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# South Korean Men and the Military: The Influence of Conscription on the Political Behavior of South Korean Males

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CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE

**South Korean Men and the Military:  
The Influence of Conscription on the Political Behavior of South Korean Males**

SUBMITTED TO

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AND

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BY

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for

SENIOR THESIS

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### **ABSTRACT**

This thesis evaluates the effects of compulsory military service in South Korea on the political behavior of men from a public policy standpoint. I take an institutional point of view on conscription, in that conscription forces the military to accept individuals with minimal screening. Given the distinct set of values embodied by the military, I hypothesize that the military would need a powerful, comprehensive, and fast program of indoctrination to re-socialize civilians into military uniform, trustable enough to be entrusted with a gun or a confidential document. Based on the existence of such a program and related academic literature, I go on to look at how a military attitude has political implications, especially for the security-environment of the Korean peninsula. Given the ideological nature of the inter-Korean conflict, the South Korean military was biased against the liberals, as liberals were most likely to generate policies supporting conciliatory and cooperative measures towards North Korea, like the removal of U.S. forces from South Korea and the repeal of the National Security Laws that outlaw discussion of communism. For an empirical evaluation, I pose the hypothesis that this political bias would manifest itself in the male public via the military's indoctrinative program. With data from the Korean General Social Survey, the Public Opinion and Foreign Policy, and the South Korean General Election Panel Study, I have found that males respond acutely to specific security issues in favor or against according to the military's point of view. However, the evidence for an overall bias on political parties generally was inconclusive. The uncertainty was mainly rooted in the fact that liberal parties have strategically avoided speaking out on specific policy issues during election.

### **Key words:**

Conscription, South Korea, civil-military relations, public opinion, inter-Korean conflict, Cold War, anti-communism

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## Introduction

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All able-bodied men become soldiers in South Korea. In implementation since the creation of the South Korean government, South Korean military conscription now spans generations of South Korean men to the degree that it has almost become fact of life. However, provided the gravity the military experience, military conscription should instead be treated as a influential stage of life, with specific psychological and social implications. Indeed, the wide enforcement of the policy ensures that any tangible impact of military service resonates – and will have resonated already – throughout South Korean society. To this end, this paper examines the potential influence of conscription on society through the institutional stance and characteristics of the military. Based on the premise that there indeed is a tangible effect on society through conscription, we hypothesize that the military image – whatever it entails - will be projected onto the conscripts through the training system, which has become particularly indoctrinative due to the indiscriminative intake of a wide spectrum of values and psychologies of individuals from society. In turn, we additionally pose the concern that the character of the military has been politicized, which has society-wide implications for South Korea due to the strong psychological influence of the military and well-enforced conscription.

To evaluate the hypotheses, this study utilizes public opinion data from the Korean General Social Survey and the Public Opinion on Foreign Policy survey, as well as personal interviews of former members of the South Korean military done by the author. In terms of the findings, this thesis finds that the South Korean military has developed an effective psychological training program to indoctrinate incoming recruits,

socializing them into military culture. Not only have we found empirical proof that the residuals of military training stay relevant for behavior of public opinion even after military service concludes, but we have also found these influences to have a tangible impact on public policy and domestic politics of South Korea. Specifically, South Korean males were more sensitized to topics and questions directly related to North Korea, most effecting policies in the area of national security and defense in the inter-Korean conflict. Looking at the broader implications of these observations, this paper concludes that South Korea's military training regime makes its policies towards North Korea more rigidly conservative, despite the rise of liberal political parties since democratization.

This study, which links South Korea's expanded military mission in a Cold War dynamic to its bias towards the political left, is one of a kind, at least for South Korea. The farthest point South Korean domestic academic literature extends is a critical review of the military's intervention in politics in the early decades of South Korea.<sup>1</sup> However, there is no critical review of the military's current political standing, nor a macro-level review of how conscription impacts soldiers' behavior in society. One can conjecture that this deficiency is due to the sensitive nature of political accusations in the context of South Korea, a society still embroiled in a Cold War dynamic of ideological conflict.

There is even a tendency in the literature to depict South Korean civil-military relations as a nearly finished project with "narrow chances of return for the military into politics."<sup>2</sup> However, throughout this paper, we demonstrate that de-politicization of the

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<sup>1</sup> Eui-Gon Kim. "The South Korean Army's Intervention in Politics and Democratization: The Lessons of Korea." *Treatises on Korea and Northeast Asia* 8, (1998): 227-244.

