



## ***Yeohaksaeng on the Streets: The Participation and Marginalization of Yeohaksaeng in the April 19 Revolution***

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the distinction between forms of participation for high school and university yeohaksaeng (female students) in the April 19 Revolution. Most yeogosaeng (female high school students) were enrolled in all girl high schools. Yeogosaeng entered scenes of protest via the Hakdo hogukdan (National Student Defense Corps) that were established in every school by the Korean government. The purpose of the Hakdo hogukdan was to regulate and mobilize students into government-sponsored demonstrations. Ironically, this organization actually worked to give high school students political experience. The government sponsored district events for the Hakdo hogukdan from various schools, during which student representatives of the forged personal networks with other students. On the other hand, participation in the April 19 Revolution by yeodaesaeng (female university students) differed from that of yeogosaeng. Ewha and Sookmyung Women's University yeodaesaeng did not participate in the demonstrations. The absence of these yeodaesaeng cast a negative light on the general yeodaesaeng image, and, in turn, consolidated a namhaksaeng (male student)-centric episteme for the April 19 Revolution. However, this paper argues that this androcentric view of the Revolution, and the namhaksaeng-centric networks that were essential to it, effectively marginalized the yeodaesaeng from participation.*

**Keywords:** April 19 Revolution, students, *dabang*, *yeohaksaeng*, *yeogosaeng*, *yeodaesaeng*, *namhaksaeng*, networks

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## Introduction

Democracy is a dynamic force in South Korea. In the recent Candlelight Movement, South Korean even supplanted their president. These candlelight rallies and demonstrations began in late October of 2016 to protest the president and her aid's monopolization of state affairs. The protest snowballed and by December 3, 2.32 million people, including 1.7 million in Seoul, were joining the candlelight rallies and demonstrations nationally. As the situation escalated, citizens marched to the Blue House demanding the president's resignation. Pressured by popular demand, the National Assembly approved the indictment of impeachment on December 9. The Constitutional Court, citing the unanimous decision of the court justices on the indictment proposal, then removed the president. Rallies and demonstrations continued until the impeachment was final. In the 134 days of the Candlelight Movement, up to 16 million South Koreans had participated (Oh 2017, 453–454).

The Candlelight Movement is a clear example of democracy at work. It traces its precedent to earlier events in the contemporary history of South Korea. South Koreans confronting undemocratic and corrupt power is no recent phenomenon. The June Resistance of 1987, for example, highlights South Koreans' resistance to military dictatorship, demand for Constitutional revision, and ultimately overthrow of that dictatorship. The estimated total number of participants in the 1987 resistance, which spanned about a month up through June 10, reached four to five million (Seo 2011, 529). Although the military dictatorship did not collapse immediately, the people of South Korea received from the authoritarian government a pledge for democratization (i.e., direct presidential elections). The amendment of the South Korean Constitution made possible by this resistance ushered in a full-scale democratization process in the 1990s, and effectively brought an end to a military regime that went back to 1961.

The Gwangju Uprising of May 1980 is another example of popular resistance. In the course of these events, 300,000 of Gwangju's 800,000 residents took to the streets. Some, armed with guns, formed militias and resisted the coup d'état of the army. Although the resistance collapsed in the

face of heavy casualties (more than 200 Gwangju residents were killed),<sup>1</sup> in the hearts of many South Koreans the Gwangju Uprising came to symbolize the South Korean people's strong desire for democracy.

Among the many events that led to the democratization of South Korea, the April 19 Revolution of 1960 was the first indication of the people's ardent desire for democracy. Outraged by the corruption of the March 1960 presidential and vice presidential election, people poured into the streets to protest the rigged election. The demonstrations continued for several days and eventually erupted in April 19 as 100,000 people joined the protests in major cities like Seoul, Busan, and Gwangju. On that day alone, 123 people died at the hands of a police crackdown (Research Institute of Korean Democracy 2008, 134). After the proclamation of martial law, the demonstration lulled briefly, but regained its strength on April 25. The next day, 100,000 people again filled the streets as they had a week previous and demanded President Syngman Rhee's resignation. Now the military, mobilized by martial law, was no longer willing to suppress the demonstrators. Forced into a corner, Rhee announced his resignation later that day.

The April 19 Revolution was an decisive moment in South Koreans' attainment of freedom and democracy. This revolutionary experience offered great impetus to the democratization movement in South Korea. During the days of the revolution, high school students were the first to take to the streets, and university students were at the vanguard when the revolution reached its climax on April 19. After the fall of the dictatorial government, South Korean society lauded the students who had risked their lives at the forefront of the revolution, and society baptized the students, particularly the university students, as *young lions*.

*Young Lions* is originally the title of a novel by Irwin Shaw published in 1948. Narrating the story of three young soldiers in World War II, the novel

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1. The Gwangju Uprising spanned ten days, from May 18 to 27, 1980. According to official numbers, 166 died in the uprising. In addition, at least 60 people went missing in Gwangju during the events, and it is assumed that a significant number of people were buried in secret after being killed by military forces (Truth Commission of the Ministry of National Defense 2007, 438).

describes the human experience amidst the devastation of war. The novel was turned into a film in 1958, and it met with tremendous popularity when released in South Korea the following year. So much so that the term young lions (*jeolmeun saja*) became a buzzword in late-1950s South Korea. The term would become common in lauding students as the heroes of the April 19 Revolution.

