

## **Korea: Neoliberalism, State Developmentalism, and People Power**

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### **Neoliberalism: Conflicting Definitions and Competing Interests**

Since the early 1980s, with the ascent of Ronald Reagan to the US presidency and Paul Volcker to the Chair of the US Federal Reserve, neoliberalism has increasingly placed the world under its ideological sway. By means of their obeisance to such key international institutions as the IMF and the World Bank, more and more developing nations have found themselves being systematically integrated into the US imperial order. Neoliberalism is commonly associated with such features as “free trade, free capital movements, reduced government or equivalently free markets.”<sup>1</sup> To quote Harvey’s famous observation on the role of the state in a neoliberal era: “The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist ... then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture.”<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that not everyone agrees with the neoliberal idea of “small government.” Even the model of the state encapsulated in Harvey’s observation strays quite far from the model of a minimalist state regime, and the neoliberalism of both Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher offer testimony to this point of view. As Saad-Filho argues, “Neoliberalism is based on the systematic use of state power to impose a hegemonic project of recomposition of the rule of capital under the guise of ‘non-intervention.’”<sup>3</sup>

Confusion over the exact nature of neoliberalism is not helped much by the usual resort to dictionary definition. One common form of definition suggests neoliberalism represents “a modified form of liberalism tending to favor free-market capitalism.”<sup>4</sup> In its turn, the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that “liberalism” indicates a social and political philosophy based on “advocacy of individual rights, civil liberties, and reform tending towards individual freedom, democracy, or social equality.”<sup>5</sup> According to another approach, neoliberalism is an ideology that stems from liberalism but is actually distinct from it, just as the cosmopolitan concept of neo-conservatism tends to diverge from strictly traditional or patriotic notions of conservative ideology. Venugopal sets out the conundrum of understanding the import of neoliberalism when he asks:

Does neoliberalism imply a contraction of the state vis-à-vis the market, or just a different kind of state that promotes and works at the behest of markets? Is neoliberalism a depoliticized and technocratic fetishization of the market, or is it a deeply political agenda of class rule and neo-colonial domination? Is it a Leviathan that bludgeons its way around the world, or is it a far more subtle, mutating, localized, contingent force that works by transforming individual subjectivities?<sup>6</sup>

Thorsen and Lie would appear to share this dilemma of trying to define, once and for all, what Mudge calls “an oft-invoked but ill-defined concept.”<sup>7</sup> As they argue: “Perhaps it is better, after all, to view neoliberalism not as one distinct political theory, but as a convenient description for an amorphous set of political theories instead.”<sup>8</sup> From a pluralist perspective, then, the concept of neoliberalism appears to range from Rothbard’s notion of “anarcho-capitalism,” which insists that the state be abolished altogether, all the way to the “classical liberalism” of Mises and Hayek, which regards a strong but largely inactive state as a necessary precondition for social life as well as for individual and commercial liberty.

What almost all proponents of neoliberalism appear to share,

however, is a deep-rooted skepticism about the virtues of democracy: if it threatens to get in the way of the steamroller of neoliberal reform, democracy should step aside. As Thorsen and Lie argue, neoliberals call for “a relocation of power from political to economic processes, from the state to markets and individuals.”<sup>9</sup> The attention to the rise of the market as a *political power* is also found in theorists such as Overbeek and Van Apeldoorn who describe neoliberalism as “a political project aimed to restore capitalist class power in the aftermath of the economic and social crises of the 1970s.”<sup>10</sup>

From a critical perspective, a neoliberal society tends to increase injustice and multiply social contradictions, particularly between the moneyed and the laboring class. In this sense, it appears to be a project aimed at preventing democratic transformation toward more just or more equitable forms of social organization. Both the United Kingdom and the United States, for example, witnessed a sharp escalation in the gap between the richest and the poorest citizens, to historically unprecedented levels, following their adoption of neoliberalism in the early 1980s.<sup>11</sup> In this context, Brown is right to argue that in a neoliberal world, “freedom is reduced to the right to entrepreneurial ruthlessness and equality gives way to ubiquitously competitive worlds of winners and losers.”<sup>12</sup> Speaking of the US’s imposition of “four economic orders” on Occupied Iraq, Harvey observes that “[t]he freedoms [a neoliberal state] embodies reflect the interests of private property owners, businesses, multinational corporations, and financial capital.”<sup>13</sup>

