

A Reconsideration of ‘Colonial Modernization’^{*}

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There has been much debate between the ‘exploitation view’ and the ‘colonial modernization view’ on how to assess the consequences of the institutional changes and industrialization initiated by Japanese colonizers in Korea during the colonial period, and how to identify what kind of legacies were passed on to Korea’s post-liberation period. Recently another view that criticizes both of the views and focuses instead on social and cultural aspects of colonial Korea has emerged. This third view, called the ‘colonial modernity view’, shares with the second view in stressing the complicated relations between colonialism and modernity, but unlike the other views, perceives modernity in a negative sense. This article surveys recent studies on political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of colonial Korea, and makes clear the points in which each view diverges from the others. Recognizing that each of the three views has its own strength and weakness in different aspects of their arguments, this article explores areas in which they come together in mutual and complementary understanding.

Keywords: exploitation, colonial modernization, colonial modernity, living standards, colonial public sphere, collaboration, disciplinary power, cultural hegemony, daily life, continuity and discontinuity

I. INTRODUCTION

Research interests and perspectives on the colonial period have repeatedly undergone changes. In the post-liberation period, research on the colonial period focused on aspects of control and exploitation, or the nationalist movement that opposed colonialism. As Korea rose as a newly-industrialized

^{*} Translated from the published article in *Review of Economic History* 43: 155-188, 2007 with permission from the Korean Economic History Society.

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nation and socialism collapsed after the 1980's, nationalist history had to confront new challenges. In foreign countries, scholars argued that the "developmental state" that enabled the rise of Korean capitalism and high-speed growth had its origins in the colonial period. And domestic scholars, particularly those in the field of economic history, contended that a modern system was introduced in the colonial period, which accelerated economic growth. At this point, the debate between "exploitation" (*sut'allon*) and "colonial modernization" (*singminji kundaehwaron*) began.¹ The idea of colonial modernization evoked a severe critical response because of the doubts that it raised about the established view on modern history of Korea. The opposing sides of the debate condemned each other for supporting colonial rule or falling captive to nationalist ideology, and the debate ran in a wasteful direction. However, the process forced mainstream historical thought to reflect on itself and provided an occasion for a change of course (Chung, Y. 2000: 150-153).

Issues raised during the debate ran in many directions, but Chung, Jae Jeong (1996b: 112-115) proposes three points deserving further scrutiny: development or exploitation, growth or assimilation, and continuity or discontinuity. First, the issue of development or exploitation is often presented with one stressed over the other, but a methodology that comprehensively encompasses both should be found. Second, a segment of the Korean population pursued self-development and instrumental growth under colonialism but this was also the path of subordinate incorporation under the colonial system in which assimilation has been equated with collaboration, giving rise to the problem of where to position "collaborators" within modern Korean history. These two points are connected with economy (development and growth) and politics (exploitation and assimilation) under colonialism. Third, particular factors are "cast in sharp relief" when discussing continuity or discontinuity between the colonial and post-liberation periods, rather than recognizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of this issue.

¹ Due to the limitations of space, the details of this debate are not included here. For a comparative and balanced summary on the unfolding of the debate and its central points, refer to Chung, Youn Tae (2000) and Chung, Jae Jeong (1996a; 1996b), though I disagree with some parts of their arguments which are presented in the latter part of this article.

Consequently, the debate has seemed to turn in on itself without serious examination of these issues. This article seeks to discuss these points, in conjunction with recently published articles. Statistical research on economic conditions during the colonial period has made some progress (Huh, S. 2005; Kim, N. N. ed. 2006), but these works have also raised questions on how living standards changed for Koreans under colonialism. This research can seem like an extension of the debate between “exploitation” and “colonial modernization”; but rather than relying on abstract concepts like “exploitation,” it is distinguished by its reliance on methods that can be statistically substantiated. I will examine some aspects of the debate later.

Consideration of the colonial period has received the recent influence of post-modernism and research topics have diversified away from politics and economy to include society, culture, and consciousness (Kim, J. and Jung, K. eds. 1997; Shin and Robinson eds. 1999; Kong, J. and Jung, K. eds. 2006). These works consider modernity and colonialism as inseparable and focus on the connection between the two. The key word and the main characteristic of their research agenda is “colonial modernity” (*singminji kũndaesõng*). However, what kind of relationship can be found between their research and the existing debate? Regardless of the conflict between the perspectives of “exploitation” and “colonial modernization,” Kim, Jin Kyun and Jung, Keun Sik (1997, 18) argue that both approaches considered modernity in a positive light and believed that modernization must be accomplished at some point. From that viewpoint, both approaches share the same perspective. In their research, Kim and Jung look at modernity negatively as something to be overcome, which fundamentally alters the topography of the existing debate. Consequently, many other scholars have followed this type of historiographical approach to the point of ubiquity. While this well demonstrates the theoretical viewpoint on which their works are based, it also indicates rigidity within the historiography that promotes over-simplification or distortion.²

² Shin and Robinson, eds. (1999: 526-527); Namiki (1999: 111-113); Bae, Sung Jun (2000: 170-174); Matsumoto (2002: 31-32); Kim, Dong No (2004: 18); and Cho, Hyung Keun (2006: 50-51) all adopt a similar approach. Generally, they use Shin, Yong Ha (1998) and Ahn, Byung Jik (1998) as representatives of “exploitation” and “colonial modernization” respectively, stating that both sides of the debate share “a

Regardless of whether one regards modernity positively or negatively, the bigger issue is the fact that there is a pre-determined value judgment. The features associated with the modern or modernity can be listed as nation-state and nationalism (politics), capitalism and commodification (economy), and individualism and rationalization (society). Although these features first appeared in the West, they were simultaneously proliferating in other areas and undergoing their own transformation through the process of diffusion. These features could promote human freedom and welfare but in other forms, they could also lead to domination, oppression, and hazards. Taking any of the features listed above, none of them can be easily characterized as negative or positive on their own because of their complex character. Kim, Jin Kyun and Jung, Keun Sik (1997, 20-23) emphasized the negative aspects, but they were aware of the “duality of modernity.” Cho, Hyung Keun (2006: 54, 59-67) goes to extremes and argues for the need to “revolutionize” modernity through “radical critique.” Beginning with a value judgment that equates the modern with negativity is the same as presenting a conclusion before doing any analysis.³ Consequently, this pre-judging research cannot be combined with other research. Cho’s historiographical overview shows that the conclusions of the preexisting academic debate have not been incorporated into the new research for this reason, but instead have been excluded. It is not necessary to narrow the scope of the understanding of the modern because of the presumption of particular value judgments.

In many cases, the difficulty of communication is due to differences in the

longing for the modern,” which is ultimately the root of nationalism. Furthermore, they criticize these scholars for having unwittingly been won over by the “hegemony of the modern” and raising the modern to “divine” status (Namiki 2003: 10). However, it raises the question of how universally this critique can be applied to scholars on both sides of the debate. For example, studies of economic history that focus on the development of capitalism and industrialization in the colonial period seek to “explain” the phenomenon rather than thinking it is “something that must be achieved” or the object of “yearning.”

³ Kim, Dong No (2003: 309-321) points out that such concepts as “modernity” (*kūndae(sōng)*), “nation” (*minjok*), and “colonialism” (*singminji*), which have been widely used in the works on colonial history, are problematic for comparative historical or empirical researches when these concepts are invested with pre-existing values.

academic backgrounds of the researchers. Those involved in the early debate conducted research according to their fields. Studies of the independence movement focused on the colonial system and the resistance movement. Economic historians looked at the economic system and market transactions, while social and cultural historians were interested in everyday life, the transformation of culture, and issues of identity. Since each field had its own inherent analytical concepts and methodology, even research on the same topic resulted in different perspectives and assessments. Depending on the extent of cooperation, research findings could have contributed to a complete understanding of the history of this period. However, the reality was that interdisciplinary communication was not easy and there were many cases where the debate yielded few results.