The problem, however, was the extremely masculine connotations of the term *young lions* (Kwon and Chun 2012, 481–485). Not only does the term insinuate or conjure up the image of a tenacious lion, but the protagonists in the novel and film were all men. This is evident in the image



**Figure 1.** Cover of *Sawol hyeongmyeong: hakdo-ui pi-wa seungni-ui girok* (The April Revolution: A Record of the Blood and Victory of Students)

Source: Reporters on the Front Line (1960).

of a lion gracing the cover of a record of the April 19 Revolution published by journalists after the event, where the overt emphasis on the lion's mane furthers the masculine imagery of *young lions*.

It is indisputable that the majority of student participants in the revolution were *namhaksaeng* (male students), as South Korean high schools and universities had larger male than female populations. However, to argue that the strong masculine connotation of the April 19 Revolution results from the larger *namhaksaeng* population would be a naïve deduction. It would be necessary, first, to outline how *yeohaksaeng* (female students) participated in the revolution, what differences exist between non-participant *yeohaksaeng* and participant *yeohaksaeng*, and why the symbols

of the April 19 Revolution exclude feminine counterparts. In order to answer these questions, this paper will focus on the organizations and networks of students in the April 19 Revolution.

Due to the resiliency of masculine projections of the April 19 Revolution, feminine representation in the April 19 Revolution has long been neglected as a subject of research. The fiftieth anniversary of the April 19 Revolution in 2010, however, was a turning point in the historiography of the revolution, offering scholars the opportunity to critique it from a feminist perspective.<sup>2</sup> These scholars point out three main contents. First, a *namhaksaeng*-centric epistemology and narrative of the April 19 Revolution excluded women (along with the urban poor), although mothers, *yeohaksaeng*, and prostitutes had participated in the demonstrations. Second, the critique of women as sources of corruption and degeneration had amplified through the experiences of the April 19 Revolution and the May 16 coup d'état. In particular, critiques of the discourse on liberal and positivist women, such as *après-girl*, which was prevalent from the 1950s, increased. Among such critiques, slogans like "send women back home!" revived the *hyeonmo yangcheo* (a wise mother and good wife) image of womanhood. Third, despite women's leading roles in the New Life Movement (*sinsaenghwal undong*), one of various social movements to emerge from the April 19 Revolution, Korean society misinterpreted social contradictions as personal issues, and relegated various revolutionary demands to the confines of New Life.

We can catch glimpses of how androcentric society and discourses systematically excluded women in the remembrance of the April 19 Revolution. This paper is indebted to studies on women's participation in the April 19 Revolution made since 2010, which have increased our understanding of how women were systematically ignored or excluded in the official discourse of the April 19 Revolution. However, overall these studies offer somewhat simplified and generalized narratives on women in the revolution, while ascribing arbitrary meaning to fragmented cases by ignoring the historical context. As a result, the definitive factors in women's

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2. Mi-ran Kim (2010); J. Kim (2010); Park (2010); Yoon (2010); Kwon (2010).

participation in the April 19 Revolution remain unexamined. Above all, the critique of androcentric historiography has yet to answer the question of how we are examine the April 19 Revolution through the lens of feminine subjectivity.

In overcoming arbitrary interpretations that simply enumerate and fragment cases without any contextual considerations, this paper seeks to analyze feminine subjects' participation in or absence from the April 19 Revolution by focusing on student organizations and networks. Despite the fact that *yeohaksaeng* held particular social identities as women and as students enrolled in a particular school, previous studies have neglected these backgrounds of feminine subjects. Analyses of organizations and networks in gender-specific and co-educational institutions will further our understanding of *yeohaksaeng* participation, or the lack thereof, in the April 19 Revolution.

### **Organizing Yeogosaeng Demonstrations**

Some of the early leaders in the April 19 Revolution were high school students. These students spurred and spread the revolutionary fervor. At the height of events on April 19, *yeohaksaeng* joined their male classmates as students protested in all corners of the country. Because most high schools at this time were gender-specific, *yeogosaeng* (girls high school students) joined the demonstrations as a part of their *yeogo* (girls high school) networks.

On February 28, 1960, high school students in Daegu raised the curtains on the revolution. First, Gyeongbuk and Daegu high school students advanced into the streets. Upon hearing news of the demonstration, student representatives from Gyeongbuk Girls High School decided to join the protest. School authorities, in an effort to prevent student participation, dismissed the students from school individually in the evening, but the students gathered soon after and rushed to the demonstration site. Around a hundred Gyeongbuk Girls High School students joined with Daegu Girls High School students. However, the police dispersed the *yeogosaeng* demonstrators. Around 30 students were taken into custody, and the police

subjected them to verbal and physical abuse (Ahn and Hong 1960, 100–101).

Before and after the rigged election of March 15, high school student protests erupted nationally. Among these demonstrations, there are significant cases of *yeogosaeng* demonstrating. On March 14, the police took five students from Jeonju Girls High School and Jeonju Girls Commercial High School into custody for planning demonstrations. On March 16, Jinhae Girls High School ventured into the protest. On March 25, in Busan, around 100 students from Theresa Girls High School and 20 from HyEwha Girls High School joined the demonstrations. On April 11, the missing body of Kim Joo-Yeol, who had participated in the demonstrations about a month previous, surfaced just off the coast of Masan, sparking *yeohaksaeng* in Masan to join the demonstrations, singing the Yu Gwan-Sun song. On April 12, student representatives from Masan Girls High School and Sungji Girls High School decided to protest, and about a thousand students from the two schools join the demonstrators the following day. On the same day, Masan Jeil Girls High School students in the demonstration chanted, “The police must take responsibility for the killing of students!” and “Down with the rigged election, redo with a clean election!” On April 18, 300 Cheonju Girls High School students also joined in the demonstrations (Ahn and Hong 1960, 144–206).