By forcing developing nations to adopt market-oriented policies, rather than the nationalist forms of nation-building that the advanced nations once deployed themselves, neoliberalism may be said to serve the interests of the First World.<sup>14</sup> Sang-gu Kang neatly summarizes these realities when he states: “a small but strong government,” an “increase of economic contradiction,” and a “widening of poverty and inequality.”<sup>15</sup> Neoliberalism would appear then to signify not so much a political philosophy or a policy model, but something much larger. While its intellectual origins may have been utopian, neoliberalism emerged, in the context of its rapid politicization by Reagan and Thatcher, as “an identifiable but heterogeneous militant movement seeking to influence

and appropriate the powers of national and international organizations, including states.”<sup>16</sup> In Peck and Tickell’s words, neoliberalism is felt now everywhere as forms of “ideological software”<sup>17</sup> for the contemporary reform of the state in the interests of competitive globalization.

### **Korea: Between State Developmentalism and Neoliberalism**

For the past two decades, among both policy makers and concerned intellectuals, neoliberalism has also been a buzzword in South Korea. Interestingly, too, several South Korean scholars have attributed the beginnings of Korean neoliberalism to the era of the regime of Chun Doo-hwan (1981-88), the military man whose period of rule largely coincides with those of Reagan and Thatcher. Unlike the previous government of President Park Chung-hee, which was characterized by a model of authoritarian state developmentalism,<sup>18</sup> Chun radically reduced state intervention and pushed for the private sector to become more stable, open, and autonomous.<sup>19</sup> Under Chun’s iron rule, South Korean neoliberalism has been compared to “Friedman with the face of Hobbes... not the face of Locke.”<sup>20</sup> Ten years later, the government of Kim Young-sam (1993-98) adopted the policy of “segehwa,” a rough-and-ready Korean translation of the term “globalization,” as its catchphrase. It then made its central mission the goal of raising national competitiveness in the face of increasingly stiff international competition. As Kang and Park note, Kim’s government prioritized the nation’s market competitiveness at the expense of much-needed politico-economic reforms.<sup>21</sup> Its devotion to globalization was such that even homemaking was considered an arena for national competitiveness! One of the consequences of the government’s espousal of both market triumphalism and international competitiveness was felt in the reduction of the country to the status of a so-called “soft market state.”<sup>22</sup> Freed from the reign of governmental control, a voracious group of conglomerates, prisoners of their excessive and overlapping investment strategies, ended up creating a series of gigantic economic bubbles. Combined with the lack of structural reform, the financial instability caused by the influx of highly-mobile global capital caused the pump-priming policies of Kim’s government to issue

forth in economic debacle. As a consequence, South Korea was required bailing out by the IMF, a story too well-known to require further elucidation here. In exchange for the bailout, the successor government of Kim Dae-jung (1998-2003) was forced to comply with IMF demands for capital market openings and greater labor market flexibility. In this way, an ideal investment environment in Korea for global capital was created. As a consequence, many scholars argue that “it was only after the economic crisis in 1997 that neoliberalism fully bloomed in Korea.”<sup>23</sup>

While pursuing the twin goals of economic reform and national competitiveness, Kim’s government consistently emphasized the need to implement the supposedly “global” IMF standards. These included privatization, deregulation, and the liberalization of key markets, all of which were deemed necessary to integrate the nation into the now-neoliberal world system.<sup>24</sup> Aimed at destroying the old state-chaebol collusion, Kim’s economic reforms were misguidedly viewed as inherently democratic, a misunderstanding partly prompted by the government itself, which saw its adoption of what it called a “democratic market economy” as the goal of its structural reforms. Clearly, Kim’s massive economic reforms helped the nation to graduate early from the IMF bailout program. From a critical perspective, however, the groups who bore the main brunt of the massive economic restructuring were the middle class and the work force of laborers, not the conglomerates responsible for the formation of a bubble economy in the first place.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, public resistance to Kim’s neoliberal reforms was quite weak. This was paradoxically due to the fact that neoliberalism was pursued by a government with sound center-left credentials and “was presented [to the Korean public] as anti-authoritarian and as a kind of anti-chaebol ‘democracy’ based on market principles.”<sup>26</sup>