This article now turns to a simple examination of this period by field, such as colonial economy (section 2), colonial system of rule and politics (section 3), and colonial society and culture (section 4). I will focus on how the research findings in each discipline offer perspectives on the other fields, which illustrates possibilities for greater communication in the future. In addition, I will examine how the introduction of value judgments blocks communication in the existing research and how the concepts and methodology of each discipline places emphasis on different things in its analysis of the colonial period. At the same time, I will highlight the need to understand the limits of the approaches. I believe this type of work can lead to solutions by helping us reflect on the preconceptions within the ongoing debate and at the very least, help block wasteful debate.⁴

⁴ In regards to the title of this article, some explanation is required to help prevent misunderstandings. Originally, "colonial modernization" was a term coined by critics of studies in economic history that focused on the introduction of a modern system and the progress of industrialization. The term was loaded with criticism of the premise that colonial control was beneficial and that modernity was equated with positivity. Under the influence of post-modernism and the re-conceptualization of the modern as negative, however, the term as the union of "colonial" and "modern" has become fashionable without giving a sense of awkwardness. The historiographical summary of Cho, Hyung Keun (2006: 54-72) differentiates between "colonial modernization" (*singminji kũndaehwa*), "colonial modernity" (*singminji kũndaesõng*), and "cultural colonial modernity" (*munhwaron chõk singminji kũndaesõng*). Other terms are also being used like "colonial modern" (*singminji chõk kũndae*) (Jung, Tae

II. COLONIAL ECONOMY: “EXPLOITATION” AND THE LIVING STANDARDS OF KOREANS

One of the most common criticisms leveled against “colonial modernization” is that it ignores the exploitation aspect in favor of stressing development. This approach has been criticized as a “historical perception that effaces relief,” as “the supremacy of economic development” (Chung, Y. 2000: 144-145), and a “colonial historical perspective” that “denudes the objective reality of exploitation” through the “magic of economics” (Jung, T. 2007: 191, 199). If we simultaneously examine both aspects of exploitation and development in a balanced manner as Chung, Jae Jeong (1996b: 113) proposes, will there be explanatory power? This method may not solve the problem. It is necessary to recognize the fundamental limitation on using the concept of exploitation in an analysis of the colonial economy. This limit is one of the obstacles that sometimes blocks communication between economics and other fields. Two examples are listed below.

The first example is the “exploitation” of rice in the colonial period. As everyone knows, agriculture was the main economic activity in Chosŏn Korea and rice was the largest export item to Japan. However, high school textbooks on modern Korean history describe this as Japanese “exploitation” of Korean rice (or “stealing”). These textbooks indicate that the drastic reduction of Korean per capita consumption of rice as a result of these exports is clear evidence that Korean living standards declined.

However, the export of rice was the result of voluntary transactions just like any other business deal. During the wartime years of early 1940s, the Japanese sought rice to expand their supply of food grains. The compensation

Hern 2007: 39-63) and “colonial modern” (*singminji kŭndae*) (Yun, Hae Dong 2004: 235-239). If we discuss how these terms have different, or even conflicting, meanings, then it only contributes to the confusion of the readers. I believe that if we eliminate value judgments from our understanding of modernity, then there is no distinction between the terms in approaching the phenomenon of modernity in the colonial period. With that purpose in mind, I used the title of the article in an inclusive manner to connect the debate over “colonial modernization” and the subsequent discussion.

they offered to Korean farmers was much lower than the price that the farmers could receive elsewhere, so naturally the farmers avoided offering their rice. Consequently, the Japanese plan to expand rice deliveries became coercive in nature. The wartime plan to mobilize labor and volunteers operated in a similar fashion. Forced rice deliveries and forced mobilization of labor in the wartime control economy can be called exploitation. However, it is cannot be said that voluntary transactions undertaken in a market economy also constituted exploitation.

In that case, how do we explain the Korean per capita decline in rice consumption? If rice was “exploited,” then the reasons for the decline in rice consumption are obvious. However, if it was the result of voluntary transactions, then the reason for the phenomenon requires an alternative explanation.⁵ Today, an increase in rice exports signifies an expansion of the export market as well as the opportunity for farmers (or landlords) selling the rice to raise their incomes. In the colonial period, grain production was the most important industry. If more than half of the rice produced was exported, then what kind of influence did that have on the Korean economy? A close examination reveals that in addition to the inflow of Japanese capital, increased rice production and expansion of exports also played an important role in colonial industrialization.⁶ If one focuses only on “exploitation,” then it becomes impossible to grasp the logic behind economic change.

Second, evidence for the economic exploitation of Korea by Japan is sought in the “outflow of surplus.” For example, Jung, Tae Hern argues that the outflow of capital was greater than the inflow of capital at a rate between 4.3 to 5 times (the rate increases to between 6.3 to 7.4 times if indirect flows are

⁵ Despite an increase in the production of rice, the decline in the per capita rice consumption resulted from population increase and rice exports, which was labelled as “famine exports” of rice. Cha (1998) argues that the most important factor was an increase in population pressure arising from the dissemination of modern techniques of hygiene and sanitation. Kim, N. N. (2003: 120-131) argues that as the Korean and Japanese economies were unified, an increase in rice prices suppressed consumption, and landlords’ greater control over tenant rice increased the commercialization rate of rice.

⁶ In this period, economic policy was less important than the role of the market, especially rice exports and the non-agricultural investment of landlord capital. For more, see Kim, N. N. (2006a: 208-219).

included), which represents “capital exploitation” on a massive scale. But what is the significance of this “capital exploitation”? When capital flows in and out, assets or credits will flow in the opposite direction,⁷ so it is impossible to know how excessive outflow of capital can be equated with exploitation.⁸ Furthermore, the scale of capital outflow which Jung calls “exploitation” was an arbitrarily determined number that is meaningless.⁹ In the colonial period, overall trade was significantly in deficit (the service trades were also in deficit) which indicates that, in contravention of Jung’s argument, there were excessive inflows of capital. Also, Jung argues that capital outflow was greater than inflow by several times, but this would have been impossible with the currency system of that period (Kim, N. N. 2003: 112). In other words, Jung Tae-hern’s argument is incompatible with the formal logic of economics. This is an example of how using concrete statistics to substantiate claims of “exploitation” results in inconsistencies.

There is an argument that “exploitation” should be understood as a “structural phenomenon” (*kujo chök hyönsang*) (Park, M. 1991: 178, 183). “Even if the phenomenon of extortive situations between individuals and groups is not apparent, there were colonial conditions within Japanese control of Korea and Koreans, and those conditions were reproduced systemically and structurally. Exploitation was inherent in the structure.” If it was not

⁷ Transfer of funds such as subsidies or military expenditures was an exception since they were moving without payments moving in the opposite direction. Throughout the colonial period, the current account of the colonial government recorded a net inflow (Kim, N. N. 2004: 29-31, 37-38).

⁸ In the case of compulsory savings enacted under wartime controls, depositors bore the losses from inflation. Additionally, the Japanese bonds purchased with savings money were ultimately not redeemed after the war. Like wartime rice delivery or the conscript of labor, these examples can be considered exploitation within the financial sector. However, common financial transactions that were not compulsory in nature cannot be considered exploitation.

⁹ For example, among government expenditures, expenditures used for Japanese (In this case, the use of the term “outflow” is inappropriate and “use” (*yongdo*) will be substituted later. Jung, Tae Hern 2007: 198), export figures for mining products heading to Japan, and the Korean trade deficit with Japan are all categorized as “outflow” (*yuch’ul*) because they are the “exhaustion of productivity” or “export of surplus.” The combination of these items is meaningless within the field of economics.

“extortion” (*t'alch'ui*) (or exploitation), it was “exploitation” structurally and in reality. The concept of “exploitation” used here is different from its dictionary meaning of stealing or robbing. It is understood as the structure and essence of the colonial system. However, using “exploitation” in the latter sense turns every phenomenon under colonial system into exploitation and makes it impossible to empirically analyze economic reality with that concept.¹⁰

The issue here is that it is difficult to substantially explain economic change while remaining critical of colonialism. The uniqueness of the market economy lies in the voluntary participation of the transacting parties as well as their mutual dependence in making a deal. This feature is accomplished regardless of the political structure of where the market economy is located. Economics has its strengths in analyzing this type of market economy, but the flip-side is that economics has limitations in revealing the colonial nature of the system. The method of explicating concepts like “exploitation” in economic analyses cannot be successful. Colonial control involves compulsion, but it is not necessary to expand this to include the economic domain where everyday transactions occur. Colonialism is typically addressed in violations of sovereignty and the coercive process of supporting the system of control. This issue will be addressed in the next section on the colonial system and politics.