It would be fair to assume that these the previous are only a small sampling of *yeogosaeng* demonstration efforts. Preventive measures by *yeogo* (girls high school) authorities to stop their students from demonstrating were often more thorough than at *namgo* (boys high school). For example, when Busan high school students marched to Gyeongnam Girls High School to request the latter students’ cooperation, the teachers at the girls high school confined the *yeohaksaeng* to an auditorium and locked the doors (K. Lee 1960, 66). Ultimately, efforts to demonstrate by Gyeongnam Girls High School students were thwarted.

*Yeohaksaeng* demonstrations were generally done in collaboration with the *namhaksaeng* of the same district. Generally speaking, demonstrations by *yeohaksaeng* and *namhaksaeng* can be categorized into three types. The first category is when *namhaksaeng* and *yeohaksaeng* pre-arranged

and executed plans for a collaborative demonstration. Dongrae High School, HyEwha High School, and Theresa Girls High School students in Busan, upon mutual agreement, sought to demonstrate together. Although never realized, this was a notable case of *namhaksaeng* and *yeohaksaeng* cooperation (Ahn and Hong 1960, 265–266; K. Lee 1960, 99). Masan student demonstrations after the recovery of Kim Joo-Yeol's body on April 11 are another example. The second type is when *namhaksaeng* demonstrations occurred first, and without prior planning, *yeohaksaeng* in the district joined in a sort of chain reaction. A few instances of this type include the February 28, 1960 demonstration by Gyeongbuk Girls High School, the March 25 demonstration by Theresa Girls High School students, and the April 18 demonstration by Cheonju Girls High School students. The third category is when *yeohaksaeng* demonstrated independently apart from *namhaksaeng*. Jinhae Girls High School students' demonstration on March 16 was such an independent demonstration. Demonstrations by *namhaksaeng* of Jinhae High School followed the next day.

Regardless of the gender confines at each school, student demonstrations in the April 19 Revolution tended to organize and operate through corresponding schools.<sup>3</sup> This was related to student experiences in the Hakdo hogukdan (National Student Defense Corps, or Student Corps). The Korean government created the Student Corps and throughout the 1950s sought to control and mobilize students in a top-down fashion. The government sought to regulate the students, and did so, in a military-like system. The Student Corps constantly mobilized its students for government-sponsored demonstrations, meaning that students were deployed in public campaigns organized by the government. Students internalized these routine experiences of organized action and street demonstration under the

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3. This is not to say that all high school students in the demonstrations were manipulated systematically. Particularly in Seoul on April 19 and April 26, students often protested individually. Most of these students protested individually and with friends because their schools were not systematically participating in the protests. The April 19 Revolution was not restricted to the dates of April 19 and 26, but spanned about two months, and was also not limited to the vicinity of Seoul but expanded into a national movement. Therefore, it is natural to assume that these high school demonstrations were generally organized by schools.



guidance of the Student Corps. The unintended consequence was that these experiences contributed to student engagement in the April 19 Revolution. In effect, instances of high school student representatives of the Student Corps plotting to participate in anti-government demonstrations were not uncommon.

By the dawn of the April 19 Revolution, *namhaksaeng* and *yeohaksaeng* had accumulated significant experience in protest through their participation in the Student Corps (Ahn and Hong 1960, 64). For this reason, one South Korean intellectual commented on student experience in demonstrations as follows:

Students in this [South Korean] society have experience in government-sponsored demonstrations of all sorts. These demonstrations were a means to benefit the dictatorial government. However, the April Revolution was accomplished with the same methods as those used to benefit the government. The irony of history lies here. (Han 1960, 40)

Another unintended consequence of the Student Corps experience from the 1950s was the formation of close networks between student representatives of corresponding districts. Since the Student Corps was organized under the aegis of the government, several schools in the same district were often mobilized in unison, in accordance with governmental demands. Also, with increased contact among student representatives, the formation of relationships and connections also increased. Student representatives in the 1950s were able to accumulate experience in cooperative action through these networks.

These student networks offered a framework through which the students could function once the events of the April 19 Revolution began. The ten students who led the Daegu *haksaeng* demonstrations of February 28, 1960 included the vice chairperson of the Gyeongbuk High School Student Corps and the chairperson of the Daegu High School Student Corps. It helped that they were friends who consulted each other on a regular basis (Ahn and Hong 1960, 97–98). The torchlight demonstrations instigated by students in Seoul on March 14, the day before the rigged

election, were also an example of cooperative mobilization by students from various schools who met frequently (Hong 2010, 396–397). Student Corps were in *namgo* (boys high schools) as well as in *yeogo* (girls high schools), which meant that *yeogosaeng* also played a significant part in these networks. However, as seen in the Daegu demonstrations, *namhaksaeng* were at the epicenter of these networks, with the degree of *yeohaksaeng* coherence varying by district.