Roh Moo-hyun, Kim’s successor, inherited the drive to create a dual welfare and neoliberal state, although this time the neoliberal policies were pursued strategically through the North East Asian Cooperative Initiative. Roh’s government (2003-08) not only initiated a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US but also pushed for a whole series of FTAs with other East Asian countries in order to widen the boundaries of the national economy and to attempt to remake South Korea as East Asia’s

major financial and logistical hub.<sup>27</sup> In the sense that these neoliberal principles were espoused by the state as a strategy for heightening national competitiveness, post-crisis South Korea, together with certain other key East Asian countries such as Singapore, might be said to illustrate a form of “developmental neoliberalism.” In this model, a soft developmental state is deliberately evolved from the older, and now outmoded, developmental state of the previous military regimes. According to Choi, “developmental neoliberalism” may be defined as “the current combined operation of market mechanisms as a developmental engine with state intervention as the operator and manager of that engine.”<sup>28</sup>

Roh’s government set in motion a series of political reforms that weakened the legacy of regionalism, vassalage, and the previously all-powerful presidency. Although the center-left presidents Roh Moo-hyun and Kim Dae-jung had both made great strides in their quest for political democratization, the same cannot be said of their handling of the economy.<sup>29</sup> In the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008, a majority of voters turned to their main rival, Lee Myung-bak, the conservative presidential candidate and former CEO of Hyundai Construction Company. Having won the presidential election in a landslide, Lee declared pragmatism, as opposed to ideology, as the new basis for national-policy making. The course of Lee’s government (2008–13) can be summed up in two key terms: greater market freedoms and fewer civic and political rights. From the beginning, Lee declared that his government would be “business-friendly.” His period of rule emphasized “small government, privatization, deregulation, competition by market principles, tax cut[s], flexibility of [the] labor market, reduction of social welfare or making it market-centric.”<sup>30</sup> Describing the growth-oriented, market-friendly nature of Lee’s policies, Im notes:

The neoliberal, conservative administration of Lee Myung-bak openly declared equality to be a left-wing idea. The administration’s free market, anti-equalitarian policies resulted in deepening social and economic polarization. Economic polarization occurred between export and domestically-oriented

industries, IT and non-IT industries, large conglomerates and small and medium-sized companies, and permanent and temporary workers.<sup>31</sup>

Nonetheless, this verdict does not imply that Lee was a neoliberal true believer. He was not reluctant to use state intervention when that served what many construed as somewhat dubious schemes, including his advocacy of “Green Growth.” Ironically, as his reign went on, Lee Myung-bak began to resemble none other than Park Chung-hee, whose authoritarianism Lee had in his college years once protested. This presidential recidivism was particularly noted in such purportedly nation-wide construction-based undertakings as the Four Major Rivers Project.

Lee appeared to resemble Park Chung-hee in other ways, too. For instance, Lee dealt with oppositional voices in a repressive manner reminiscent of a police state. The regression of democracy under Lee’s government is indisputable. For instance, when hundreds of thousands of South Koreans peacefully expressed their discontent with the resumption of the US beef imports, Lee, overwhelmed by the energy of the dissent, offered his public apologies. Nonetheless, as soon as the political crisis had dissipated, Lee had the protest leaders arrested. As Amnesty International spells out, in dealing with popular opposition, Lee’s government employed “unnecessary or excessive use of police force, including the misuse of police and security equipment during the protests; arbitrary arrest and detention; and a lack of police accountability.”<sup>32</sup> A number of critical intellectuals were also placed under police surveillance after they criticized Lee’s shoddily-designed Four Major Rivers Project, a massive undertaking that had been highly touted as a quick way to achieve economic growth as well as to protect the environment.

Particularly in the way it sought to deal with labor organizations, to handle the delivery of social welfare by market means and to emphasize the moral hazard of social benefits, Park Geun-hye’s government (2013-17) resembled that of her immediate predecessor. In many ways, however, Park distinguished herself by an even more regressive form of

governance than had been favored by Lee Myung-bak. As Im observes, instead of consulting her ministers, senior advisors, and party officials, Park ruled by privatizing public power—that is, by relying on her personal cronies. Instead of reaching decisions through discussion, Park took to issuing written orders and reading her notebook aloud to her ministers! Some critics suggested, perhaps only half-jokingly, that South Korea had reverted to a form of Chosun-era “rule by queen dowager.” Park also took personal steps to rehabilitate both her father, the former President Park Chung-hee, and the spirit of that military-dominated era: not only did she attempt to restore her father’s honor in new ways but she also sought to appeal to legacy politics by reviving some of her father’s socio-economic plans.<sup>33</sup> In retrospect, the presidential attempt to turn back the clock seems like a tempting of the fates.