Next, we will focus on recent statistical researches on the colonial economy, especially those on the changes of living standards of Koreans. It may be meaningless from the perspective of “exploitation theory” to question how living standards of Koreans had changed during the colonial period. However, the decline of living standards is not a foregone conclusion, but a topic that requires serious examination.¹¹ Huh, Soo Youl (2005: 26-33) does

¹⁰ Chung, Youn Tae (2000: 153) says exploitation theory, “too easily accepts the ‘obvious premise’ of Japanese exploitation and nationalist resistance and it is quite careless in clearly uncovering the other facts of exploitation.” The task remains to “really discover actual exploitation that will convince the international community.” Jung, Tae Hern (2004: 62) states that “despite all the discussion, there has been no real progress in empirical studies that uncovers exploitation.” Why has this happened? The reason lies in concept itself of “exploitation” which cannot be statistically substantiated.

¹¹ Living standards does not only include the material aspects of life but also the level of psychological satisfaction. If we seriously consider psychological wounds like damage

not use the term “exploitation” since he does not believe that it appropriately describes the exchange relations of the period, but there is little difference between “exploitation theory” and his conclusions. That is to say, development in the colonial period intensified the extreme inequality between Korean and Japanese ownership of land and capital, which exacerbated the inequalities in income, and caused a steep decline in Korean living standards. The difference between this argument and “exploitation theory” is its utilization of statistical evidence and concrete numbers to indicate the extent of the inequality and the decline in living standards, which makes a serious examination possible.

Before examining Huh’s argument, we first look at the overall direction of the Korean economy, including the economic activity of the Japanese. Kim, Nak Nyeon ed. (2006) estimated the national account statistics for the period from 1911 to 1940,¹² relying on the standards established by the UN in its 1993 System of National Accounts. According to this system, the annual average growth rate of the economy was 3.7% while the population growth rate was 1.3%. Therefore, the growth rate of per capita income was 2.4%. The fastest growing sectors were mining, industry, electric, and construction (annual average 9%), followed by the service sector (5%). As a result, structural change was also rapid as agriculture declined from 68% to 41% in this period, while mining and industry increased from 5% to 14%. In that regard, growth in trade and investment led economic growth. Reliance on trade increased from the 20% level to 60% while the investment rate increased from 5% to 14%. Private consumption expenditures increased at an annual average of 3.3% which, considering population growth, resulted in an estimated per capita growth rate of 1.9%. Although grain consumption showed a slight decrease, consumption of other foodstuffs and industrial

to national pride, then it may be difficult to say that living standards in this period improved. However, the subjective nature of that type of damage makes it difficult to quantify for comparison. Therefore, this discussion will be limited to the material aspects.

¹² Before the publication of these estimates, the GDP numbers estimated by Mizoguchi and Umemura (1988) have been widely used. Kim, N. N. ed. (2006) has significantly revised these numbers and for the difference on the estimates, see Kim, N. N. ed. (2006: 281-287).

products increased.¹³

These estimates can be linked to the statistics of post-liberation South Korea for international comparison. In comparison to post-liberation South Korea, the economic growth rate in the colonial period was only half, but growth showed a similar pattern led by the development of trade, investment, and industrialization. The economic growth rate was at the same level as that of Japan and Taiwan, but was quite high in comparison to other areas. In this regard, the Japanese empire was not only unified in terms of money and tariffs but had been unified into a single market as a system. However, in comparison with the post-liberation period income inequality levels were high due to the landlord system. In conjunction with the low level of education rates, these factors account for the gap in economic growth rates between the pre- and post-liberation periods (Cha and Kim 2006).

Huh, Soo Youl (2005) is critical of these approaches which consider the whole colonial economy including Japanese economic activities. From the Korean perspective, economic growth in the colonial period was nothing more than development by Japanese for Japanese. Rather than examining the territory called Korea, the perspective of the Korean people has to be considered. Huh used distribution statistics for each nationality of rice production and land ownership to argue that estimated per capita rice income for Korean farmers (including landlords) decreased 33.2% from 1910 to 1941. This study is, though limited to rice, an attempt to present concrete numbers indicating changes in Korean incomes and living standards.

A debate ensued in which Kim, Nak Nyeon (2005), Joo, Ik Jong (2006), Cha, Myung Soo (2006) gave their critiques, to which Huh, Soo Youl (2006) responded and to which Kim, Nak Nyeon (2006b) responded again. There were several key points of the debate. First was the issue of modifying the rice

¹³ Greater urbanization was also a result of the changes to the industrial and expenditures structure. If administrative units with over 20,000 people are classified as cities, then the urban population between 1925 and 1940 increased from 7% to 20% (Hori Kazuo 1995: 110-112). Although the level of urbanization was not high, the rate of urbanization was quite fast. Although still confined to a part of population residing in cities, there were significant changes to Korean lifestyles. The emergence of modern culture and lifestyles in the 1930's which Kim, Chin Song (1999) describes was possible due to such changes in the economic structure.

production statistics from the 1910's, which saw the implementation of the land survey. The second issue was the productivity gap between land owned by Koreans and Japanese. The third issue was the overestimation of the agricultural population growth rate before census survey, which was used to find peasant per capita income. Even Huh, Soo Youl recognizes the validity of the last point. On the first point, the question remains as to whether to accept the final rice production statistics adjusted by Government-General after the completion of the land survey. Without any clear evidence, Huh disregarded those statistics and estimated that production stagnated in this period by retroactively applying production trends from 1918 to 1926. However, he ignored the increase in the penetration rate of superior seed from 2.2% to 43.5% between 1910 and 1918 and that the effects of increased production were reflected in the statistics adjusted by the Government-General. On the second point, Huh estimated that the Japanese owned 14.6% of the land in 1931 (16.9% in 1941) and accounted for 44% of rice production in 1931 (54% in 1941), which means that the productivity of Japanese-owned land was between 4.6 to 5.7 times greater than Korean-owned land. However, this type of unrealistic productivity gap is not real but a result of misreading the statistics (Kim, N. N. 2006b: 327-330).

If the problematic numbers for the three issues listed above are adjusted in Huh's calculations, then the rice production growth rate from 1910 to 1941 is 64.1% (compared to Huh's 52.3%), the gap in land productivity is 28.5% (compared to Hō's five times), and the annual average growth rate of the Korean agricultural population is 1% (compared to Huh's 1.6%). Consequently, the per capita rice income growth rate for Korean farmers is not the 33.2% decline presented by Huh, but rather an 8% increase (Kim, N. N. 2006b: 320-333).¹⁴ Although Korean farm income increased 8% over thirty-one years, which is quite different from a 33.2% decrease, it was still a slow growth rate. Furthermore, landlords were included within the average, so it is likely that income for tenant farmers and lower-class farmers stagnated.

Joo, Ik Jong (2006: 113-121) pursued a different approach and inferred an

¹⁴ Statistics on this period are comparatively abundant, but statistics that distinguish between nationalities are quite limited. Since the figures above are calculated partially on the guess only, these remain tentative results.

increase in Korean per capita income for this period. The above-mentioned GDP figures (including Japanese economic activity¹⁵) increased 2.66 times from 1912 to 1939 (an annual average growth rate of 3.7%), while the Korean population increased 40% (an annual average growth rate of 1.3%). What might happen if the increase in income had all gone to the Japanese while Korean per capita income just stagnated? If the per capita income of Japanese living in Korea is assumed to be twice the per capita income of Japanese living in Japan in 1912, the gap between incomes in 1939 would have increased 6.5 times (the results do not change much even if the assumptions are changed). In that scenario, many Japanese would have moved to Korea to seek greater income opportunities, but the reality is that the growth rate in the numbers of Japanese living in Korea decreased as time passed. The Japanese had an initially low population ratio of 1.7% so it would be unrealistic to assume that they captured all of the income increase. Consequently, it is logical to think that Korean per capita income also increased.

While this inference relying on aggregate statistics and assumptions suggests that Korean per capita income increased, it only shows averages. The landlord system in this period was expanding in the countryside, particularly after the Shōwa financial crisis. In the cities, the number of salaried workers and skilled laborers increased along with new types of occupations, but there were also many unskilled laborers. Cha, Myung Soo (2006: 321-328) has estimated the Gini coefficient in this period and shown an increase in income inequality between nationalities and classes. Overcoming the aforementioned limitation is possible through records of wages that were directly observed. Wages in that period have been surveyed according to nationality and occupation, but it is possible to ascertain real wage trends by occupation for Koreans by estimating the consumer price index. Huh Soo Youl (1981) examined Korean wages by separating laborers into skilled and unskilled categories. From 1910 to 1938, wages for the former increased while wages for the latter stagnated.¹⁶ Kim, Nak Nyeon and Park, Ki Joo (2007) estimated real

¹⁵ Like today, the residents included in calculations of the national account are not distinguished by their nationality, but rather by their character as “center of interest” (usually they are considered residents if they have resided in the country for longer than one year). Most Japanese living in Korea at that time can be considered residents.