### **The Absence of Yeodaesaeng**

Unlike high school students who took the lead in the early stages of the April 19 Revolution, *daehaksaeng* (university students) were unseen. There are two logical explanations for this. First, universities also had Student Corps, but their sphere of influence was less prominent than high school Student Corps. Cases of university students mobilized for government-sponsored demonstrations were also rare. In other words, university students lacked the experience of collective action with the Student Corps. Second, universities were concentrated in the metropolis of Seoul, whereas high schools were dispersed among different districts. The rigged election was in March, when university classes were not yet in session, and the majority of the university students whose homes were located in regions beyond Seoul had not yet returned. Any joint effort by university students was not easy under these conditions.

However, the shock of finding the floating body of Kim Joo-Yeol on April 11 intensified the demonstrations in and beyond Masan, and university students then returning to Seoul for classes began to mobilize. Korea University students were the first to stream into the streets on April 18, but political hoodlums incited by the government ambushed them and injured around a hundred students. The next day, on April 19, university students from almost all of the universities in downtown Seoul flooded the streets in protest.

The absolute majority of the university student rioters were *namhaksaeng* since the proportion of males among university students was overwhelmingly

high. Of 101,041 university students in South Korea in 1960, 83,622 (82.8%) were *namhaksaeng* and merely 17,419 (17.2%) were *yeohaksaeng* (Ministry of Education 1963, 337). However, simple numerical differences in the gender binary are not enough to explain the overwhelming male presence. In 1960, of 273,434 high school students, 202,246 (74%) were male and 71,188 (26%) were female (Ministry of Education 1963, 337). The deviation is smaller than that of university students. However, the gender equilibrium in high schools was also disproportionate.

A key factor in focusing on the *namhaksaeng* presence was, in effect, due to the lack of participation by women's universities (where majority of *yeodaesaeng* enrolled) in the revolution, especially prominent institutions like Ewha Womans University and Sookmyung Women's University. High schools were categorically gendered, while most universities were co-educational institutions. However, there were exclusively *yeodae* (women's universities) as well. Particularly, women's universities like Ewha and Sookmyung accounted for more than half of the entire *yeodaesaeng* population. Among 17,419 *yeodaesaeng* in 1960, 7,701 (44.2%) and 3,036 (17.4%) were enrolled at Ewha and Sookmyung Women's University, respectively.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the proportion of *yeodaesaeng* in co-ed institutions was rather miniscule. Statistical deficiency makes it difficult to accurately depict the circumstances in 1960, but according to a study on Seoul National University (SNU), the largest institute of higher learning at the time, in 1962, of a student body of 11,127, 9,767 (87.8%) were *namhaksaeng* and 1,360 (12.2%) were *yeohaksaeng* (Yoon and Jung 1963, 1). Although *yeodaesaeng* participated in the cooperative demonstrations at co-ed universities on April 19, *yeodaesaeng* remained largely invisible due to the absence of students from Ewha Womans University and Sookmyung Women's University.

The diminutive participation of *yeodaesaeng* in the April 19 riots led to a general portrayal of the *yeodaesaeng* as passive. Ewha Womans University, which was seen as representative of all *yeodae* in South Korea,

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4. "Sarip daehak-ui hollansang" (Chaos in Private Universities), *Kyunghyang sinmun* (Evening Edition), October 29, 1960, 3.

were subjected to the harshest social critique among women's universities after April 19. An open letter from a father of an Ewha *yeodaesaeng* to his daughter after the collapse of the dictatorial government describes this social ambience. The letter was published in several newspapers, and it read in part:

My daughter whom I love! I write this letter so that the world can read it, because I assume that thousands of parents, brothers and sisters who sent their daughters to your school like me share this shame, and in sharing this pain, we will want to weep together. There is no need to disclose the name of your school, but everyone can guess as of all the schools in downtown Seoul with the name "university," among those that partook in the April 19 demonstrations only a few were absent. [...] I have become a completely "ashamed father." [...] Where were you? What were you doing when the streets of Seoul were blazing with youthful passion? [...] Go ahead and remove your school badge, run out of the school gates and to the hospitals. Go bleed for the bedridden young heroes like the shamed and humbled sinner you are. If only the young men would accept the blood spilled by a woman like you. [...] You ought to know well that under no circumstances am I the kind of father who would send his daughter to university so she might become a "first daughter-in-law candidate" for a rich family.<sup>5</sup>

One editorial, titled "April Revolution and 'Ewha,'" appearing in the first issue of Ewha Womans University newspaper on May 9, 1960, expressed the perplexity and mixed feelings constituents of Ewha Womans University felt.

Ewha has been subjected to the general condemnation for her absence in the student and faculty demonstrations. Ewha students and faculty are subjected to reproach wherever we go and this has caused a great degree of recoil. [...] It would be more accurate to say we were not able to participate than to say we deliberately chose not to. Our student demonstration liaison was unable to contact the Ewha student body

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5. "Demo daeyul-eseo ppajin ttal-ege 'bukkeureoun abeoji'-ro buteo" (From an Ashamed Father to a Daughter Absent from the Demonstrations), *Chosun ilbo* (Evening Edition), May 2, 1960, 3.

president. Moreover, faculty had not received any information about the rallies. [...] One could argue that demonstrating is not the only path to democratic revolution. However, the fact that a large institution like Ewha was excluded in a nation-wide movement cannot be ignored.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, a few individual Ewha *yeodaesaeng* did participate in the large-scale demonstrations of April 19. For instance, some Ewha *yeodaesaeng* ran out from the campus to join the Yonsei University demonstrators as they were passing. Yonsei University students advised Ewha *yeodaesaeng* to disband for it was “dangerous” but these *yeodaesaeng* remained to the rear of the demonstrators (Foundation for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the April Revolution 2011, 195). However, the sweeping social critique of Ewha Womans University obscured these individual cases of *yeodaesaeng* participation.

