal image for full-time housewives, discouraging characterizations of independence or social participation on the part of women (Jang 2007, 146–152).

Bonding the *good wife, wise mother* primarily to the household is a discourse that changed contour according to time and place, as it first landed in Korea at the turn of the 20th century and gained full momentum during the Park Chung-hee period. The discourse that women, as housewives, should *manage* the household is in itself a modern project, with connections to Meiji Japan's women's education and popularized in colonial Korea during the 1920s. Scientific management of the household included attention to child rearing, with an emphasis on hygiene, and economic operations that fit into the needs of the family and the government, both colonial and post-colonial. To the burgeoning nation, women became a target of *enlightenment* to shed off any traces of *backwardness*. The Park government inherited these colonial traces and amplified them during the nation-building 1960s and 1970s, with an emphasis on population control and national survival. Population control also indicated a pivot from a pre-modern large family to a small "modern" family, where the relationship between a husband, a wife, and their educable child took center stage as the main proponents of a family unit. In this family, the productive wife ran the household in a scientific manner, while new responsibilities tied her and her day-to-day activities to the household, strengthening the *good wife, wise mother* paradigm as part of the post-war nation-building project (Yi 2018, 15–93; A. J. Lee 2021, 69–92).

Not only was the 1970s a period full of opportunities for magazines to find full-time housewives, but also to find new consumers in advertisements for domestic travel as a leisure event. South Korea's leisure landscape and

patterns for travel changed rapidly during the Park Chung-hee period. Taking time off for *summer vacation* and traveling to the countryside became popular leisure activities as the nation's economy grew. During the 1960s, surveys still show that the most popular leisure activities included hobbies that cost little to no money, such as "listening to music, reading, playing Chinese chess, contemplation, and leisurely strolls in the neighborhood" (Song 2013, 85). However, by 1979, according to a study by a Seoul National University professor, an average of 50.7 percent of the South Korean population had been on a trip that involved at least one overnight stay (Yang 1979). Sociologists, such as Kim Mun-gyeom, label the 1970s a period of emerging leisure desires (M. Kim 1993). Observers have noted the flooding of mountains, temples, beaches, and riverbanks, alluding that outdoor leisure became a possibility, indicating a domestic travel boom in the late Park Chung-hee era as the nation's economy opened doors for new consumer activities (A. J. Lee 2021).

Magazine editors and businessmen were quick to respond to this trend. They captured the moment and rode the wave of making the most out of the domestic travel boom, especially by producing relevant advertisements and shopping columns. Thus, the magazines were both influenced by the travel boom, and in turn, influenced readers by promoting the trend and further encouraging people to become traveling consumers. Advertisements in popular women's magazines such as *Yeoseong jungang*, *Yeoseong Dong-A,* and *Elegance* all propagated, established, and promoted domestic traveling as an important leisure activity. The magazine companies created advertisements not only for travel merchandise, but also to provide relevant information on traveling, by offering tips and guides for tourists. This included suggesting potential destinations, as well as providing information on how to get to the destinations (including advertisements for tour buses and transportation schedules), what to do at the destinations, where to stay once you get there, and what to bring. In specials and serialized columns, the magazines provided all-inclusive informative sections about traveling, so that even people with no previous experience could learn and partake in the new vogue. Department stores, such as Midopa, often collaborated with

magazines to create special catalogs and shopping columns.[8] Department store managers or sales personnel directly contributed and drafted some of the articles.[9]

Travel merchandise advertisements and shopping columns included promotions of seasonal specials for timely purchases. During the summer vacation season, this included page after page of promotions for swimwear, beach hats, sunglasses, summer beach bags, and sandals. In one such advertisement, the August 1977 edition of *Yeoseong jungang* writes: "There are many things besides swimsuits that we need to prepare. Do not buy everything you need but think about what you can reuse from last year"[10] (*Yeosong jungang,* July 1977). Though short, the phrases in the advertisement are framed carefully to draw the consumer in many ways. First, it shortens the distance between the reader and the writer, by using words such as "we," to create an imaginary community shopping summer vacation goods together. This good intention and community-building intensifies in the second sentence, where the advertiser is considerate and offers caution on behalf of the consumer, by warning her against buying too much. Second, the advertisement argues that traveling is not as expensive as people might assume, as long as you are aware of your resources ('what you can reuse from last year') and allocate them wisely. The message of the advertisement is clear, nevertheless, as the bulk of the advertisement is devoted to introducing other beach accessories besides swimwear, for potential purchase.