¹⁶ It is difficult to reconcile Huh’s findings of real wage trend with his above mentioned

wages for Seoul factory workers from 1936 to 1956 and connected the two periods to ascertain long-term trends in real wages (1910-1975). According to their findings, real wages for unskilled and factory labor generally stagnated throughout the colonial period, unlike wages for skilled labor. Immediately after Liberation, wages for unskilled labor quickly fell and did not recover to pre-liberation levels until after the Korean War. Disregarding the chaotic periods of war and Liberation, average wages for unskilled Korean laborers before the outbreak of war between Japan and China in 1937 were 82% of average wages of South Korean factory labor from 1953 to 1967.

Many topics remain for future research on the colonial economy. This article emphasizes that the current debate can be moved from discussion of essentialist concepts like “exploitation” to substantial points like changes in Korean living standards. The pursuit and accumulation of substantial research demonstrates the possibility of escaping from conventional useless debates.

III. COLONIAL SYSTEM OF RULE AND POLITICS: DOMINATION, RESISTANCE, AND COOPERATION

Unlike the economic realm which relied on the autonomy of the transacting parties, the system of rule, to the extent that it relied on coercion, was a typical colonial sphere. Japanese methods of colonial rule were based on their command of the military, police, and bureaucracy, but were characterized by the pursuit of assimilation. Unlike Western imperialists, the Japanese believed that it was possible to establish permanent control through complete assimilation of Korea, due to the close geographical, racial, and cultural ties between themselves and their colony. In the process of pursuing these assimilationist goals, the Japanese found it necessary to compromise with reality, producing varying aspects at different times and in different areas.

Economically, the Japanese system was transplanted to Korea and there was institutional integration of the two regions from early on. The cadastral survey established modern land ownership rights and fixed the land tax system, but it was similar in nature to the land tax reform implemented in

argument that Korean peasant income decreased by 33.2%.

Japan. Japanese currency had been penetrating the peninsula immediately after the opening of the ports and ultimately replaced Korean currency. Bank of Chōsen notes and Bank of Japan notes were different but they could be freely exchanged at a 1:1 ratio so there was no functional distinction between the two. The tariff systems of Japan and Korea were combined in 1920. With the exception of a few items, there were no tariffs between the two regions. In regards to economic laws (civil law, commercial law, etc.), Japanese laws were practically transferred wholesale (Kim, N. N. 2003: 44-73). From the businessman's perspective, he was operating within an institutional environment that made colonial Korea seem like another region inside Japan. As a result, trade between the two regions in goods, capital, and labor quickly expanded. In this respect, colonial Korea and Japan resembled the present-day EU, which has achieved currency, tax, and institutional unification. As mentioned in the previous section, the Korean economy moved in lock-step with the Japanese empire for precisely this reason. Unlike the EU, which was based on equal relationships between the participatory nations, colonial Korea and Japan had a different political relationship which was based on domination and subordination. The above-mentioned process of institutional transplantation was how Korea was colonized. In contrast to the EU, the economic unification of the two areas was a result of the domineering methods used by the Japanese in pursuit of assimilation.

In contrast, the Japanese avoided political assimilation and did not recognize the political rights of the Koreans. The laws implemented in colonial Korea were different from those in Japan (inner land; *naichi*) since it was classified as a "different-law region" or "outer land" (*ihō chiiki* or *gaichi*). Some Japanese laws were selected for enactment in Korea for the sake of convenience, but the legal code related to election law was omitted. Other laws were enacted through regulations issued by the Governor-General (*seirei*). In other words, Koreans were blocked from participating in the formation of the laws that bound them. Since the composition of courts, appointment qualifications for judges, and disciplinary actions were all prescribed by Government-General regulations, judicial power could hardly be expected to be independent from government administration. In short, the Government-General in Korea naturally had administrative authority, but it also controlled legislative and judicial authority which essentially allowed

it to wield unlimited power. Political rights for Koreans were permitted, but they were extremely limited and existed only on the local level (Kim, N. N. 2003: 35-44).

During wartime, assimilation policies developed in an extreme form. Economically, a unified command economy was implemented across the Japanese empire. The switch began with the substitution of planning and control for market, but ultimately, the entire economic system was transformed. By the end of the war, the government was demanding that businessmen and peasants alike fulfill the production responsibilities assigned to them and to place the “public interest” (*kongik*) above personal interest. While the wartime mobilization system was being established, greater efforts at psychological assimilation were being exerted. These were the “Japan and Korea as one body” (*naisen ittai*) and “imperialization of colonial subjects” (*kōminka*) policies. The adoption of these slogans further exposed the contradiction between assimilationist policies and the lack of political rights for the colonial people. With the enactment of the conscription system at the end of the wartime period, the Japanese decided to grant Koreans political rights but only in the most formal sense. Those rights were never implemented before liberation.

As stated above, the Japanese control policies aimed at complete assimilation and permanent merger and assimilation did make substantial process in certain areas. These methods of domination are striking in comparison to other colonial situations. For example, the Japanese simultaneously pursued aggression while also introducing modern systems and they rationalized colonial control through the façade of modernity. The complex and delicate nature of the Korean response to these policies can be attributed to this feature. Previous scholarship has focused on resistance to this system of control. When describing the colonial history of a country that was liberated from colonial control, it is only natural to concentrate on the history of the independence movement. Consequently, much research has been done from that perspective. However, focusing on the development of the national independence movement as has been done in a high school modern history textbook would impart a distorted view of the period. That research is based on a structure of domination and resistance that obscures the diverse array of responses pursued by the Koreans.

Namiki (2003: 2-3) states that post-liberation politicians in North and South Korea exercised leadership that was legitimated by their participation in the national liberation struggle (particularly overseas) by being members of the Provisional Government or the communist partisan group (*Ppalch'isan*). As a result, their political judgments and assessments have dominated up to the present day the perspective from which we have understood modern Korean history. He characterizes it as a "political refugee's historical discourse". For this reason, there is intense scrutiny of even minor details related to the national liberation struggle while the complex and diverse experiences of the majority of Koreans in the colonial period is disregarded, concealed, and undervalued.

Within a similar context, Yun, Hae Dong (2003: 24, 27-39) discusses the dichotomy between resistance and "pro-Japanese collaboration" (*ch'inil*). Within this dichotomy, resistance was viewed only from the standard of nationalism, so it could not encompass diverse forms of everyday resistance. On the other hand, the concept of pro-Japanese collaboration was infused with ethical judgments, while the ambiguity resulting from expanded use made it unsuitable as an analytical concept. Furthermore, the dichotomy obscured the real life of Koreans in the colonial period, who showed contradictory attitudes of cooperation and resistance within the fluctuating situations. Yun called this the "gray area" (*hoesaek chidae*). Another problem with the dichotomy was its distortion of the political history of the colonial period. On the one hand, all social movements were considered part of the national liberation struggle, which indicates the privileging of social history. On the other hand, everything else was excluded from the political realm. For this reason, while the period preceding and just after the March First Movement was colored as that of "total national resistance", the period approaching the Second World War was described as that of "total national collaboration", which was a completely reversed image of the former. The dichotomizing approach can thus be criticized as impoverishing the study of the political history of this period.

How then should we approach colonial period political history? This section focuses on issues that do not fit within the existing perspective on independence movement history and attempts to link them to colonial political history. First is how to introduce the concept of "colonial publicness"

(*singminji konggongsöng*) (or the “public sphere”), although this effort is still at the experimental stage. Namiki (2003: 16-7, 22, 29) argues that the particular characteristics of colonial politics and racial domination made reaching agreements difficult and that regardless of whether one was the ruler or the ruled, the costs of attaining one’s goals were too high. Some of the rulers and the ruled sought neither the overthrow nor denial of the other, but pursued the partial realization of their goals through negotiation and compromise in a “bargain” process that is conceptualized as the “public sphere.” The sphere includes not just resistance and collaboration but a gray area between the two that allows a mutual blending and diffusion (that is to say, resistance ↔ gray area ↔ collaboration). From this viewpoint, the actions of the ruled can be seen as “politics,” while society can be seen as having been dynamic.