<sup>2</sup> Hong Deuk-Pyo. "Depoliticization of the Korean Military." *Korean Political Science Review* 29, no. 2 (1995): 253-274; Lee Ju Hee. "A Study on the Civilian Control of the Military Authorities since



military is a nonlinear affair, that there is no definite end point. Particularly in the case of South Korea, the military has been continuously accused of political intervention and bias, which is shadowed by the perception of South Korea as a model case of democracy in the region. Indeed, based on the clear politicization of the South Korean military – and many others – during the Cold War, South Korea’s case is actually an ongoing struggle against politicization given its proximity and dynamic with North Korea, and we treat it as such.

Along the same lines, research on the social effects of conscription in South Korea has been lacking as well. Indeed, most of the literature on the effects conscription in South Korea has been concentrated on operationalizing conscription, especially its psychological training programs. Another limiting aspect of this literature is its close proximity with the military, which makes it difficult for scholars to raise critical questions regarding conscription. However, there is no doubt that conscription has had political implications. For example, Alexander Grab shows how the implementation of conscription in Napoleonic Italy brought about a society-wide resentment and an eventual “estrangement of the governed from the state.”<sup>3</sup> Other works have gone deeper into how conscription has been used as a tool by the state to engineer social behaviors, given the wide reach of universal conscription. Antonis Adam, for example, presents a statistical analysis of 149 states with regards to conscription, concluding that unstable democracies are more likely to utilize conscription to cement its rule over the polity and the military.<sup>4</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, Sanborn shows how the Soviet Union used

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Democratization Case Study: South Korea and Argentina." *Social Science Research Review* 27, no. 3 (September 2011): 53-75.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Grab. "Army, State, and Society: Conscription and Desertion in Napoleonic Italy (1802-1814)." *The Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 1 (March 1995): 25-54.

<sup>4</sup> Antonis Adam. "Military Conscription as a Means of Stabilizing Democratic Regimes." *Public Choice* 150, no. 3/4 (March, 2012): 715-730.

conscription to craft a Russian narrative of violence and brotherhood.<sup>5</sup> These studies show that conscription has a political function due to its wide reach throughout society, and that it has been used as a political tool in numerous cases.

Stepping away from the directional aspect politics, Kent Jennings looked at the potential political implications of military service on individuals, demonstrating through data on Vietnam War veterans that service led to increased political interests and attention span.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, another political aspect of military service has to do with the influence of the military experience itself on politics, like participation and attention, rather than a directional influence. To this end, a notable study by Vasquez correlates conscripted armies to fewer casualties. Under conscription, where more individuals have to go to the military and their family members inevitably drawn to news from the military, the government receives more negative feedback for undertaking missions that incur more casualties. Thus, due to democratic pressure, governments become more reluctant to endanger its soldiers.<sup>7</sup> Hence, conscription has tangible effects on the public as well, which has been shown to be directly influential on public policy and politics.

In conclusion, we believe that this study contributes to the literature by producing a direction of study that confronts political realities of South Korea, especially in terms of the military's finer political nuances. In doing so, we also generate a critical appraisal of

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<sup>5</sup>Joshua A. Sanborn. *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905-1925*. (Northern Illinois University Press DeKalb, IL, 2003).

<sup>6</sup>Jennings M. Kent and Gregory B. Markus. "The Effect of Military Service on Political Attitudes: A Panel Study." *The American Political Science Review* 71, no. 1 (March 1977): 131-147.

<sup>7</sup>Joseph Paul Vasquez III. "Shouldering the Soldiering: Democracy, Conscription, and Military Casualties." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 6 (December 2005): 870-873.

the South Korean military's conscription system, which has direct relevance to actual training policies and politics that deal with security issues.

## Chapter I Conscription and Psychological Manipulation

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Conscription is mostly an outdated concept in the Western world. Most Western European nations and the U.S. do not enforce active military conscription. However, conscription is in fact still implemented by numerous nations across the world on every continent.<sup>8</sup> The key aspect of conscripted armies, by definition, is that individuals are obligated to commit to military service. Aside from the obvious, obligatory military service also results in a need for stronger, more manipulative psychological training within the military since it accepts men that do not necessarily want to join or are fit for the military. Based on an initial review of conscription and its relationship to indoctrination, we further examine how manipulation is manifested in a training regime through an analysis of South Korea, whose military effectively enforces conscription on the vast majority of males. Upon such analysis, this chapter concludes that universal conscription – conscription of a majority of men in a society – inevitably challenges the military to transform individuals that are psychologically or ideologically incompatible with military service into soldiers to be entrusted with military assignments, which has resulted in South Korea a highly manipulative culture of *jung-hoon*.