### **A Sunken Ferry: The Symbol of Neoliberal South Korea**

On the morning of 16 April 2014, the Sewol ferry, en route to Jeju Island, a picturesque destination for Korean tourists, lost her balance in a sudden turning movement, capsized, and immediately sank near Donggeochado, Jindo County, Cholla Province. On board were 476 passengers, mostly high school students on a field trip. In total, 304 crew members and passengers died in the disaster, throwing the nation into immense grief. For many, this disaster emblemized the recent history of Korea, a country that had plunged forward into the waters of the neoliberal world system, prioritizing profits over everything else, including foresight, caution, human limitations, and personal ethics.

Built in 1994, the Sewol ferry operated in Japan from 1994 to 2012. After 18 years of service, the ship was purchased in October 2012 by the Chonghaejin Marine Company. Once the purchase was made, the company set about adding two floors of passenger cabins, thereby increasing the ship’s capacity from 840 to 956 passengers, while simultaneously decreasing the cargo tonnage from 2,437 tons to 987 tons. On the day the ferry sank, the ship was loaded down by 2,142.7 tons of cargo, a figure more than twice its maximum-allowed weight.<sup>34</sup> If the refurbishing had shifted the center of the ferry’s gravity upward, thus



making it vulnerable to capsizing, the overloaded cargo compromised her ability to restore her balance. The structural weakness combined with the compromised ability to rebalance ensured that the ship would capsize. In this regard, the tragedy was the direct result of the ferry owner's unconscionable pursuit of money.

At the same time, the absence or criminal misfiring of the proper regulatory safeguards was fully implicated in the disaster. In early 2012, when the ferry was examined following these structural modifications, the Korean Register of Shipping, for safety reasons, reduced her cargo limit by more than half. And yet the Register's report on the ferry's new cargo capacity found its way neither to the coast guard nor to the Korea Shipping Association. Only the firm that owned the ship received a copy of the report.<sup>35</sup> This meant that no informed authorities were ever in a position to inspect or regulate the ferry's shipping operation.

Perhaps more fundamentally, the aging ferry should not have been in operation in the first place. In the past, Korean ferries were retired after 20 years of service. In 1991, this regulation was altered in order to allow a maximum five-year extension for ferries that met certain strict provisos. It was Lee Myung-bak's "business-friendly" government that eased these restrictions even further, extending the absolute limit from 20 to 30 years. Since the Chonghaejin company purchased this retired vessel after the deregulation had become law, it was able to extend its period of viable use.

The management of the shipping firm, with its extreme profit-driven orientation, was also partially responsible. For instance, most of the crew were employed as irregulars, and even the captain was hired on a yearly contract. As a consequence, the crew was being paid approximately 30 percent less than their peers at comparable marine companies. The exploitative nature of the management, along with the crew's lack of emergency-management training, explains the crew's irresponsible behavior when the ship actually capsized.

In its rescue attempts, the government of Park Geun-hye also proved totally incompetent. No official was able to communicate with the president at the crucial moment when the control tower at the Blue House ought to have assumed charge of the rescue operations. As Yang

argues, “it was the violence of neoliberalism, not the captain, that was the culprit.”<sup>36</sup> Or, to borrow Lee and Park’s words, the Sewol ferry disaster proves Park’s neoliberal South Korea had become a “rogue nation,”<sup>37</sup> one that abandoned its responsibilities to protect its citizens in the face of neoliberal-induced disaster.