After April 19, in order to participate in the revolution, albeit late, Ewha *yeodaesaeng* visited the hospitals to deliver gifts of consolation to wounded protesters. However, due to the apprehension that even a single wounded participant might refuse visitation from an Ewha *yeodaesaeng* and thus bring greater injury to the Ewha Womans University community, the gifts were delivered through newspaper agencies. There were cases of individual students paying visits, donating blood, or raising funds for solatia. However, these consolatory activities were not enough to stifle the already negative public opinion. Faced with such societal critique, many Ewha *yeodaesaeng* had for a period of time to remove their school badges in guilt or shame (H. Lee 1970, 249).

In the case of Sookmyung Women’s University, various departments had scheduled their outdoor orientation for April 19. Hence, most of the Sookmyung *yeodaesaeng* heard the news of the demonstrations on their way to their scheduled orientations. Some joined the demonstrations with other universities sporadically, but these did not develop into communal demonstrations by the university. However, there was one *yeodaesaeng* from

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6. “Sawol hyeongmyeong-gwa Ewha” (The April Revolution and Ewha), *Idae hakbo* (Ewha Bulletin), May 9, 1960, 1.

Sookmyung Women's University who was caught on camera roaming the streets with a placard reading, "Re-do the Presidential, Vice Presidential Elections!" This photo remains a symbolic image of the April 19 Revolution (Ahn and Hong 1960, 254–255). Another *yeodaesaeng* from Sookmyung received a gunshot wound during the riots (Reporters on the Front Line 1960, 245–247). Despite these cases, Sookmyung *yeodaesaeng* also could not escape social admonishment.

It is difficult to explain the absence of Ewha and Sookmyung Women's University *yeodaesaeng* in the April 19 Revolution based solely on the notion of gender. *Namhaksaeng* were also absent in the demonstrations. Jemulpo High School, a prominent school in Incheon, is a good example. Jemulpo High School students were largely uninvolved in the protests and for this reason scolded by the local community: "How is it that Jemulpo High School students who represent Incheon failed to participate in a single riot?" The teachers also rebuked the students, "We did not know you were such cowards" (H. Kim 2010, 90). In other words, these societal critiques of non-participating *haksaeng* sat at the junction of societal expectations for university students to develop into the elite of Korean society on one hand, and disappointment at unfulfilled societal expectations on the other, especially at a time when high school and university attendance was not commonplace.



**Figure 2.** A *yeodaesaeng* from Sookmyung Women's University roams the streets holding a placard (April 19, 1960)

Source: *Donga ilbo* (Morning Edition), April 20, 1960, 2.

However, it is imperative to note that these negative opinions of Ewha and Sookmyung *yeodaesaeng* were also imbued with a certain misogyny. This is clear in a self-mocking piece by an Ewha *yeodaesaeng*. According to her, the phrase “do not date or marry an Ewha Womans University student” was circulating in Seoul. When someone would explain that there were individual cases of *yeodaesaeng* participation in the demonstrations, people would belittlingly respond, “*heung*, even so, I’m sure she would have just passed by, brushing the dust off her clothes,” or, “It’s a good thing Ewha Womans University did not participate. Why? Well, if it had, the thing would have turned into a fashion show.” Then, this same student quoted a phrase from the open letter mentioned above to declare herself “an orphan of the era.”<sup>7</sup> The social rebuke against Ewha and Sookmyung Women’s University ultimately reinforced a university *namhaksaeng*-centric, androcentric understanding of the April 19 Revolution. It is against this background that an extremely masculine symbol like *young lions* became a catchphrase for students—especially university students—as heroes of the April 19 Revolution.

On the other hand, male university students also showed limited signs of participation in the April 19 Revolution. In late February 1960, when high school students continued their protest efforts, many male university students in Seoul had already ceased such efforts for some time. High school students would even openly criticize the university students, “*Seonbae* [our seniors] are cowardly!” University students first joined the protests on April 18, and the next day on April 19, students organized large-scale demonstrations by school. Rather, ordinary civilians, particularly the urban poor, participated in demonstrations more aggressively, and with a higher number of casualties (Oh 2014). Not only was the social rebuke of *yeodaesaeng* absence unjustified, but it was also a clear indication of period prejudice and hatred against women.

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7. Lee Deok-hee (then a sophomore in the Sociology Department, Ewha Womans University), “Saeroun yeoksa ap-e seoseo: Jinjeong uri-neun mueot-eul malhal geosinga?” (Facing the New Era: What Are We Going to Truly Speak?), *Idae hakbo* (Ewha Bulletin), May 9, 1960, 2.