Looking at everyday life, Yun, Hae Dong (2003: 36-39) saw that issues related to communal life fell into the public realm and were also political. Even under colonial rule, participation in regional elections or various mass meetings all expanded the public sphere. Hwang, Byoung Joo (2007) did not presume the existence of “publicness” or a “public sphere,” but analyzed the various examples and meanings of the concept of “public” appearing in newspapers and magazines. Hwang saw the expansion of the value of “public” through all parts of society and confirmed the initial formation of the “public sphere.” Within the sphere, a limited form of politics was able to withstand the strong regulation of colonial power and endure. Although there are small differences in how scholars understand the “public sphere,” they share the understanding that the introduction of this concept allows the further development of discussions about colonial political history.

Second, we need to change how we address the issue of “pro-Japanese collaborators.” In the existing history of the independence movement, the “pro-Japanese group” is simply seen as a product of colonial rule or else is excluded from examination because of the moral judgment of the researcher. However, this approach prevents an understanding of the internal logic of their actions. First of all, the term “pro-Japanese” should be replaced by the concept of “collaboration with Japan” (*taeil hyömyöök*) (Namiki 1993: 55-56). The term “pro-Japanese” fosters the tendency to easily convict someone’s actions on their qualities as an individual. If the concept of “collaboration with Japan” is used, then general comparisons on aspects of collaboration can

be made with other situations of colonialism or occupation. As emphasized by the recent theory on the margins (*chubyönbu iron*) in the study imperialism (Park, J. 2000: 113-144), collaborators should be included in the analysis of the structure and dynamics of imperialism.

Below is a simple introduction of actual research that approaches colonial political history with this kind of critical understanding. Kim, Tong Myung (2006) empirically describes the political process of the cultural policy period of the 1920's. He focuses on the political process between the colonial government and the Korean political movement (divided into the three categories of the "assimilationist collaboration" (*tonghwahyöng hyömnnyök*) movement, "separatist collaboration" (*pullihyöng hyömnnyök*) movement, and the resistance movement), and explains the process of political exchange, or bargaining, between the two, consisting of suppression and conciliation, guidance and rejection, and adjustment and compromise. After the shock of the March First movement, the colonial government reformed the control structure to promote assimilation, but the contradictions inherent in that policy and the influence of the resistance movement led to a further change to promoting autonomy. However, the failure of that approach caused a return to the assimilation method. In other words, the colonial government could not unilaterally impose its will.

On the other hand, Korean political groups were pursuing their own goals and striving to expand their power, but in the midst of repeated internal conflict, competition, and division, they could not achieve their goals. In conjunction with the colonial "divide and rule" policy, the stubborn uncompromising attitude of Korean society prevented the mustering of political strength. Colonial rule, the independence movement, and the "pro-Japanese" activities have usually been addressed separately, but the uniqueness of this research is its focus on the dynamic nature of colonial political history that encompasses the interactions between all three elements.

If this was politics of the center, how was colonial rule implemented on the local level? This type of research has been comparatively active and features many controversies. For example, Kim Ik Han (2006) argues that village autonomy was maintained until the loss of independence due to the central role of the prominent families. However, these families lost their influence with the consolidation of regional administrative units and the

implementation of the township system in the 1910's, and the introduction of town councils in the 1920's, which allowed the appearance of new community leaders that cooperated with the Japanese. Furthermore, active collaborators known as "intermediaries" (*chunggyŏn inmul*) emerged from among regular peasants in the 1930's and the colonial government used them to extend its control all the way to the bottom of rural society. In regards to these people, Yun, Hae Dong (2006) argues that there has been a one-sided bias toward highlighting the aspects of control or systemization of the villages, and he emphasizes the need to also examine three other aspects of the situation. Those are the infiltration of modern forms of control through the township system, village autonomy, and the role played by the mid-level ruling stratum (*chunggan chibae ch'ung*) that connected the two. The central figures of this stratum were the district chiefs (*kujang*) or the "intermediaries" (*chunggyŏn inmul*). These people had a dual nature: on the one hand they were agents of colonial rule, while on the other they were representatives of the autonomy and collectivity of the peasant society. It has been noted that during the War years, their role as the former was strengthened while the gap between them and village autonomy grew greater.

According to Matsumoto (1998: 27, 235-238), the village order that had been led by local leaders drawn from the middle and small landlords living in the villages was transformed into one led by "intermediaries" during a transition period from the late 1920's through the wartime period. The definitive difference between these two periods is that the autonomy of the former period gave way inevitably to a new order as a consequence of the policy interventions of the colonial government. Such policy interventions as the mediation of tenant disputes and the Rural Revitalization Campaign of the 1930's became key elements in the wartime system of control. Matsumoto argues that the relationship of domination formed between the colonial authorities and the peasants continued in the post-liberation period under the system of authoritarian control (namely, "strong state and weak society"). A point of interest in his argument is how the "intermediaries" accommodated themselves to the policy opportunities. The "intermediaries" were mostly composed of upper-middle class peasants who relied on family labor and personally practiced the diligence and frugality that were preached as policy slogans of village rehabilitation. When the push for village reorganization

during the wartime years came into conflict with the egalitarian community ethics of the village, the intermediaries used the logic of agricultural modernization to persuade the villagers.

Ji, Su Gol (2007: 348-349, 361-362) states that the main administrative level for the colonial government's system of local rule was not the township or the village but the county. He conceptualizes a "system of rule by government officials and community leaders." This system corresponded to and represented continuity with the "system of rule by magistrates and local literati families" (*suryöng-sajok (yihyang) chibae ch'êje*) of the Chosön period. Although the formal position of the county was weakened with the implementation of the township system which reorganized local administration into a two-tier system of the province and township, Ji argues that the county continued to be a site for civil complaints and petitions and maintained its place as a central space for local social movements. He introduces groups of "community leaders" and "innovative youths" that are differentiated from the district chiefs and intermediaries (village representatives and mid-level ruling stratum) that were his focus of the above-mentioned studies.¹⁷ The social background and composition of these two groups were largely indistinguishable until the 1920's but distinct differences in their political positions began appearing with the buildup of local social movements aiming at systemic change in the 1930's. The conflict between the two continued into the post-liberation period through the political activities of the left and right (Ji, S. 2005: 232-242). However, scholars are divided over the utility of the characteristics of these two groups as analytical concepts.¹⁸

There is empirical research on the members of provincial councils (including municipal councils), one type of public officials mentioned by

¹⁷ Ji separates individuals according to their character by stating that the "community leaders" are individuals included in registers like the *Chosön kongjikcha myönggam* (Register of public servants in colonial Korea) (1927) and the "innovative youths" are people in the *Yujuüi yosichallin myöngbu* (Register of suspicious people under surveillance) found in the county or village police stations (Ji, S. 2005: 199-201).

¹⁸ For example, Yun, Hae Dong (2006: 224-227) criticizes viewing "community leaders" (*yuji*) as a social status group because it exaggerates their power and overlooks their attributes as a mid-level ruling stratum situated between control and resistance. Kim Ik Han (2006: 69-70) is skeptical of the concept of an "innovative youth group."

Ji, Su Gol in his group of “community leaders.” Tong, Sun Hee (2006: 63-136, 283-290) analyzed the family backgrounds, careers, home regions, and political activities of Koreans (approximately 1,400 people) who served one term or more on a provincial council between 1920 and 1945. According to the research, their average age was early to mid-40’s and they received a modern education (with about 40% having attended secondary schools). While many of them were engaged in agriculture, a significant number (40%) worked at or owned shares in companies, stores, and banks. An examination of their careers shows that more than a few held public office in the military, police, or judicial fields before and after annexation in 1910. It is interesting to note that 30% of the total had been township heads. Some of these township heads used their authority as local spokesmen as a stepping-stone to a seat on the provincial council. Ultimately, they advanced through their modern education, their commercial or industrial activities, and their participation in colonial officialdom, rather than their class background. Many of them participated in the enlightenment and self-strengthening movement in the years before annexation or supported the movement to develop Korean capabilities (*sillyök yangsöngnon*) after annexation. In the pursuit of modernization within the realities of colonial rule, some were satisfied with the idea of harmony between Korea and Japan or incorporation into the structure of colonial rule. Others however expressed local demands or complaints for lifestyle improvements like the expansion of social infrastructure in areas like education and argued for better treatment of Koreans. Due to this duality, they existed on an unstable boundary line situated between resistance and cooperation with Japanese colonialism. They were trying to gain the confidence of locals as well as the trust of the Japanese, both of which were always fluid, so their position was usually quite precarious.