### The need for indoctrination in a conscripted army

Broadly put, a process of socialization is inevitable for individuals upon entrance to any type of organization with a defined internal culture, and the military is one of such organizations. However, the form and function of socialization in the military is most aptly described as indoctrination due to the sheer weight of the military's responsibilities,

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<sup>8</sup> For a visual representation of conscription policies globally, see <http://chartsbin.com/view/1887>.

as the military is the only authorized arm of the state to exercise violence. While this exceptional need for rules and conduct is the same across any military, it is much harder to satisfy in conscripted militaries, as conscription allows less selectivity in military recruitment. This leads us to the observation that conscripted militaries must inevitably indoctrinate its recruits in a more powerful manner than do volunteer militaries.

Before discussing the challenges of training conscripted men, however, it is necessary to analyze what is expected of individuals upon entrance into military service to have a better grasp of potential difficulties in the training process. Speaking of the military broadly, Clausewitz provides the following passage on the necessary challenge of inculcating military values among soldiers, from which we draw our points of analysis about military culture:

War is a special business, and however general its relations may be, and even if all the male population of a country, capable of bearing arms, exercise this calling, still it always continues to be different and separate from the other pursuits which occupy the life of man.— To be imbued with a sense of the spirit and nature of this business, to make use of, to rouse, to assimilate into the system the powers which should be active in it, to penetrate completely into the nature of the business with the understanding, through exercise to gain confidence and expertness in it, to be completely given up to it, to pass out of the man into the part which it is assigned to us to play in War, that is the military virtue of an Army in the individual.<sup>9</sup>

The point that Clausewitz makes is that there is a distinct set of values, a “spirit,” specifically upheld in the military. In particular, Clausewitz draws a distinction between technical knowledge of military duties – of being “capable of bearing arms, [and] exercise [exercising] this calling” - and a mental adjustment to military lifestyle. Both

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<sup>9</sup> Carl von Clausewitz. *On War: All Volumes*. (Vook, Inc. Kindle Edition, 2012). 115.

Janowitz builds on this point in *The Professional Soldier* featuring military vocations as like any other profession that “develops a sense of group identity and system of internal administration ... [which] implies the growth of a body of ethics and standards of performance.”<sup>10</sup> As such, the military has a sustained and distinct culture, which applies fully to current military values, as militaries have an expressed system of values. For example, the U.S. military proposes loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage as core military values.<sup>11</sup>

And indeed we can see how some of these values are different from that of society. Jobs in the military affect a more fundamental level of the human value system in that individuals are trained to kill other human beings, an inevitable and fundamental role of soldiers. Given this job description, the values of loyalty and duty demonstrates the point that deployed soldiers must be ready to kill, something that is very far removed from civilian society. Therefore, the process of adopting military culture demands both an adaptation to a different set of rules and norms and a degradation of values that individuals have previously held. Additionally, the military limits a number of civil liberties and individual rights that are held sacred throughout civilian society, like freedom of speech, justified through concerns of national security. Therefore, military values and culture are not only distinct, but also far removed from civilian society. Indeed, coming back to Clausewitz’s description, “War is a special business” where recruits have to “pass out of the man into the part which it is assigned to us to play in War.”

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<sup>10</sup> Morris Janowitz. *The Professional Soldier, a Social and Political Portrait*. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960). 32.

<sup>11</sup> “The Army Values.” *U.S. Army*, accessed October 30, 2014. <http://www.army.mil/values/>.