### Marginalized *Yeodaesaeng* in *Namhaksaeng*-centric Networks

So why were Ewha and Sookmyung Women's University absent in the organized demonstrations of the April 19 Revolution? Freshmen orientation as a factor in Sookmyung's absence is irrelevant in this matter. Let us look at the situation at Ewha. As the primary target of social outrage over Ewha's lack of presence in the protests, the name Maria Park, vice-president of Ewha Womans University at the time, stands out. Maria Park was the wife of Ki-poong Lee, right-hand man of Syngman Rhee and vice president from the March 15 election. Maria Park is also known for using her relationship with the first lady Francesca to advance her husband as Syngman Rhee's potential successor. Further, Maria Park and Ki-poong Lee's firstborn son was also registered as Syngman Rhee's adopted son in 1957.

With such political power, Maria Park arranged various social services for herself, and claimed one of the most prestigious posts in the *woman's world*, as well as reaching the vice-presidency at her alma mater, Ewha Womans University. During the April 19 Revolution, Maria presented herself as a vocal opponent of the protests. When the Masan protests resumed after the body of Kim Joo-Yeol was found, Maria Park, in her editorial "*Daehaksaeng* and Faith" in the Ewha newspaper, urged the student demonstrators to "submit to the providence of God."<sup>8</sup>

How did Ewha *yeodaesaeng* respond to Maria's assertions? According to memoirs by Ewha *yeodaesaeng*, they did not participate in the demonstrations on April 19 because Helen Kim, president of the university, had addressed the *yeodaesaeng*, emphasizing that "Maria Park, wife of vice president Ki-poong Lee, is the vice president of the university but also your *seonbae* [senior alumnus]" (Yukilhoe 1992, 133). Maria Park, her husband, and sons were killed in a murder-suicide soon after the collapse of the Rhee regime on April 28, 1960, and the following day, April 29, Ewha students mourned the death of Maria Park at the university chapel session. As Helen

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8. "Daehaksaeng-gwa jonggyo" (Daehaksaeng and Faith), *Idae hakbo* (Ewha Bulletin), April 15, 1960, 1.



Kim's prayer for Maria Park commenced, many sobbed and wept for her.<sup>9</sup>

In this light, the Ewha *yeodaesaeng's* absence was not dependent upon Maria Park's approval but on her presence itself. The negative image of Maria Park is associated with the hostile views of the public regarding the class of elite women, including the *yeodaesaeng*. A passage from a novel in the 1960s that reads, "What is a Maria Park? What is a Francesca? As the saying goes, 'when a hen crows, a family perishes.' The swish of a skirt by women has ruined this country," captures the mood of the time very well (Kwon and Chun 2012, 477). The so-called *samonimjok* (madams' sorority) of Maria Park and Francesca was a culprit in the twelve years of corruption of the Rhee regime, and this social ambience contributed to the discourse of *female participation brings about national ruin*, and intensified societal hatred of women in politics in South Korea. Ultimately, the general election of July 29, 1960 for the organization of a new government elected only one woman (Yoon 2010, 256–259).

However, to argue that Maria's presence, however large or impactful, was *the* obstacle to Ewha *yeodaesaeng* participation in the April 19 Revolution is only a partial truth. Regarding this, the episode of SNU students contacting Ewha *yeodaesaeng* on the eve of April 19 deserves more attention. The memoir of Kim Man-ok, a sophomore in the Department of Korean Literature at SNU at the time, contains detailed narratives regarding the interactions between SNU and Ewha students, and offers valuable information on the structural constraints to *yeodaesaeng* participation in the demonstrations.

Kim Man-ok was the only *yeohaksaeng* in her class and found it difficult to co-exist with *namhaksaeng*. Not even a "crevice in which to wedge herself" were possible with *namhaksaeng*, but even if there were a moment, she "lacked the nerve to do so." Whenever she passed by a crowd of *namhaksaeng*, she "turned her face away like a criminal, and hurried away" (Man-ok Kim

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9. Jang Myung-soo (then a junior in the Journalism Department, Ewha Womans University), "Sawol-ui hoesang: 'Geu-reul dulleossan beil modu hechigo: Bak Maria seonsaeng-ui myeongbok-eul bildeon chaepul'" (Reminiscence of April: Pushing Through All the Veils: A Chapel Praying for the Soul of Maria Park), *Idae hakbo* (Ewha Bulletin), April 16, 1962, 4.

2012, 155–156). However, on April 18, 1960, as fervent protests by Korean University students began, a few *namhaksaeng* approached Kim. They subsequently asked Kim to contact her peers at Ewha Womans University for a joint demonstration.

As a Masan native, Kim Man-ok had watched the demonstrations there with a burning desire to participate. So when her classmates approached her, Kim raced full of anticipation to meet with her friend, who was majoring in English literature at Ewha, and requested Ewha students to join them. However, her friend refused. Not only did Ewha *yeodaesaeng* show little interest in the Korea University protest, there were too many children of officials and dignitaries susceptible to potential targeting by the demonstrators, and more than anything, the risk of sacrifice, in case of the failure of the protests, was too great to take. Instead, she asked Kim to contact her again when all universities were participating in the demonstrations (Man-ok Kim 2012, 162–163).

Here, two key points are apparent. First, there was contact between SNU and Ewha students prior to the demonstrations, but Ewha students were too passive. Rationalizations like “there is little interest on campus,” “there are too many children of high-ranking officials,” or “the sacrifice is too great to risk,” stand out. These explanations seem to support the general notion at the time that *yeodaesaeng* were, relative to *namhaksaeng*, wealthier but politically more apathetic or spiritless.