In the fall and early winter seasons, advertisements and shopping

8. Midopa, alongside Misseukosi and Hwasin, was one of the oldest department stores in South Korea, tracing its history back to the colonial period. The store was in downtown Seoul until 1998 when the store was hit by the IMF crisis and filed for bankruptcy (Kim and Ju 2006).
9. The era's publishing norms made this trend possible; instead of having only in-house journalists write articles, magazine companies often outsourced their content, collecting articles and columns from contributors, including famous writers, newspaper journalists (often from the same publishing company, as was the case in *Yeoseong Dong-A* and *Dong-A Ilbo*), and social celebrities. The magazines I examine here published monthly editions.
10. All translations are the author's unless indicated otherwise.

guides promoted hiking destinations and travel goods for backpacking trekkers and mountain climbers. The advertisements encourage the purchase of hiking gear and sportswear, with the message that fall and early winter are the seasons to take your family to the mountains, climb them, and enjoy fresh crisp air and the leaves changing into beautiful fall colors. Similar to the advertisement about the swimsuit and other accompanying beach accessories, often the shopping guides draw consumers in by creating an imagined community of shoppers (to include the writer), to show the genuine intention of the writer. The writer assumes the tone of an expert in the field, knowledgeable about leisure goods, and wanting to offer help, even as the ultimate goal is to introduce new merchandise. The shopping guides often contain detailed information for inexperienced shoppers, introducing different locations to buy a range of travel goods. "For hiking goods, Seoul residents used to visit the East Gate Market areas. These days, however, popular destinations include the Mugyo-dong area, leisure merchandise corners in each department store, and Kolon [Koorong] Arcade" (*Elegance,* November 1976). The friendly writer continues to describe the different stores where shoppers can find a range of goods, often accompanied with information about such goods from the sponsor (Kolon Sports Company) and the prices of certain items. As such, instead of taking the position of a merchant or a vendor, the magazine shopping guides often take the stance of a good neighbor or a friend who is offering advice out of concern for the reader's well-being and happiness.

The *Model Family* in Travel-Themed Advertisements

Alongside the boom for advertisements and shopping guides on travel merchandise, some advertisements directly advertised a certain travel destination or a certain product with the family located in a tourist destination. Out of these advertisements, I focus on a common mise-en-scène established by portraying a *model family* of three to four members on holiday.[11] At close-

11. While "mise-en-scène" commonly refers to "setting the stage," I particularly focus on how

range view, the advertisement closes in on the family, and in the background or in the distant view, there is a beach, a mountain, or other leisure destination. The family consists of a father, a mother, and one or two young children. Common portrayals of the family mood include smiling faces and the family having fun (for instance, the children splashing in waves at a beach), to capture the atmosphere of the tourist destination. The father is often holding the youngest child, and the mother is often holding the hand of another child, or holding the hand of her husband. Sometimes the family is clad in outfits with similar colors or styles, often sharing a fabric pattern or design.

These advertisements stand out from the rest of the magazine in two ways. First, even in the 1970s, the bulk of the magazine was printed in black and white. Against these *content* pages, many of the advertisements and fashion pictorials were printed in bright colors, often on better-quality paper, making them distinct from the rest of the magazine. They were often located at the front or the back of the magazine, and sometimes in separate small sections (booklets) in the middle section.[12] Second, out of the colored pages, the travel-themed advertisements featuring *model families* stand out because many of the other color pictorials and advertisements feature either only women, in the case of women's clothing and fashion advertisements, or only men, for men's clothing advertisements. Fashion advertisements took up a considerable percentage of all advertisements during the 1970s, as the most commonly featured advertisement, compared to other types of advertise-

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the page comes together aesthetically to highlight the narrative.

12. Among other reasons, the mixed content, various representations, and heterogeneous content of the popular women's magazines during the Park Chung-hee era also illuminate the transforming, transnational setting of media production during the time period. Charles Kim has noted that in post-war South Korea, both Japanese and Euro-American cultural practices influenced both the production and consumption of media. Many people continued to use Japanese-driven loan words and English-inspired phrases, as Japanese and Euro-American culture was grafted onto the cultural landscape of magazine and print media production. The magazines having both glamorous, colored pictorials for advertisements and black-and-white didactic essays capture the changing, heterogeneous print environment well (C. Kim 2018, 27–45).

ments, including travel-themed ones.[13]

The reason there are only one or two young children featured in these *model family* advertisements relates to the family planning campaign of the Park Chung-hee government. In her work, "Socializing Childbirth: Korea's Family Planning Program in the 1960s and 1970s," Sohn Aelee argues that during the 1960s and 1970s, women's bodies not only became responsible for the nation through childbirth, but were put under the management of government administrators and medical authorities by a specific family planning program. In order to adequately control the country's demographic structure, the program encouraged married women to have no more than two children. While having more than three children was the norm before the Park Chung-hee period, the government's family planning program, with the catchy motto "Let's just have two children and raise them well" ('*Dulman naa jal gireuja*') had the goal of correcting the childbirth rate and managing the population. Son views these measures as driven by ideals of enlightenment and "forces of modernity," to create a new type of modern subject that adheres to new propositions of knowledge. Under these measures, South Korea's birth rate, which hovered over 6.3 in the immediate postwar period in the 1950s dropped to 4.3 in 1970 and further to 2.7 by 1978 (Sohn 2013).