So in summary it is clear that individuals must make a significant transition in their lives and value systems. However, the story is far more complicated for conscripted armies, which we will examine in further detail in this section. There are four main aspects that raise the bar for training conscripts as opposed to volunteers. Firstly, incoming recruits are more diverse ideologically, politically, and in other attributes than a group of volunteer recruits; aside from a wider recruitment, a study has also found that conscripted militaries are 34 percent larger than those that do not, further contributing to the problem.<sup>12</sup> Second, we find that service time tends to be more uniform than volunteer armies, which puts additional pressure on the training system to mold men into soldiers faster. Third, militaries exercising conscription have no choice but to deeply involve conscripted men in integral, demanding, and dangerous roles in the army, since professional career military personnel are a minority. Lastly, given that conscription is mostly instituted in reaction to an imminent security threat, we find that military training also involves instilling an image of the enemy. These four observations of training systems under conscription are expounded further below, leading to the conclusion that conscription puts a significant pressure on training to be highly manipulative.

### *Public values and democracy*

As a Human Rights Watch report on Russia states, “Many young men of conscription age do not want to serve in the armed forces.”<sup>13</sup> Compared to reality, this statement is correct, but is also a gross simplification of the reasons why young men are

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<sup>12</sup> Michael D. White. "Conscription and the Size of Armed Forces." *Social Science Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (September, 1989). 779.

<sup>13</sup> “Background on Conscription in Russia.” *Human Rights Watch*, accessed October 25, 2014. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/russia/russia1102-01.htm/>.

predisposed against conscription. Conscripted armies demand adherence to a set of military values of recruits that are far more representative of the wide spectrum of values, opinions, and physical and psychological state of health in society than are those of volunteer armies. As a result, there is a pressing need for the military to harmonize soldiers both with the military system of values and amongst themselves.

Owing to the previously analyzed distinctness of military culture compared to society, the immediate problem of having a wide spectrum of individuals in the army is that some individuals are physically or mentally better suited for life in the military. On the other hand, volunteer armies avoid this problem exactly because service is voluntary, since men that are already more sympathetic to military values tend to volunteer.<sup>14</sup> Conscripted armies have had to deal with individuals that hold values and beliefs incompatible to those of the military, which can result from a number of causes ranging from religion to personal values. Some nations have overcome this problem by simply allowing a large number of exceptions to their enforcement of conscription. For example, the Russian military was projected to be at a shortage of soldiers for its yearly quota of 400,000 men, despite the fact that it had “only 712,000 18-year-olds” to draw from since many would be exempted from service.<sup>15</sup> In countries with more extensive and better-enforced conscription, there has been a wide range of organized protests against conscription from various beliefs and individuals incompatible with military service. For example, South Korea has seen a rise of pacifist movements and “conscientious objection”

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<sup>14</sup> Jerald G. Bachman, Lee Sigelman, and Greg Diamond. "Self-Selection, Socialization, and Distinctive Military Values: Attitudes of High School Seniors." *Armed Forces & Society* 13, no. 2 (1987).

<sup>15</sup> “Military Faces Shortage of Conscripts.” *The Moscow Times*, April 5, 2007.  
<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/military-faces-shortage-of-conscripts/197927.html/>.



against military service, where individuals have protested being forced into practicing violence.<sup>16</sup> Conscientious objection has been a particularly flagrant issue in South Korea, with figures cited up to “Nine out of 10 conscientious objectors behind bars around the world” as being South Koreans.<sup>17</sup> Religion has been another source of controversy, as some forms of religion like Jehovah’s Witnesses outright ban participation in military service, with South Korea a leading country in imprisoning noncompliant religious individuals.<sup>18</sup> In Israel, ultra-orthodox Jews are joined in a controversy against a recent bill passed against religious exemption.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, while conscription is difficult enough for individuals, the real dilemma lies on the side of the military. Taking these protests as an expression of incongruence between civil and military personalities, military policymakers face the challenge of having to entrust military assignments to individuals that have not satisfactorily adapted to military life on various grounds. Indeed, there have been a number of publicized cases of psychopathic behavior in South Korea where individual soldiers turned on their comrades and attacked them, the most recent of which occurred in June 21, 2014 when a sergeant attacked his comrades at the North-South border, killing five and injuring seven.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the high level physical and mental abuse

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<sup>16</sup> Kyung-Kyu Park. “Conscientious Refusal of Military Service and Alternative Service.” *The Military Obligation* 55 (Fall 2003). [http://www.mma.go.kr/www\\_mma3/webzine/55/htm/55-12.htm/](http://www.mma.go.kr/www_mma3/webzine/55/htm/55-12.htm/).

<sup>17</sup> Geoffrey Cain. “Think You’ve Got It Tough? Just Be Happy You’re Not in the Korean Army.” *Global Post*, September 22, 2014. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/south-korea/140917/south-korea-military-hazing-bullying/>.