Whether family economic status or the social standing of *yeodaesaeng* affected their participation in the revolution requires further examination. However, surveys conducted of university students in the 1960s show that *yeodaesaeng* were generally better off economically than *namhaksaeng* and tended to be more urbanized. In a survey on SNU university students in 1962, of 8,538 students, 28.2 percent of *namhaksaeng* were from Seoul, compared to 51.5 percent of *yeohaksaeng* (Yoon and Jung 1963, 2). In 1963, of 621 Ewha *yeodaesaeng*, 88.1 percent were from urban areas (Research Department of the Haksaeng Society of Sociology 1963, 163). It is difficult to make an objective comparison between *namhaksaeng* and *yeohaksaeng* based on social standing, but the following results are worth noting. We do have survey data from 1966 on 2,043 SNU freshmen

regarding family financial status, in which *namhaksaeng* and *yeohaksaeng* answered “agree” to the following statements: 1. “very well off financially” (*namhaksaeng*, 6.1%, *yeohaksaeng*, 16.4%); 2. “not well-off but facing no immediate financial difficulties” (*namhaksaeng*, 39.7%, *yeohaksaeng*, 52.1%); 3. “barely maintaining one’s present financial state” (*namhaksaeng*, 28.5%, *yeohaksaeng*, 19.0%); 4. “frequently face financial difficulty” (*namhaksaeng*, 22.2%, *yeohaksaeng*, 11.8%); 5. “in unspeakably needy circumstances” (*namhaksaeng*, 3.2%, *yeohaksaeng*, 0.7%); and 6. “no reply” (*namhaksaeng*, 0.1%, *yeohaksaeng*, 0.0%) (Kim and Lee 1968, 30). Albeit subjectively assessed, university *yeohaksaeng* generally belonged to a higher social stratum than *namhaksaeng*. As mentioned above, in 1963, around 82.0 percent of Ewha Womans University students viewed their family’s economic status as above average. Those that answered that it was below average were a mere 17.6 percent (Research Department of the Haksae Society of Sociology 1963, 168).

It is indisputable that in the 1960s *yeodaesaeng* were economically better off than their male counterparts. Korean families often suppressed female enrollment due to the precarity of the national economy and instead focused on the advancement of male family members. This meant that without a certain degree of financial comfort, women faced greater obstacles to university enrollment. Even so, this alone cannot explain the absence of women in the demonstrations. Ascertaining the interrelation of social status and political participation is an uneasy task in itself. Nevertheless, according to an empirical investigation conducted after the 1960 revolution, there was no significant correlation between a student’s family financial status and participation in demonstrations (S. Kim 1960).

Second, contacts between SNU and Ewha students occurred at the level of personal relationships. Contact between university students based on personal relationships was not exclusive to SNU and Ewha. In planning demonstrations, various networks of university students formed and operated based on regional and school ties.

Networks of university students usually utilized the spaces of *dabang* (tea rooms). Since the 1950s in South Korea, the *dabang* was a space for private meetings to discuss issues of public interest. The *dabang* epitomized

a distinct public sphere in South Korea where the demarcation of public and private became abstruse (Kang and Oh 2015). At the time of the April 19 Revolution, students would also loiter around major *dabang* to plan demonstrations.

However, the plethora of these mutually entangled *dabang* networks often resulted in miscommunication. For example, Korea University students were the first to protest on April 18, triggering larger demonstrations the following day. However, students from other universities criticized such activities as encroaching upon the pledge for collaborative demonstration planned for April 21. To this alleged contention, Kang Wu-Jeong, committee chairperson of the Korea University Law School, explained that since other university students also frequented Hyeondae Dabang, where Korea University students had planned their demonstration, other students misunderstood that Korea University had broken the agreement for joint protest.<sup>10</sup> In other words, other university students argued that *dabang* network of university students had muddled consensus on the planned demonstration date. It became clear that frequent contact with other students had caused more confusion than agreement regarding joint protest.

The problem, however, was in the marginalization of *yeodaesaeng*, as these university student networks were formed around *namhaksae*. Even in co-ed institutions, interchanges between male and female students were sporadic. They would maintain distance between each other by speaking in honorifics and avoiding as much conversations as possible, as is evident by the account of Kim Man-ok related above.

When, on April 18, 1960, Kim's *namhaksae* classmates asked her to contact her friends at Ewha Womans University, this was a rather singular occurrence. But the objective of contact, as her male classmates explained, was that "if a woman's university joined the demonstrations, police obstruction may be toned down." This was not unique. SNU *namhaksae*

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10. Kang Wu-jeong, "Na-ui bareon: Dangyeonhan illo chingsong-eul batdani" (My Comment: I Am Being Praised for What I Am Supposed to Do), *Godae sinbo* (Korea University News), May 20, 1960, 4.

did not view Ewha *yeodaesaeng* as comparable partners but rather as a means for executing their demonstration plans with reduced risk. In addition, they did not disclose the actual date of the protest when they asked Kim to find ways to contact Ewha students. When Kim witnessed her classmates' demonstration the following day, she "felt betrayed for a moment" for it had occurred without her knowledge. When some *namhaksaeng* left their books and bags with Kim and ran to join the crowd of protesters, Kim pondered, "Why do they conclude that *yeohaksaeng* will not join them?" Still, Kim gathered the book bags the *namhaksaeng* had left behind as they went to resist the police (Man-ok Kim 2012, 162–166).