Finally, there are two points that should be mentioned. First is the significance and limitations of the “publicness” (*konggongsöng*) as used in research on colonial political history. With the exception of the resistance movement, it was difficult to establish politics that obtained the consent of the ruled while under Japanese colonialism, and the “public sphere” (*konggong yöngyök*) was limited to a highly restricted area of local politics. Some Korean participation within politics was part of the Japanese plan to “divide and

rule,” and functioned as “white washing” or glossing over its colonial nature (Namiki 2003: 23). The dilemma of pursuing legitimate political activity in the colonial period was that it could be seen as approval or recognition of the system of rule and finally won over to that system. However, regardless of the colonizers’ plan, the expansion of the “public sphere” was still an opportunity for politics, albeit in distorted form. Considering its influence on post-liberation politics, empirical research in this area is an important task. Although it is in a slightly different context, Hwang Byoung Joo (2007: 9-10, 36-38) argues that the expansion of “public” was also an opportunity for greater control. The colonial government attempted to make a public (or citizenry) that accepted the idea of sacrificing personal interest for the public good, but the public pursued by Korean elites was also another means of disciplining the masses. Ji, Su Gol (2007: 356, 372) states that “public opinion” (*kongnon*) was often an “formal ritual” of local leader groups seeking to portray themselves as representativeness of the people and points out its limitations as a “pseudo-public” (*saibi kong*). These points are not issues limited only to the colonial period, but an empirical examination of the politics of that period should take these characteristics into consideration.

Second, the problem of pro-Japanese activities or collaboration is one of the central issues that must be addressed in any study of colonial political history. Namiki (1993: 34-46) divides forms of collaboration into the ideologue-type and the technocrat-type. Prominent people from the upper class who were clearly purposeful in undertaking pro-Japanese action fall into the former category, while the latter category encompasses administrators, teachers, legislators, and other participants in institutions of colonial control whose regular duties were connected to the practice of colonial control. In 1941, Korean employees of the Government-General (including educators) numbered 68,000 people, town and village employees including district chiefs totaled 74,000 people, and local council members reached 24,000 people. Most collaborators fell into this latter category. Although the debate about “pro-Japanese” has mostly focused on the former category, collaborators from the latter category actually had much wider influence in the post-liberation.

Here we can examine the issue raised in the introduction regarding the connection of Korean self-improvement and instrumental development (*kinŭng chök söngjang*) with assimilation and “pro-Japanese” collaboration.

The above-mentioned technocrat-type collaborators are the prototypical example. Of course, the instrumental growth of Koreans in this period was not limited to public servants but also included private citizens who developed in various ways, which signifies that not all were connected to assimilationist or “pro-Japanese” elements. However, this shows that the issue itself is larger than the collaboration problem and is related to modernization in the colonial period. Koreans in this period had a strong orientation toward modernization and civilization under the imposition of “modernity as hegemony” that will be discussed later. On the flip side, the colonial government presented itself as both the provider of modern facilities in various aspects of life and the spokesperson for modernization, even while applying coercive pressure. If a Korean wanted to encounter the modern in whatever form, contact with the colonial government was inevitable. Collaborators experienced the modern before anyone else and pursued modern desires that would elevate their status. Based on this point, Namiki (2003: 24-25) conceptualized the issue of collaboration as “the site of actual contact between the ‘modern’ and the ruled,” which allowed an examination of the special qualities of modernization under colonial rule.

Previous research on colonial political history has focused on the national independence movement, but there is a need to include the transformation of the structure and policies of Japanese colonial rule as well as the various reactions and cooperation of Koreans within the “colonial public sphere.”¹⁹ When the mutual interactions between them are considered, then it will be possible to see the contradictions and dynamism of colonial politics.

¹⁹ In regards to the debate over “colonial publicness” (*singminji konggongsŏng*) and collaboration, Ji, Su Gol (2005: 243) admitted need to overcome the binary historical understanding by deconstructing the existing history of the colonial period, but was also cautious of falling into a reverse bias in the process. In other words, the concern is that by “grey-ifying” the historical understanding of this period, “it results in obscuring the course of political actions necessary for addressing the pro-Japanese issue and achieving social justice.” However, the aim of their debate is to explain the complex, entangling reality as well as the contradictions of colonial politics, which does not allow for directly addressing the issues of social justice and political practice. The former aim is an expression of empirical interest, while the latter is premised on value judgments.

IV. COLONIAL SOCIETY AND CULTURE: "COLONIAL MODERNITY"

The scope of inquiry regarding imperialism is continuing to expand. Study of the colonial structure is no longer limited to the military and political but includes issues of culture, epistemology, and consciousness. In other words, interest is moving from the material to the cultural. Scholars of post-colonialism argue that although formal military and political rule ended with the collapse of the colonial system, the negative legacies of colonial control in culture and consciousness have continued.

Post-colonialism theory has arisen against the theoretical backdrop of the critique of modernity of post-modernism, the body and discipline and the knowledge and power of Michel Foucault, and the Orientalism of Edward Said. Power was usually identified by power holders exerting their will through coercion. However, a characteristic of the modern is that even without the control or coercion of authorities, the self-regulation of individuals operates through modern subjectivity. Modern power works through micro-power structures, like schools and factories, on the soul and body of individuals within the institutions and manifests itself in disciplinary power that tames the individual as modern subjects (Foucault 1975). Furthermore, there is power in all knowledge. Since power works through knowledge, there is an inseparable relationship between modern power and knowledge. Rather than simply suppressing or prohibiting, power chose a form to accomplish its aims through the production of knowledge (Lee, J. 1998: 129-145). As a result, control was not through simple coercion but by gaining voluntary consent, or hegemony. The modern forms of power (disciplinary power, power and knowledge, hegemony) were also achieved in colonial Korea. Because this power had the characteristic of operating through the realms of body, knowledge, and culture, it continued to exist in forms like Orientalism even after the collapse of the colonial system (Said 1978).

Let us examine three research trends in regards to this critical approach. First, there is research focusing on modern subjectivity and colonial disciplinary power. Kim, Jin Kyun and Jung, Keun Sik (1997: 23-25) emphasize

that the colonial government made the people into objects of control, but went further by trying to instill a self-reproducing subjectivity within each individual that forced him/her to respect and maintain the colonial order on their own. The Japanese repeatedly injected various types of discipline, in the form of “regulation of the mind” (K. *simdük*, J. *kokoroe*), into everyday life in an attempt to internalize and impress control upon the colonial body and soul. The sites for this training and education were the family, schools, factories, hospitals, and other institutions of the modern social system. The discipline did not simply contain a modern character, but also incorporated the logic of “making imperial subjects” (*hwangminhwa*) that distinguished it from Western colonialism. The Japanese were making imperial subjects who had internalized modern discipline and were constructing a system to mobilize them for war. In the division system of the post-liberation period, this control was reproduced in “corporeal anti-communist unconsciousness” (*saengch'ehwa toen pan'gong mu'isik*). Therefore, overcoming the division system does not stop with changes in the political and military dimensions, but involves the elimination of modern colonial power that has been inscribed upon the body and the consciousness to the present day.

How do we prove the inscription and internalization of disciplinary power and its continuity into the post-liberation period? Kim, Jin Kyun et al. (1997: 109-111) argue that secondary schools under the Japanese were aiming at the making of “industrial-type people” (*sanöphyöng in'gan*) and “soldier-type people” (*pyöngsahyöng in'gan*), and they used various means (corporal punishment, repetitive training, group activity, influencing the subconscious) to internalize discipline in children. In order to make modern workers in the factories, the Japanese used force in the form of fines, violence, and punishment, as well as values education through bonuses and commendations (Kang, Y. 1997: 152-164). Understanding the extent to which this discipline was internalized requires an examination of those on the receiving end, but this is difficult due to the limited records. Kang, Yi Soo (1997: 165-166) states that the disciplinary measures did not accomplish much due to Korean resistance or passive evasion, but does not explore further.

The critique of Chun, Woo Yong (1998: 419) is related to this point. He states, “Colonial modern is a modernity where the mechanism of internalization did not work or could not work,” which explains why the

Japanese continually resorted to punishment and coercion. There were fundamental limits to applying the logic of modern subjectivity, which was premised on Western society, to a colony under Japanese control. In addition, training sites for internalization like schools were inherently limited, while the imposition of the ideology of “making imperial subjects” was concentrated in the wartime period. From this perspective, the question of where to find colonialism becomes a topic for debate. Is it found in the argument that disciplinary power was internalized (where the logic of “making imperial subjects” worked together with the modern character)? Or is it found in the argument that internalization was difficult to achieve? Regardless, proving either contention is crucial.