It is in this context that concerned intellectuals, labor unionists, artists, and civic organizations raised the issue of the nation’s responsibility to protect the safety and human rights of its citizens. From this perspective, the freedom advocated by neoliberals serves the interests only of the biggest companies and its global capitalists. In a neoliberal era, the laboring class, with the social safety net now removed, must fight in return for a meager existence while the government shies away from its duties toward the deprived. Even though neoliberals argue for small governments, big markets, and the free choice of rational actors, the reality is that neoliberalism cannot function anywhere in the world without the key support of the state. The obvious truth of this may be discovered in the fact that no neoliberal government advocates either smallness or minimalism when dealing with its “recalcitrant” labor force. Both the governments of Lee Myung-bak and that of Park Geun-hye cracked down on the union movements’ demand for higher wages and the civil protests launched against public sector privatization. Even Thomas Friedman, that major preacher of the creed of globalization, emphasized the need for brute force behind the principles of the market when he noted the need for a stable geopolitical power structure: “The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist—McDonald’s cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the builder of the F-15.”<sup>38</sup>

### **Hell Chosun, the Engaged Individual, and the Art Forms of Subversion**

Each of the four featured articles in this issue deals with the dire situation of the marginalized and the unprotected under the neoliberal regime in South Korea. In Keehyung Lee and Kyongah Hwang’s “‘Youth-at-Risk’ and the Changing Role of Cultural Studies in South Korea,” the focus of

attention is the plight of young job seekers faced with a prolonged rate of high unemployment. This research maps out the efforts of researchers in cultural studies to understand and sympathize with the infernal life perceptions and desperate survival efforts of young people in neoliberal South Korea. In this view, the discourses and practices popular among Korean youth—self-fashioning, self-improvement, self-cultivation—are seen to aggravate the situation in the way they end up inadvertently making the demands of the market even more oppressive. Nonetheless, this bleak picture is not the only story that cultural studies scholars can or should tell about contemporary society. As Lee and Hwang maintain, engaged scholarship needs to explore the other side of the story since there *are* “pockets of resistance” to the neoliberal agenda being mapped out by means of “an imaginative coalition of public intellectuals, labor unions, and civic groups.”

In her essay, “Mother/Whore: Prostituting Motherly Care in Neoliberal South Korea,” Seunghui Clara Hong calls attention to the harsh realities of “the infirm, old, unproductive.” E. J-yong’s *The Bacchus Lady* (*Chukyōjunūn yōja*, 2016), which portrays an elderly prostitute who not only provides the elderly with sex but also assists those who wish to end their own lives, offers a lens through which to survey some of the unacknowledged social issues facing old people in South Korea. According to the author, the protagonist’s illegal services, assisting in the need for both sex and suicide, are understood as serving neoliberalism through the technology of biopolitics. By voluntarily enforcing the state’s regulation of the unproductive and the elderly, and by taking the blame for doing this, the protagonist illustrates a “responsibilized” individual. According to Brown, the latter are not only required to provide for themselves but are also blamed for the woes of everybody else.<sup>39</sup>

In their respective analyses of two contemporary cinematic forms, both Angeliki Katsarou and Kyoung-suk Sung explore some of the uncomfortable truths about neoliberal South Korea. In “Notes on a Korean Scandal: The Blockbuster Social Critique of *Veteran*,” Katsarou examines how the cinematic blockbuster *Veteran* (2015) critically represents “the pressing social issues arising from inequity, abuse, mistreatment, nepotism and bureaucracy” in neoliberal South Korea,

noting the ways in which the movie differentiates itself from more conventional Hollywood formulas. In “The Truth Shall Not Sink”: Korean Documentary Film and the Fall of Park Geun-hye,” Sung provides an extensive history of the South Korean documentary form, before narrowing her focus to isolate the controversy surrounding a 2014 documentary about the Sewol ferry disaster. These cinematic representations constitute what Chua dubs “social memory,” something that is “essential to prevent the [popular] memory from fading and to embed it in the social/collective body.”<sup>40</sup>

### **Biopolitics and People’s Power**

From a Foucauldian perspective, neoliberalism may be understood to function by means of a set of bio-power technologies. As Nadesan argues, “biopolitical forces adapted to neoliberal ends seek to minimize societal risk and maximize individual well-being through scientific engineering and individual technologies of the self.”<sup>41</sup> In this view, the foundational philosophy of neoliberalism that sees individuals as “autonomous self-regulating agents” is reflected in those governmental policies that regulate the social life of the population. Under a neoliberal regime, for instance, the state seeks to palm off risk and empower its subjects, by invoking a society of self-regulating individuals as its utopian goal. The process of holding individuals responsible for what was once seen as the central task of the welfare state is explained in the following terms:

The idea of one’s life as the enterprise of oneself implies that there is a sense in which one remains always continuously employed in (at least) that one enterprise, and that it is a part of the continuous business of living to make adequate provision for the preservation, reproduction and reconstruction of one’s own human capital. This is the “care of the self” which government commends as the corrective to collective greed.<sup>42</sup>

In this regime, individuals are urged not only to take care of themselves but are also sometimes required to sacrifice themselves for the public

good. In contemporary Korean society, Joo-Hwan Kim observes, “social units, such as corporations, trade unions, NGOs, and consumers, voluntarily have begun to assume social responsibilities, instead of the state.” Subjects and rights agencies, labor unions and consumers, must voluntarily transform themselves into organs of social responsibility. For example, based on their heightened sense of social responsibility, citizens talk about their duty to consume ethically, instead of their rights as consumers, while labor unions preoccupy themselves with the need to demonstrate social responsibility rather than with the immediate economic interests of their members. In consequence, the choices of individuals as consumers begin to be made after careful consideration of how they will impact the environment, labor, and human rights (rather than by using the much stricter neoliberal standard of how to maximize utility while minimizing costs). Kim argues that this kind of “social responsabilization” represents “not the restoration of the socio-moral solidarity at all, but a technology and an effect of the neo-liberal governmental territorialization of the social solidarity.”<sup>43</sup> In this regard, the elderly prostitute of *The Bacchus Lady* is neither an isolated case nor a hyperbolic dramatization. This apparent paradox is explained by Brown in the following way: “as neoliberal citizenship sets loose the individual to take care of itself, it also discursively binds the individual to the well-being of the whole—demanding its fealty and potential sacrifice to national health or economic growth.”<sup>44</sup>

From the perspective of Foucauldian or Agambenian biopolitics, neoliberal South Korea appears to offer no way for individuals to subvert or change the forms of governmentality that always already interpellate them as “responsibilized” subjects. The bleak picture of neoliberal society, in which the economization of the political contains the potential resistance from its individuals, is articulated in the following terms: “the reduction of citizenship to responsabilized investment in oneself, on the one hand, and to being human capital for the nation as firm, on the other, means that citizenship is stripped of substantive political engagement and voice.”<sup>45</sup>

But is this a complete summary of the current situation? A proper examination of the Korean realpolitik would indicate otherwise, pointing

to the presence of individuals and civic groups that, in refusing to be coopted by governmentality, biopolitical or otherwise, do not hesitate to voice and act out their discontent. An obvious case in point is the events that led to the fall of Park Geun-hye, initially triggered by the candlelight protests that mobilized millions of people over a period of nearly six months, starting in October 2016. This incident clearly demonstrates the possibility for the triumph of people power even in the face of the machinations of an authoritarian regime. Although the demonstrations started in response to the scandals of Park and her confidante, as well as to the disastrous official response to the Sewol ferry tragedy, the massive political protests were soon appropriated as an outlet for the frustration and anger of citizens enduring a much-disliked neoliberal regime. As Nam maintains, “Hell Joseon was an important catalyst that converted grief for Sewol victims into a shared sense of social precarity among the South Korean youth who formed the backbone of the candlelight protests.”<sup>46</sup> Kim also observes:

Protests and social movements still remain a fact of life in South Korea.... [T]he nature of ties and organization has changed in recent protests and solidarity today is expressed more frequently through the social media, online petitions, and funds flowing through bank accounts. However, this weak-tie solidarity has been an empowering tool to political challengers and an indispensable component of large-scale social movements today.<sup>47</sup>

With its strong tradition of people power dating back to the beginning of the republic and even before, this small geographic peninsula regularly sets into motion a principled fight for justice, never knowing how to give up until tyrannical power is vanquished. When heavy waves of hardship, whether economic, political, or militaristic, threaten the lives of the powerless, South Korean *agora* politics has engaged itself to suggest viable alternatives. Bisang 2016, the other name for the Emergency Public Campaign for the Resignation of the Park Geun-hye Administration, articulates this vision as follows: “We believe in the great power of ordinary people. We believe that when those gather together

who have neither money, nor power, nor great education, nor impressive careers but have done their best on their different paths of life, they can straighten up the crooked world .... This is why we want to hold candles with you.”<sup>48</sup> As tumultuous as they may seem, it is in the spirit of these words, rather than in some sterile IMF memorandum, that the future of the nation will thereby be assured.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> James Petras and Veltmeyer Henry, *Social Movements in Latin America: Neoliberalism and Popular Resistance* (New York: Macmillan, 2011), 80.