Reflecting the family planning program, the advertisements with traveling families depict a family that adheres to the government standards. Magazine advertisements were mindful of the birth control campaign. The advertisements usually do not show couples with more than two children, often resorting to one child per family. Advertisements made for the Coca-Cola Company, frequently found in all three magazines throughout the 1970s, capture this atmosphere well. Since Coca-Cola was a soft drink with a high seasonal demand, especially during the summer vacation season, many of the Coca-Cola advertisements were travel-themed, such as a family

13. Food or kitchen item advertisements also mostly featured women alone (Oripyo sink advertisements), working in the kitchen (Hansang electronics advertisements), and sometimes feeding their young children (Geum Seong rice cooker and gas-burner advertisements), but more often, do not feature a full family.

enjoying their time together at a beach.[14] In the advertisements, the small family, with three to four members, is frequently standing in shallow water near the beach in swimwear, holding hands, next to a giant Coca-Cola bottle that has ice and appears to sweat in the hot summer weather.

The irony is that in actuality, many families during this period still had more than two children. One advertisement in *Yeoseong jungang*'s July 1977 edition for Fanta, a soft drink with fruit flavor made by the Coca-Cola Company, catches both this reality and also fits the *model family* mold by showing two families grouped together, instead of just one. By doing so, the total number of children portrayed in the advertisement is four, but it is ambiguously shown in a way that leaves the reader to guess whether both families have two children each, or whether one family has three children while the other has only one. Regardless of whether the two families can fit the family planning program or not, the reader acknowledges that they are enjoying their vacation together at a beach, with the soft drink contributing to the lively atmosphere. In the very back of the advertisement, there is an island and the ocean. In the middle distance, there are four children accompanied by the two fathers. One of the fathers is carrying on his shoulders his son, in a matching white-and-blue hat. The other father is holding the hands of his two children, all clad in swimsuits. Between the two fathers, there is a girl, who is also wearing a white-and-blue swimming cap, although in a different design. Because of her location in the middle, it is ultimately up to the reader to decide to which family the daughter belongs. By the matching colors of the hat, however, the reader may deduce that two of the children with the white-and-blue hats belong to one family and the other children (without hats) to the other, although flexibility remains. In front of the children and the fathers, who are emerging from the ocean towards the sandy beach, there are two mothers seated on a picnic mat on the sand, pouring the drinks out of bottles and into cups for their families.

14. Not all of Coca-Cola's travel-themed advertisements were targeted at summer audiences. Winter and spring advertisements also appeared with travel destinations in the background. Coca-Cola printed an advertisement in April 1972 of a couple enjoying a snow sled together, and in March 1973, printed an advertisement showcasing a famous ski resort with ski tourists (*Yeoseong Dong-A,* April 1972, March 1973).

The children and fathers are expectantly smiling, returning after having fun in the water. On the right side of the frame, there is an orange tent, and on the picnic mat, there are more than seven bottles of Fanta, the advertised drink.

In the nearest distance of the frame, separated from the contours of the family, there is a sweating Fanta bottle and a cup with ice filled with orange-flavored Fanta. The main caption reads: "The spring of joy—Fanta, tasty orange flavor." In the bottom corner of the advertisement, there is a motto printed in small but visible letters: "In a house where laughter blossoms, happiness blossoms!" Along with the photograph of the happy families, the advertisement's phrases extend the message and the atmosphere of the summer vacation. The message emphasizes undiluted delight, joy, happiness, and laughter felt by all the family members involved. Phrases such as "spring of joy" indicate that the origin of the pleasure of this smiling family is the Fanta drink. The caption on the bottom again highlights this aspect that conveys that the basic consumer unit for the soft drink is a family, as they are living together in a *house* of laughter.

In this *house* family unit, each member has their designated role. The two mothers are providing for the other family members by not joining the others in the water, but waiting on the beach and pouring drinks for the returning crew. This highlights how even on summer vacation, they are dutifully fulfilling their role as *good wives and wise mothers*, looking out for the rest of the family, and as the household manager, performing housework-like activities such as preparing drinks. She is creating a domestic atmosphere even outside the home, at the travel destination. They fit the frame of the model housewife—caring, providing, and supporting their husbands and children. The women's *laughter* in this advertisement is derived not by merrymaking or joining in the water, but by becoming supportive bystanders and domestic providers for the rest of the family. This message is verified by the picnic mat and the orange tent on the right side of the advertisement that resembles a replication of the domestic home, in which the kitchen is designated as the mother and wife's designated space, with the husband and children respectively going out and returning from work and school (*Yeoseong jungang,* July 1977).