The second research trend was influenced by post-modernism and sought to abandon the existing essentialist and binary historical understanding based on race and class. Instead, it focused on uncovering the diverse identities and complex histories hidden by the existing scholarship (Shin, G. 1997). According to this view, Western history cannot be considered universal history and the diverse courses of historical development should be recognized. Modernity is not a positive value that non-Western societies must chase but should itself be recognized as an object for critique. In particular, it is difficult to separate modernity and colonialism in countries that have experienced colonial control, but it is important to see the relationship between the two. Shin and Robinson (1999) are representative of this trend. In approaching the colonial period, they extract the keywords of colonialism, modernity, and nationalism and focus on the complex and subtle relationships between them. The introduction of the concept of “cultural hegemony” in their analytical perspective shows how colonialism did not simply rely on coercion but pursued hegemonic control. Within this context, they argue that there was an indivisible relationship between colonialism and modernity (Shin and Robinson 1999: 46).

For example, Lee, C. (1999) prefers to focus on the modern changes of colonial rule, rather than citing the repressive and undemocratic nature of colonialism as proof that it was a premodern form of rule. The colonial state established a legal system, utilized a sharply strengthened police force, and interfered in the minute details of everyday Korean life. The state inserted itself into hygiene, road maintenance, agriculture and sideline occupations,

savings campaigns, and even the mediation of private disputes. While it naturally engaged in statistical surveys, the colonial state also intruded into the previously private realms of traditional society, like clothing, funerals, butchery, burials, brewing, and tobacco cultivation. Beyond rule that relied only on laws, the state attempted “spiritual rule” (*chöngsin e taehan chibae*) through the ideology of “making loyal subjects.” The mode of power and control described here was different from Western modernity, but the differences in comparison with the previous period are starkly apparent. Shin and Han (1999) discuss the changes in the relationship between the colonial state and rural society through the implementation of the Rural Revitalization Movement of the 1930’s. This movement was the response of the colonial state to the intensification of the rural crisis resulting from the agricultural depression in the late 1920’s and the proliferation of tenant disputes. The significance of the movement was the state’s shift from its previous policy of caring for landlords to a social policy of protecting peasants. The movement not only focused on the economic rehabilitation of rural villages but also emphasized the spiritual aspect as well, thus indicating the extension of ideological and hegemonic rule to the masses. In the process, new village leadership was nurtured, like the previously-mentioned prominent people, along with the expansion of an organizational network of semi-official groups (village revitalization committees, credit unions, and mutual assistance associations for production [*siksan kye*]) that increased the grip of the state over rural villages. The resultant system could be called a “colonial corporatism” that provided the model for the post-liberation state-society relationship as expressed in the New Village Movement (*Saemaül undong*).

Robinson (1999) uses the subject of radio broadcasts to show the diverse, paradoxical effects of modern technology on colonial society. The Keijo Broadcast Corporation began broadcasting in 1927 as another means of promoting political control and assimilation in Korea. In the beginning, broadcasts were made in both Japanese and Korean. In order to expand the number of receivers and listeners, the station added a Korean-only broadcast channel, which became an opportunity to quickly increase radio sales. Although this broadcast was under the control of the Government-General, it took the form of artistic performances with a Korean bond of emotional sympathy that transcended class and created a space of cultural autonomy. On

the one hand, radio broadcasts were a modern technology that played a role in extending cultural hegemony in support of colonial control. On the other hand, they were also a double-edged sword that contributed to the formation of Korean identity through a new technological means, in direct opposition to the intent of the colonial government. The complex, subtle relationship intertwining colonialism and modernity is clearly apparent in this example.

Third, the above-mentioned critical approach is related to the current interest in everyday life in the colonial period. Research in this area appears in diverse forms but Jung, Keun Sik (2006: 16-21) divides critical approaches or methodologies of research on everyday life into the "quotidian as the object" and the "quotidian as the method." The former approach disregards the structural or institutional aspects in favor of pursuing the concrete details of everyday life. In other words, this approach seeks to uncover the complex and varied reality within the realm of everyday life (such things as apathy, evasion, entertainment, and pleasure lying outside of resistance and collaboration) that cannot be captured in the dichotomy of domination and resistance. The latter approach seeks to rediscover the structure, the system, and policies of rule within the various aspects of daily life. The focus of this approach is to find the macroscopic aspects of colonial control hidden within the microscopic phenomenon of daily life. In the process, this approach also seeks the "cracks" and the "fissures" in which colonial aims were subverted.

Research on everyday life in the colonial period is quite diverse, but only the following two examples will be introduced. First, Kong, Jae Wook (2006) addresses the topic of clothes and discusses Japanese control of clothing that saw the suppression of white clothes in favor of colored clothes and the wartime promotion of loose trousers and Japanese clothing. The logic of suppressing white clothes was based on ideas of economic efficiency because those clothes had to be washed often and were inappropriate as work clothes, but the change was also based on the idea of changing aspects of traditional life in the making of "citizens" (*kungmin*). These trends were even more pronounced during the war. These attempts were not always accomplished according to Japanese plans, which indicates the cracks and fissures that appeared. This research shows the process by which the personal realm of clothing and lifestyle was invaded by the logic of efficiency and modernization on the one hand and by the domineering logic of Japanese

colonialism on the other hand. Thus, the establishment of this kind of system appears broadly in the research of colonial everyday life.

Jung, Keun Sik (2006) uses the topic of chemical seasoning (Ajinomoto) to show the process by which modern “taste” was formed in colonial Korea and continued into the post-liberation period. Through advertising and the application of the image of science, chemical seasoning found a new market and changed both food culture and the idea of taste. It was the modernization of food lifestyle driven by private capital (*min’gan chabon*). However, this particular pleasure was only available to some social strata, which left many Koreans unable to satisfy their desires. Through an analysis of the “8-year chemical seasoning war” between Miwŏn and Mip’ung in the 1970’s, Jung shows how both companies used sales strategies that appealed to the frustrated appetites and envy of consumers who still remembered the taste of Ajinomoto. By using pertinent documents, Jung was able to explore the concept of “taste” as well as the continuity of “frustrated desires,” which are usually difficult to substantiate. The debate on colonial modernity, which has heretofore been focused on the issue of state power, has been expanded to include research that captures the transformation of daily life by market principles led by private capital.

The research trends described above illustrate the characteristics of the “colonial modernity” viewpoint. Colonialism and modernity are not regarded as exclusive terms, like that found in traditional understanding, but rather as tied together within an indivisible relationship. Depending on how the relationship between the two is arranged, a variety of opinions can be accommodated. Shin and Robinson (1999) use the term “colonial modernity” in the title of their book, and while they do not offer a concrete definition, they emphasize the three-way relationship between colonialism, modernity, and nationalism. However, Shin and Robinson are criticized because within the three-way relationship, their stress is on modernity. Park, Myoung Kyu (2001: 51) argues that among the three, the concepts of modernity and nationalism are clear, but the meaning of colonialism is sketchy and ambiguous. It is similar to the criticism that it is a “colonial modernity that omits colonialism” (Do, M. 2006: 16-20). Cho, Hyung Keun (2006: 61) also criticizes the perception that modernity was first originated in the West and subsequently expanded (or was transformed) into colonial societies.

Consequently, the meaning of colonialism based on this perception became nothing more than "modernity that occurred in the colonial period."

Then what about these critiques? If modernity and colonialism in the "colonial modernity" understood by Cho, Hyung Keun (2006: 61-67, 75-77) are not different, then colonialism and modernity itself should be criticized and the goal should be to overcome both. If Shin and Robinson (1999) argue that modernity and colonialism are different and the interdependent relationship between the two must be understood, then Cho emphasizes the sameness and duplication of the two. Colonialism is contained within modernity and colonialism is a manifestation of modernity. Consequently, the difference between the modernity of the West that dominated their colonies and the modernity of colonies that were dominated then becomes ambiguous. If "colonialism and modernity are not different situations," then the logical contradictions within the argument that the difference between the two should be uncovered become apparent.