In Kim's memoir, SNU *namhaksaeng*'s lack of sincerity or enthusiasm, even as they sought to expand networks to Ewha Womans University, is paralleled in how they approached Kim. SNU *namhaksaeng* underestimated the political capacity of *yeodaesaeng* and, deprecated their potential as protesters. Ultimately, the SNU and Ewha liaison through Kim ended in nothing more than a formality. The case of Man-ok Kim alone would be insufficient to explain the absence of Ewha students in the April 19 Revolution. However, the case of Man-ok Kim does demonstrate how androcentric networks within university student society marginalized *yeodaesaeng*. At the time of the April 19 Revolution, university student demonstrations operated through various networks among male students based on regionalism and school ties. This meant the marginalized *yeodaesaeng* faced great difficulties in locating forms of participation. The structural marginalization of *yeodaesaeng* was the core and fundamental factor in their relative absence from the April 19 Revolution.

## Conclusion

In summary, the high school students and university students distinction is essential in order to fully comprehend the circumstances regarding *yeodaesaeng* participation, or lack thereof, in the April 19 Revolution. Most *yeogosaeng* were enrolled in girls high schools and entered the protest scenes through the Student Corps. Two factors made *yeogosaeng* protests

possible. First, the government's role in regulating and mobilizing students for government-sponsored demonstrations through the Hakdo hogukdan (National Student Defense Corps), ironically allowed those students to accumulate experience in organization and mobilization. Another was in the formation of close networks among student representatives of the government-sponsored Student Corps, and *yeogosaeng* were involved part of these networks. However, the extent to which *yeogosaeng* cohered with the networks varied by district.

*Yeodaesaeng* participation in April 19 Revolution differed from that of *yeogosaeng*. In particular, Ewha Womans University and Sookmyung Women's University, where more than half of all South Korean *yeodaesaeng* were enrolled, did not participate in the protests. There was a fundamental factor behind the absence of *yeodaesaeng*. The Student Corps did not exercise the same level of influence in universities as they did in high schools; *yeodaesaeng* were structurally marginalized from the regional and school networks of *namhaksae* in the April 19 Revolution. These were drastically different circumstances from the *yeogosaeng* in the Student Corps. Meanwhile, during the revolution of 1960, male university students did seek to expand their networks to encompass *yeodaesaeng*. However, it became clear that *yeodaesaeng* were seen by the male students merely as a way of boosting the number of demonstrators, rather than as corresponding and full partners in the student protest movement. As a result, these attempts of network expansion failed, and the participation of *yeodaesaeng*, pushed as they were to the periphery, in the revolution became that much more difficult.

Despite the structural constraints, individual cases of *yeodaesaeng* participation did occur. On April 19, 1960, Kim Man-ok witnessed a group of *yeohaksaeng* gathered at the university to join the demonstration. Kim and these *yeohaksaeng* then ventured off to the protests. They joined the SNU *namhaksae* at Jongno 2-ga and fought alongside them (Man-ok Kim 2012, 166–167). These SNU *yeohaksaeng* demonstrators fought with zeal. According to the account of Lee Jae-young, a second-year *yeogosaeng* at the time who accompanied these *yeodaesaeng* to the protest, they “shouted and screamed their chants, almost like howls.” Some students lost their voices

and could barely talk; some led the demonstrators in songs and chants (J. Lee 2011, 143–144). Yonsei, Korea, and Joong-Ang Universities provide examples of active participation by *yeodaesaeng*.

Although the headcount of *yeodaesaeng* was small, and Ewha and Sookmyung *yeodaesaeng* that accounted for more than half of the *yeohaksaeng* body were absent, *yeodaesaeng* were present in the streets of the April 19 Revolution. Together with other *yeodaesaeng*, or with *yeogosaeng*, they protested in solidarity against Rhee administration just as fervently as *namhaksaeng*. In particular, *yeohaksaeng* often took the lead in the recitation of resolutions or proclamations. Apart from the intentions of their male counterparts, *yeodaesaeng* were active and dignified participants in the April 19 Revolution.

After the April 19 Revolution, however, the male university students would monopolize the accolades as revolutionary subjects. In the acts of remembrance for the April 19 Revolution, *yeodaesaeng* were marginalized once more. Not only *yeodaesaeng*, but also high school students (who had shown more discipline and tenacity in the protests than university students) and the urban poor and ordinary civilians, who had stood at the vanguard intensifying the demonstrations, were soon lost in the memories of the April 19 Revolution (Oh 2014). For example, middle-aged women in Masan, Seoul, and like places were active participants in the demonstrations. However, their roles are all but forgotten. It would be a fair assessment to say that the marginalization of female actors in the April 19 Revolution is a direct reflection of the androcentric historiography of the April 19 Revolution that centers those events on male university students.

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## GLOSSARY

*dabang* 茶房 (tea room)

*daehaksaeng* 大學生 (university students)

*haksaeng* 學生 (student)

Hakdo hogukdan 學徒護國團 (National Student Defense Corps)

*namgo* 男高 (boys high school)

*namhaksaeng* 男學生 (male student)

*yeodaesaeng* 女大生 (female university student)

*yeogo* 女高 (girls high school)

*yeogosaeng* 女高生 (female high school student)

*yeohaksaeng* 女學生 (female student)