Similar *model families* could be found in travel-themed advertisements, but with single families, and which advertise not a product but the tourist destination itself. An advertisement titled, "Dad let's go to Yeonpo!" features a family of four, all holding hands, at their summer travel destination of Yeonpo, a beach town in Chungcheongnam-do province, about three hours from the capital of Seoul by a car or a bus (Fig. 1). The beach town was first developed as a tourist destination in the late 1960s, and drew the Samsung corporation as its main developer in the early 1970s, later expanded into a major hub for summer vacation travelers with leisure houses and tourist accommodations. While the advertiser is anonymous and unidentified in the advertisement (the advertisement draws attention to the destination itself), there are two phone numbers at the bottom of the page, indicating that the phone call would reach "Yeonpo Project Management Department" (Yeonpo saeopbu) for tourists seeking further information.

The advertisement itself is rich in details and instructions for potential visitors and curious travelers who want something new and different for the summer traveling season. The catchphrase immediately below the title compares Yeonpo to other beach vacation locations: "This summer, let's please have a vacation that does not wear us out." The advertisement draws in the reader with this motto, resembling a plea from one family member to another. Yeonpo's advertisers recognize that the target audience is someone who is organizing a family vacation, and draws on the previous negative experiences they might have had in other tourist locations. The advertisement continues, promising that Yeonpo is a safe and tidy place, different from other places: "A disorderly (*mujilseo-han*) beach leaves the family tired with double fatigue (*piro-reul gyeopchige hamnida*). Yeonpo is a very orderly place, where there is nothing to be cautious about compared to disorderly destinations. Also, the infrastructure is complete and hygienic, making you feel refreshed, and keeps to a practical budget. Anyways, you can have your children play by themselves, and walk around the beach even at a late hour without feeling at ease. You know, Yeonpo is a good place for a vacation that does not leave you tired. Got it?"

This dialogue, written in a colloquial manner, conveys the feeling of a persuasion being made by a friend, rather than that of a stranger or

advertiser. By using informal words such as "anyways" ('*eojjaeteunyo*,' which is a misspelling of '*eojjaetdeunyo*') and "you know," the writer emphasizes the conversational context, far from formal, official tones, to reduce the psychological distance between reader and writer. This culminates in the ending phrase, "Got it?" (*jal asyeotjyo?*), which captures the intent of both persuasion and reassurance on the part of the writer, acting as a tool that requires a response from the reader. The writer resembles a chatty neighbor who is recommending a travel destination and soothing potential worries, such as about the fatigue or disorder one might encounter at a tourist destination during the peak summer season.

Just above the lengthy speech that promises sanitation and order, there are phone numbers of four tourist companies, and their tour buses designed to take you to Yeonpo by public transport. The advertisement is making sure that Yeonpo is within a reachable distance, with adequate measures of transport. The 1970s was a period when many people had yet to own their own car. Even in the country's capital, Seoul, the rate of automobile distribution for individual families still remained around 3 percent in 1970. This climbed dramatically during the 1980s, reaching 31.9 percent by the end of the 1980s, but in the 1970s, many people still depended on the availability of public transportation to reach long-distance destinations.[15] The four companies, Geumseong Tours, Seumail Tours, Sinhwa Tours, and Hannam Tours, operate buses together, connecting the capital Seoul with Yeonpo. The advertisement indicates that the buses depart every morning at 9:30 am, from the Hotel Silla (formerly known as Yeongbingwan) and in front of Jangchung Gymnasium (a famous Seoul landmark).

To the right of this message of persuasion, there is information about lodging and family events. Accompanying the information about public transportation and sanitary conditions, the advertisement specifies there are around one hundred "tidy" motels, including one named "leisure house,"

15. The Seoul City government provides this data on the Seoul City Statistics webpage, under the topics, transportation-transportation method-registered automobiles (monthly data, data according to county and district). See http://stat.seoul.go.kr/jsp/WWS8/WWSDS8111.jsp?cot=017.

with Westernized toilets and shower rooms. Again, the message focuses on safety and hygiene. The list of summer events includes a "beach school for children," "guitar concert," "TBC Show Show Show," "South Korea-China Go (*baduk*) competition," "South Korea-America friendly match of saltwater fishing," and "family-unit tennis competition." The event information makes clear that Yeonpo is a vacation destination that targets families, as the events include various entertainment programs for families, television broadcasts, and a sports competition with "family" as a unit.