Matsumoto (2002: 42) sees modernity and colonialism as each responding to "simultaneity" and "stages." The development of modern transportation and communications technologies allowed faster circulation of people, goods, capital, and information, a "simultaneity" which occurred even under colonial rule. The "simultaneity" of the colonial period was initiated by Western culture (mainly via Japan), but the limitation of contact to certain social strata shows the nature of "stages." Regardless of the fact that many colonial people were alienated and frustrated in their attempts to enjoy Western culture, their longing did not diminish, which only strengthened colonial hegemony. The colonial government used this longing as stepping-stone to establish a form of colonialism where the people pursued their own modernization and civilization. From this perspective, modernization was another means of domination by which hegemony could be achieved. This shows the close accord between colonialism and modernity. However, the nature of "stages" is closer to the idea of late development than to colonialism. That logic generally appears in various undeveloped regions, even if they are not colonies.

The debate on "colonial modernity" covers more research than those listed here, but it is difficult to find a definition that includes all of them. If they have something in common, it is the fact that they share a critical consciousness that recognizes the close relationship between colonialism and modernity.

From this viewpoint, there is little that separates the “colonial modernity” view from the “colonial modernization” view. The former argues that it is fundamentally different from the latter by emphasizing its differences, but as discussed before, the differences are only exaggerated because of the injection of positive or negative value judgments on modernity. Furthermore, the colonialism that they present is slanted toward the aspects of culture and consciousness. Regardless of their emphasis on colonialism, it is relegated to a secondary role in comparison to modernity (Shin and Robinson, eds. 1999); or colonialism is equated to modernity, throwing the concept into chaos (Cho, H. K. 2006), or colonialism is substituted for backwardness (Matsumoto 2002). Therefore, colonialism should not only be considered in the cultural aspect, but it is important to consider the contradictions in the system of rule and colonial politics as described in the previous section.

V. CONCLUSION

How should we construct the entirety of Korean society in the colonial period? There are great differences among scholars according to their interests and their academic backgrounds. Each academic field has its own distinctive concepts and methods and while it is necessary to recognize the characteristics and differences between the fields, it is also important to aim at communication and synthesis as well. Let us consider the complementary relationships between the three areas we considered earlier; the colonial economy (A), the colonial system of rule and politics (B), and society and culture (C).

First, let us examine the relationship between (A) and (B). There were two points raised in the introduction. The first point was the issue of how to understand development and “exploitation” within a comprehensive framework. As stated above, attempts to prove exploitation in everyday economic transactions, as argued by the exploitation view, ultimately failed. Despite the colonial system of control, there existed an economic sphere where autonomous transactions could be undertaken and that sphere operated according to its own logic. The importance of understanding the balance between different spheres should be recognized. The second point

is that the self-improvement and instrumental development of Koreans ultimately depended on a subordinate incorporation, assimilation, or a “pro-Japanese” orientation. Under Japanese imperialism, Koreans who sought the modern were confronted by this dilemma of colonial politics. However, it is impossible to categorically conclude that economic development or Korean self-improvement had to fall under the colonial system of control. In the long term, those activities were significant because they provided the economic foundation for post-liberation society. The colonial economy (A) was under the restrictions of the colonial system (B), but it was not a unilaterally regulated relationship.

Next is the relationship between (B) and (C). The colonial system was maintained not only through the force of the bureaucratic apparatus and the military (B), but also through cultural hegemony and the regulatory force internalized in the body and soul of the colonial people (C). Seeing the complementary relationship between the two allows a fuller understanding of colonial domination.

Next is the relationship between (A) and (C). The development of a market economy and the advance of capitalism, industrialization, and urbanization (A) brought vast changes to everyday life and the realm of the consciousness (C). In comparison to the period of high-speed growth in the post-liberation period, the scale and scope of this process was limited but clearly there in the colonial period. If the “colonial modernization” view was focused on the former (A), then the “colonial modernity” view focused on the phenomena of the latter (C). Regardless of the emphasis of both views on the differences in their conceptions, they are still interrelated. In order to see the whole of society in the colonial period, the realities of (A), (B), and (C) should be examined, but the interrelationships between the three must also be considered.

Finally, the last point put forward in the introduction was the question of continuity or rupture between the colonial period and the post-liberation period. Judgment on this point differs greatly depending on the area (politics, economy, or society and culture) as well as the perspective of the researcher. Looking at the political sphere, there is a clear break between the colonial system and the independent state. On the other hand, the internal development view (*naejae chök palchön non*) sees continuity between

the colonial system (or dependency on foreign powers) and the national movement (or *minjung* movement) that opposed it throughout the early twentieth century. Although the viewpoints are different, “strong state and weak society” (Matsumoto 1998) and “colonial corporatism” (Shin and Han 1999) also see continuity between periods.

In terms of the economic sphere, both aspects of continuity and rupture can be found. Some argue that the model “developmental state” (*kaebal kukka*) found in Korean capitalism or the Park Chung Hee system had its origins in the colonial period (Eckert 1991; Kohli 1994). However, there is still insufficient empirical evidence to support that argument. For example, the interventionist state is cited as evidence for the colonial origins argument of the developmental state, but this phenomenon was limited to the period of wartime control and cannot be retroactively applied to the previous period (Kim, N. N. 2006a: 200-208). In fact, the institutional legacy and totalitarianism of the wartime control system remained strong in North Korea (Kimura 1999a, 1999b). While South Korea was partially influenced by the control system in the post-liberation period, it inherited the market system of the pre-wartime period. Using the outbreak of war between Japan and China in 1937 as the turning-point of the colonial period, the economic systems before and after were qualitatively different and debate on the continuity or discontinuity of the economic system should consider this difference.

On the other hand, there is also the argument emphasizing discontinuity in the economy. For example, Huh, Soo Youl (2005: 313-330) argues for discontinuity based on the fact that only one-tenth of all manufacturing assets before liberation was ultimately inherited by South Korea due to peninsular division and the Korean War. Industrialization in this period disappeared like a mirage and the South Korean economy was turned back into the agricultural society that existed before annexation. Consideration of human capital and the institutional legacy was excluded from the study due to difficulties in finding proof, but the influence of these factors over the long term was certainly more important than the material assets. Chung Jae Jeong (1996b: 114-115) argues that irrespective of the fact that North Korea inherited more of the legacy of colonial industrialization than South Korea, the failure of the North Korean economy invalidates the continuity argument. However, his argument is deductions based on a premise limited to material

assets, which overlooks the importance of the system.

Studies of society and culture emphasize the continuity argument. For example, Kim, Jin Kyun and Jung, Keun Sik (1997: 15-20) emphasize that the disciplinary power of the colonial period and the logic of wartime mobilization were inscribed upon the bodies and consciousness of the Korean people and continued in the post-liberation period, supporting the system of North-South Korea division. They define "the colonial modernization" view as the discourse of "positive continuity" in the sense that it simply accepts both the present and the past as positive, and differentiate this view from their discourse of "negative continuity." The research (Sin, J. 2006) which emphasizes the continuity of the militarization of physical education from the period of wartime mobilization into the 1970's *Yusin* (Renewal) system falls into the same category.

As demonstrated above, evaluations can be separated into diverse groups according to the research interests and perspectives of scholars. In the economic sphere, judgments can vary based on whether one is limited to material assets or focuses on the institutional aspects. Furthermore, it is possible to discuss continuity or discontinuity depending on the specific element, but it is difficult to discuss continuity or discontinuity across the two periods from a comprehensive perspective. In order to make communication and synthesis between various fields of researches possible, at least two things are required. First is the elimination of value judgments from those evaluations. Failure to do this will result in the exclusion of differing evaluations.²⁰ Also, there is a need for more empirical research on

²⁰ Among historical research, studies advocating praxis face a similar issue. Studies that emphasize "modernity as an aim," which exists outside of "modernity as existence," would be one example (Chung, Y. 2000: 153-163). Studies in the latter category are interested in history as "explanation," while studies in the former category, are focused on praxis. In the case of the former, values dictating the aim of research, political evaluations to put those values into practice, and ideology are apt to interfere. As a result, other perspectives are excluded and communication becomes difficult. This is linked the issue in history about what should be studied. In this respect, the "colonial modernization" view relies on proof in historical research and is limited to explanations of the phenomenon. On the other hand, the "exploitation" view (which is the flip-side of the "internal development" view) gives serious consideration of praxis. In this regard, the "colonial modernity" view is close to the latter perspective, but does

the elements and ways the pre-liberation period has affected the present. In comparison to material factors, it is difficult to prove the continuity of institutions, structures, and internalized consciousness. In this respect, topics remaining for research far outnumber topics that have been researched. These two points should not be limited to the problem of continuity and discontinuity, but should apply to the entirety of research on the colonial period.

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