<sup>2</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Alfredo Saad-Filho, “Neoliberalism in Crisis: A Marxist Analysis,” *Marxism* 7, no. 1 (2012): 246.

<sup>4</sup> *Oxford Dictionaries* <<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/neo-liberalism>>.

<sup>5</sup> Oxford English Dictionary <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/107864?redirectedFrom=liberalism#eid>>.

<sup>6</sup> Rajesh Venugopal, “Neoliberalism as concept,” *Economy and Society* 44, no. 2 (2015): 166.

<sup>7</sup> Stephanie Lee Mudge, “What is neo-liberalism?” *Socio-Economic Review* 6, no. 4 (2008): 703.

<sup>8</sup> Dag Einar Thorsen and Amund Lie, “What Is Neoliberalism?” 14, accessed Aug. 1st, 2018, <http://folk.uio.no/daget/What%20is%20Neo-Liberalism%2010-11-06.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>10</sup> Henk Overbeek and Bastiaan van Apeldoorn, Introduction: The Life Course of the Neoliberal Project and the Global Crisis, in *Neoliberalism in Crisis*, ed. Overbeek and Van Apeldoorn (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2012), 4.

<sup>11</sup> Seok-Choon Sohn, “A Critique on the Critical Communication Studies and Journalism Focused on the Neoliberalism in Korea,” *Korean Journal of Communication & Information Studies* 45 (2009): 53.

<sup>12</sup> Wendy Brown, “Sacrificial Citizenship: Neoliberalism, Human Capital, and Austerity Politics,” *Constellations* 23, no. 1 (2016): 3.

<sup>13</sup> Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> David Hundt, “Neoliberalism, the Developmental State and Civil Society in Korea,” *Asian Studies Review* 39, no. 3 (2015): 467.

<sup>15</sup> Sang-Gu Kang, *History and Truth of Neoliberalism* [신자유주의의 역사와 진실] (Seoul: Moonhwa Kwahaksa, 2000), 117-19.

<sup>16</sup> Mitchell Dean, “Rethinking neoliberalism,” *Journal of Sociology* 50, no. 2 (2012):

160.

<sup>17</sup> Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 380.

<sup>18</sup> For developmentalism, see Byung Doo Choi, "Developmental Neoliberalism and Hybridity of the Urban Policy of South Korea," in *Locating Neoliberalism in East Asia: Neoliberalizing Spaces in Developmental States*, ed. Bae-Gyoon Park, et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), 89.

<sup>19</sup> Barry Gills, "Economic Liberalisation and Reform in South Korea in the 1990s: A 'Coming of Age' or A Case of 'Graduation Blues'?" *Third World Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (1996): 667-88; Hochul Sonn, "Neoliberalism and Democracy in South Korea," *Korean Political Science Review* 43, no. 5 (2009): 77-79.

<sup>20</sup> Sonn, "Neoliberalism and Democracy in South Korea," 79.

<sup>21</sup> Myungkoo Kang and Sanghoon Park, "Political Symbols and Politics of Discourse," *Korean Journal of Sociology* 31 (1997): 143, 138-39.

<sup>22</sup> Pyŏngch'ŏn Lee, "Crisis and Great Change: Conservative Revolution of Neoliberalism and the Prospect of Korean Democracy" [위기와 대전환: 신자유주의의 보수혁명과 한국 민주주의의 전망], *Contemporary Criticism* [당대비평], June 1996: 338

<sup>23</sup> Sonn, "Neoliberalism and Democracy in South Korea," 77.

<sup>24</sup> Jung Min Seo and Hyeon Jun Kim, "Neoliberal Korea? The Idea of Competitive Nation-State and Korean Political Economy," *Journal of Contemporary Politics* 6, no. 2 (2013): 168-70.

<sup>25</sup> Kang, *History and Truth of Neoliberalism*, 281-86.

<sup>26</sup> Hyun-Chin Lim and Jin-Ho Jang, "Neo-liberalism in post-crisis South Korea: Social Conditions and outcomes," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 36, no. 4 (2007): 448.

<sup>27</sup> Seo and Kim, "Neoliberal Korea?" 171-72.

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