What is most noticeable, apart from all this information, is of course the photograph used for the advertisement, revealing a *model family* enjoying its summer in Yeonpo. In the distant background, there are rocks and the ocean. In the middle distance, there is a yellow motel building on the left, with a family of four, all holding hands, walking past it. The advertisement features two children, one son and one daughter, with their smiling parents. The father is holding hands with his daughter, and the mother is holding hands with both the daughter and son. The father figure is wearing white trousers with a black shirt with pink, white, and violet flowers printed on the chest. The same pink, white, and violet flower pattern on black is replicated in the mother's dress. In this way, the family's attire is literally cut from the same cloth (*Yeoseong jungang,* August 1977).

Similar to the aforementioned Coca-Cola and Fanta advertisements with model families, the prominent atmosphere is delight and laughter felt during the summer vacation, to be enjoyed with the model family as a traveling unit. While well-curated and colorful in appearance, the advertisements stick to a template of the heteronormative family, suppressing the full range of gender identities even when it comes to issues of travel and leisure. While material gains became more visible in certain consumer spaces such as travel destinations with economic growth during the late 1960s, this gain did not necessarily translate into a more open, highly mobile consumer society (Song 2011). The advertisements capture this milieu well, as what is seen in the similar looks, similar smiles, and similar surroundings of the images in the archetypal reproductions of *model families*.

Yuhan Buin: *Leisure Women* and Their Real-life Excursions

> Once you get to make acquaintances with the rich "leisure women" (*yuhan buin*), they draw you into gambling card games (*hwatu*, or 'flower cards') for competition in a few meetings. Once women get into these gambling card games, they get drawn into the group even more to make up for the money that they lost in the games, without letting their husbands know. (*Sunday Seoul*, March 31, 1974)

In sharp contrast to the advertisements with happy, traveling families, Park Chung-hee period media also teem with warnings against the *leisure women*, and what happens once you make dangerous connections with them, as is connoted well in the *Sunday Seoul* newspaper article quoted above. The news snippet, though short, captures well the moral message and the hint of danger associated with *leisure women*, as a group that receives harsh sociocultural judgment. According to the article, the innocent woman who is "drawn into" gambling card games and meetings is sure to lose money and with the passing of time find herself in trouble. In the article, the "husband" is characterized as a pitiful figure who is left in the dark, without knowing that the household economy is being compromised from the inside-out, with housewives representing the *inside* activities of the family and the husband the *outside* activities as the breadwinner. In this way, playing the flower cards, as a leisure activity, comes at a high price that destabilizes the stable *model family* household, leading to a point of no return.

The early part of the newspaper article characterizing leisure women as wealthy speaks to the origins of this phrase in colonial period (1910–1945) popular media. While the Chinese character for "*yuhan*" in "*yuhan buin*" can be translated as "having leisure," or "having free time," this idleness connotes a condition where the women at leisure come from a moneyed background, or at least have the means and finances to enable her to enjoy her free time. Sometimes the descriptive term "*yuhan*" was combined with other words, such as "madame" or "housewife" to create variations of meaning. However, the word combinations in most cases carried the same

connotation and sense, with the most frequent characters being different types of women who either did not work or stayed at home, with their money and time provided from either inheritance or a working husband's salary. In essence, as a colloquial phrase, the boundaries of the group remained fluid, with no fixed meaning of belonging or definite criteria for its membership.[16]

Despite this flexibility, *yuhan buin* took on a new significance during the Park Chung-hee period. As the government took a gradually authoritarian turn, especially during the 1970s after the enactment of the 1972 Yusin Constitution, it renewed its concerns and gave more attention to this group. In a modernization campaign against *decadent* consumer behavior, the Park government launched an attack against "tendencies of luxurious consumption and wastefulness" (*sachi-wa nangbi pungjo*), targeting especially the country's youth and women. Newspapers joined in the government campaigns to write reports against this type of behavior, with the two groups in mind. Scholars argue that as a modernizing force, the government went so far as to diagnose South Korean society as a diseased one, in which the government took on the role of *doctor* treating decadent *patients* in need of guidance and enlightenment. Decadent venues included coffee shops, high-class restaurants, billiard halls, and dance halls (Hwang 2011, 148–151). Personal desires, impulses, tastes, and likes were often considered to be wasteful and extravagant, under the scrutiny of productivity and the utility value of a modernizing, industrializing society (Song 2021, 176–178).

Leisure wives were at the forefront of this alleged *decadent* consumer

16. A term that enjoyed popularity in the 1950s also includes the postwar media sensation "*jayu buin*" or "Madame Freedom," first a character based on the fictional work of Jeong Bi-seok that became a recognized social category of its own, popularized in other media forms such as films. Associated with extramarital affairs, dance halls, and moral impropriety (C. Kim 2018, 22, 46), the term illuminated the social anxiety of postwar gender relations, by portraying a married woman leaving her home after the war, rejecting the roles of housewife and mother. The phrase "freedom" (*jayu*) captures the chaos and confusion in boundary-making practices, as well as searches for meaning immediately after the Korean War (S. A. Lim 2005).

trend. For instance, in 1978, the November 18 issue of *Dong-A Ilbo* reported, "Aberrant trends of luxurious consumption and wastefulness are spreading in some circles. The streets of Seoul's Myeongdong and Chungmuro, known as the district that creates the latest domestic fashion, are lined up with luxury boutiques for Western clothes and Western items. If the Myeongdong streets are for people in their twenties during the evening and night, from 11 am to 4 pm, daytime Myeongdong is the luxurious exhibition hall for 'leisure housewives' (*yuhan jubu-deul*) in their thirties and forties to boast of their wealth and extravagance" (*Dong-A Ilbo,* November 18, 1978). The lengthy description squarely targets youth ('people in their twenties') and married women ('in their thirties and forties') as the people who visit Myeongdong, the proposed origin of this national vice of decadent behavior. The active hours of housewives to shop are confined to the day, and phrases such as "aberrant" indicate that there is moral judgment attached to what is considered normal behavior for consumption habits, as "luxury" products are designated abnormal, residing outside the confines of this healthy consumer behavior. Phrases such as "some circles" also highlight the weight that the government is putting on normalcy, as people displaying luxury items are considered to be exceptional, outside the boundary of ordinary, good citizens. In Park Chung-hee's South Korea, good citizens were citizens who detested vanity, extravagance, corruption, and incompetence, while embracing "productive subjectivity" towards the goals of modernization (Chu 2018, 203).

Like the *model family* advertisements, essays connecting "*yuhan buin*" and travel for leisure, and condemning this connection, made recurring appearances in magazines and newspapers throughout the 1970s. The columns mostly denounce the activities and consumer behavior, including the traveling habits of the so-called leisure women. In August 1971, *Yeoseong jungang* printed a series titled, "Special: Summer Vacation," with one of the sections titled, "Vacation Can be Your Disease or Your Medicine," written by a hospital director. The column vehemently asserts that leisure activities had to be planned and executed carefully in a "correct" (*olbareun*) manner. As the title suggests, the author proclaims that leisure can be either a good thing or a bad thing for you, depending on how you use it. Proper ways to plan

leisure included building "wholesome" relationships with friends and having fun by giving back to the community through volunteer activities. Improper ways to plan leisure include spending too much on your vacation. This was what *leisure women* were prone to do. The author laments that he has even heard of cases of them obtaining loans to pay for expensive leisure activities. As a doctor, the author argues that such "evils of leisure" had to be fundamentally prevented for society (*Yeoseong jungang,* August 1971).

Such criticism and didactic tones did not belong to male contributors alone. In a column titled "Is the Decade of the 1970s Only One of Materialism?" with the subheading "People are supposed to long for mental, and psychological nourishment after their stomachs are full," Jeon Suk-hui, a famous writer and essayist, laments the decade's materialistic problems and writes a philosophical text on how to go beyond this to attain "new ideals of art and philosophy past the dangerous endemic of decadence and the idol worship of materiality."[17] Like the government, Jeon also targets youth and housewives as the two groups at the center of the trend of materialistic behavior. Jeon asks: "Why are children from well-to-do families becoming more decadent, and idle housewives (*yuhan-han gajeong jubu-deul*) living in worry with some of them at the center of spreading shameful scandals?" (*Yeoseong jungang,* January 1971). In Jeon's view, they are waiting for something to save them from this "soul's hunger and thirst" that differs from the body's hunger, and which can only be satisfied with affluent material culture. In this way, Jeon condemns the *decadent* material pursuits of *yuhan* housewives, showing that author gender alone is not be the characterizing feature of such didactic essays.

As highlighted in these essays, the expansion of leisure and travel industries did not necessarily precipitate the advent of a society more

17. Jeon's earlier work encompassed fiction, but in her later career she became an essayist. Born during the Japanese colonial period, Jeon also wrote about her experiences during the Korean War, and worked as a translator and journalist. In postwar society, Jeon was a member of the Nakrang Club, an organization often criticized for its pro-American elitism and its political support of President Syngman Rhee. Jeon also harbored a positive view of traditional Korean culture and believed that it should be promoted as a form of cultural outreach (J. Kim 2019; Seo 2016).

understanding and lenient towards women traveling alone. With the essays and advertisements, discourses on *leisure women* bring attention to gender constraints, even as women were becoming traveling consumers. Women apart from their families caused anxiety for the male members of South Korean society, to include the magazine contributors and editors. Period essays perceived women traveling alone as *running away* from household duties, as women were bound with their families as a unit, even in leisure activities and in travel destinations. While Korean popular media has always been quick to reflect on women "caught between traditional and new moral sensibilities" (J. Lee 2015, 11), catching them in their solitary travels was a relatively new phenomenon for the magazines to write about in 1970s South Korea.

This social discouragement of women traveling alone reverberated with the era's developmental ethos, propagated by the Park Chung-hee government but also disseminated in society by popular media. Foucault's governmentality is a useful concept allowing us to think about the era's gender demands in a hegemonic manner. According to Foucault, the government, as well as other willingly participating social institutions (including media sources), govern people's conduct, guiding and shaping their behavior in accordance with a communal goal such as modernization (Foucault 2010). In this way, governmentality for gender behavior can reverberate both inside and outside government institutions, including a society's popular media outlets. Popular women's magazines and newspapers in 1970s South Korea capture this disciplinary manner well.

Against these moral and disciplinary demands, the *yuhan buin* travelers created narratives apart from national and social governmentalities. A traveler is someone who gains distance from where they used to be, indicating a certain sense of separation and liberation, temporarily toppling the rules that held tight the traveler in their everyday structures. Im Jeong-yeon, in *Travel, Gender, Space*, calls traveling alone an experience of acquiring "otherness," as one's sense of geo-positivity, including fixed impressions of race, gender, generation, and class, temporarily dissolves based on new discoveries and the desire to rearrange previous relationships with society and self (Im 2022, 13–17). Traveling alone allows women to *see*

instead of *be seen*, suggesting that individual intentions and senses are no longer suppressed or presupposed according to a group or nation. Im borrows Kim Hui-ok and Gabriel Marcel's analysis that travel narrates *departure*. As "Homo Viator," or someone on a quest or journey, Hestia and Penelope from Greek mythology, who used to stay by the kitchen hearth, providing food and a comfortable bed as they await a husband's return, suddenly depart and accept new meanings (Im 2022, 117–234; H. Kim 2005, 48; Marcel 1951).

That said, publications with images invite imagination, and suggest that ultimately the process of visual mediation is up to the viewer. Christina Klein (2020), although looking at film instead of still images, also focuses on this aspect when looking at representations of women and didactic messages, to suggest that a film invites multiple interpretations. When people view *Madame Freedom* (*Jayu buin*, 1956), for instance, an era-defining film by director Han Hyung-mo, who adapted Jeong Bi-seok's fictional work, they can come away with multiple messages. The film portrays the protagonist as a decadent woman, condemning luxurious lifestyles. In the end, the protagonist repents her lifestyle and returns to her home and husband. Even in this case when the message is clear, the film invites multiple interpretations and voices. Viewers can either "read with the grain" to accept the didactic message of warning against luxury, or "read against the grain," as the representation offers new ways for women in the audience to imagine new subjectivities and consumer lifestyles. The viewer chooses between these competing interpretations, which to privilege and which to discard (Klein 2020, 85–107). In the same way, even if the magazine advances certain messages via advertisements or essays, some viewers are going to take in the presented message and go with the grain to a dominant discourse, while others will go against the grain to imagine and articulate emergent perspectives. The 1970s was a period of rapid social transformation, and the question of openness in interpretation should always be considered in any attempt to analyze the visual representations of popular women's magazines.

Conclusion

Taken together, advertisements and essays reveal South Korean society's constitution of gender based on morality and social obligations, on women and their multiple roles including as housewives, mothers, independent women, and consumers of leisure and travel. In developing South Korea, the *appropriate* roles of families and women were largely composed and ensconced in narratives based on the sustainability of production for fast industrialization. Popular women's magazines shaped and responded to the socio-economic changes of the 1960s and 1970s. Both the advertisements and essays reflect that society's vision of modernization, including its views on family management and the roles women should perform, even as advertisements were selling commodities and reflecting the cultural shifts towards leisure travel. How the women's magazines portray gender, autonomy, and community reflects the era's values, goals, and anxieties, as social transformation and economic growth did not dissolve, but in many ways condensed, the management of gender and family relations.

While government censorship of magazines still existed during the Park Chung-hee period (1961–1979), the sociopolitical aspects of South Korean society were motivators enough for advertisers to create advertisements surrounding *model families*, with women as their target audience. Even without any external pressure from the government to reinforce images of the model family, the advertisers and the magazines made a commercial choice on their part, to use the representations as part of the sales initiatives for commodities and travel destinations. The magazine writers acknowledged the applicability of such models in the context of period social imaginings and cultural standards. Postwar South Korean society expected women to be responsible mothers and wives, even in the context of their *temporary* flight to tourist destinations. As seen in the Coca-Cola and Fanta advertisements discussed here, the images normalized the duty of women to pour drinks for their husbands and children and not join them in the water for leisure activities. Their attached roles, as housewives in charge of food and snack provision, followed them to their travel destinations without relief. The women would be assigned to bring their family support

even during the excursion, connoting that materialistic pursuits and leisure activities could be done in communal contexts, not automatically translating into independence, agency, or individualism.

Miyako Inoue (2007), writing about commodity advertisements in Japanese women's magazines from 1900 to the 1930s, observed that in an advertisement, unlike in books where the script offers a chance for readers to engage in linear reading, the imagined scene presents itself as the "here and now" to the viewer. In Inoue's reading of the advertisements, visual and physical texts coexist to complement and illustrate each other. Thus, unlike the textual flow of linear reading, texts and images together disrupt and momentarily *suspend* the flow of reading, grabbing the attention and focus of the viewer. Although the meanings from the advertisements are by no means fixed, flexibly construed by respective viewers, the advertisement's materiality, with images and texts perceived simultaneously, introduces a new mode of reading experience. I draw on this sense of presence and immediacy of an advertisement on the experiencing subject, which Inoue observed as a crucial tool for building the relationship between the perceiver and the perceived. This sense also corresponds to reflections on the viewer's relationship to the *model family*, centered and located at a tourist destination, in the travel-themed advertisements. The advertisement, in a way, creates an immediate and almost *inescapable* imagery for the viewer, and a brief moment for transposition to occur between the reader and the figure in the advertisement, in this case the traveling housewife.

Escaping this inescapable freeze-frame of time in captured images, however, leisure women drew their own boundaries and presented an autonomy far from the morality cultivated by the authoritarian government. If the women traveling with their husbands and children in the advertisements are *seen* as still wedded to their role as mothers and wives even at a travel destination, women traveling alone or with other women *see* and explore, mediating new concepts of mobility and immobility. Outside the designated boundaries of appropriateness, *leisure women* attempted to carve their own consumer existence and subjectivity, even as they met perceptual judgments regarding their myriad choices and decisions. On the act of women traveling, Ji-eun Lee observed in her essay on women's travel

journals from the turn of the 20th century, "The presumptive mold of a 'cult of domesticity' that places men outside and women inside the home no longer applies for travelers, whether men or women. It also places women among strangers and in situations where she cannot always rely on men" (J. Lee 2023, 79).[18] This act of *leaving* connotes that women, through mobility, could exercise alternativity and non-conformity.[19] They extended beyond the conventions of their domestic experiences, even as a mode of temporary suspension.[20]

Against political and social structures that bound women to a certain position, *travel* by women, and for women, became a micro-protesting tool to unpack some of the complexities of gendered identities during the Park Chung-hee period. *Yuhan buin* excursions connote the possibilities of temporary mobility away from familial identities, rearranging the cultural position of women in relation to a predominantly patriarchal, developmental society. Anxieties from this social frame were reflected in a discriminatory fashion, in the form of criticizing the relative freedom characterized by the act of traveling outside a patriarch-headed family. In contrast, stereotypical sex roles shown in the *model family* advertisements include not only the traditional positions of women, but also the era's political demands, expressed in different ways, such as the images showing two or three children based on the era's "let's only have two and raise them well" slogan for population control. They are surrounded by family members and sometimes pour drinks for the husband and the child, even at a beach, as a productive task. If the *good wife, wise mother* is an ideal for the developing nation even while women are on vacation, as shown in the *model family* advertisements, *yuhan buin* are granted leave against domesticity and patterns of everyday life based on family structures.

Of course, gender identities during this period were fluid and not

18. And through traveling, the hegemony encompassing everyday gender relations can be temporarily overcome (J. Lee 2023, 79).
19. In a sense, women *traveling* and women *writing* share similarities, as they attain and accrue *new momentum* through a public outlet (Y. Kim 2010, 1–14).
20. On the alternative possibilities for experiences of mobility and non-conformity, see H. S. Kim (2022).

confined or exclusionary, sometimes with respective identities overlapping each other. There were no fixed points on what mobility meant for South Korean women, as all spheres of South Korean life, including the political, economic, and social, underwent rapid change throughout the transformative 1970s. Women traveling by themselves or with their families could also mean different narratives for different people, in various contexts. Even so, what traveling represented, in various contexts, especially for *leisure women*, offers us a window for considering what Arjun Appadurai calls a "subversive micro-narrative" (Appadurai 1996, 10), a narrative that has the power to fuel change, even in societies such as the Park Chung-hee era South Korea, a society that guarded and confined women's travels in many ways. Through travel, the position of women becomes no longer a fixed identity but an intersection of a collection of social relations. The women's magazines become an important medium allowing readers to unearth the layers of contradictions formed and anchored in their everyday lives. How *leisure women* stepped outside the boundaries of *appropriateness* of South Korean society of the Park era, while being condemned by many, highlights all the more the transformative power of their mobility, an aspect that transfigured the existing vectors of gender, identity, and agency in 1970s South Korea.

Figure 1. Dad, Let's Go to Yeonpo!

Source: Yeoseong jungang (August 1977).

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