<sup>18</sup> *Analytical Report on Conscientious Objection to Military Service*. Human Rights Council. June 2013. [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session23/A-HRC-23-22\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session23/A-HRC-23-22_en.pdf). 13.

<sup>19</sup> Maayan Lubell. “Israel Curbs Army Exemption Granted to Ultra-Orthodox Jews.” *Reuters*, March 12, 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/12/us-israel-conscription-idUSBREA2B00N20140312/>.

<sup>20</sup> Sang-Eun Bae. “What Made Sergeant Lim a Murderer?” *News1*, September 19, 2014. <http://news1.kr/articles/?1865500/>.

that are often identified as the cause of such attacks, whether the perpetrators of abuse were the attackers or the abused attacked in revenge, can also be attributed to the rising level of stress rooted in mental incompatibility. Such was the previously mentioned shooting, where sergeant Lim, the shooter, specifically accused his fellow comrades “ostracizing” him.<sup>21</sup> While the South Korean army operates a system of “attention soldiers” where individuals are tagged as maladaptive and thus prone to committing crimes or attacks, it has proven to be largely ineffective,<sup>22</sup> and merely serves as the military’s recognition of the fact that maladaptation is a tangible threat. Under such circumstances, it is quite clear why the Korean military would see effective indoctrination as a necessity during training.

#### *Role of conscripts in the military*

The military also has a need to indoctrinate its recruits due to the high percentage of conscripts in the military. In a conscripted military, the percentage of professional soldiers who has chosen the military as a career path is a minority. In South Korea, conscripted military personnel occupy 69.7 percent of the entire military.<sup>23</sup> As a result, the military inevitably must employ conscripts to high-risk assignments, for instance assignments that require handling weapons. Beyond the area of combat and responsiveness, conscripts are also placed in specialized positions in key areas of national

<sup>21</sup> Jeyup Kwaak. “South Korea Military Says Shooter Felt Ostracized.” *Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 2014. <http://online.wsj.com/articles/south-korea-military-says-shooter-felt-ostracized-1405431625/>.

<sup>22</sup> “Three Attention Soldiers Commit Suicide in One Day ... Administrative Pitfalls Revealed.” *Yonhap News*, August 12, 2014.

<http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/politics/2014/08/12/0505000000AKR20140812087451043.HTML>; This system came into national spotlight when the shooter of the said case turned out to be under watch. Subsequently, it received fire when three other soldiers under watch, and in the same regiment as the shooter, committed suicide in separate cases.

<sup>23</sup> Yang-Jin Kim. “Number of Military Personnel in the Decrease.” *Seoul Shinmun*, October 15, 2012. <http://www.seoul.co.kr/news/newsView.php?id=20121015008015/>.

security, like intelligence, surveillance, and diplomacy. In fact, while the key decision-making officer core is comprised of career military professionals, a significant portion of the operational function of the military is comprised of conscripted men. Men in the two-year track at the soldier level move up through the ranks to sergeant. Those who choose the officer track, which is three years long, start their service as a second lieutenant and are released by the time they are first lieutenants. Hence, it is essential for the institutional integrity and operational capabilities of the military to create adequate soldiers.

#### *Service time*

Conscription also places a restriction on service time, which results in a need to hand out assignments as fast as possible. Of course, this creates a dilemma with quality control - making sure recruits are adequately trained. Especially for a universal and well-enforced conscription like that of South Korea, the duration of military service affects the productivity of the economy. From an economic standpoint, military service takes hundreds of thousands of soldiers that have been creating value and income in various sectors of the economy and locks them down in the barracks where they are paid less than 100 dollars a month. In addition, limitations on career development impose an implicit cost on the economy. The South Korean military does recognize this cost, granting alternative service to exceptional athletes, engineers, and so forth, albeit in a limited

fashion.<sup>24</sup> Lengthening the duration to, for example, four years would result in an even larger loss in human resources.

However, at the same time, it is difficult for conscripted armies to impose conscription at variable lengths. While variations do exist between different branches of the military or between positions, the duration of service for recruits is mostly uniform across recruits in comparable positions. The variance is not substantially large to avoid crowding recruits in positions offering shorter service time. Furthermore, since military service is also a form of state obligation, a tax, it is difficult to justify significantly longer lengths for some people but not others, unless volunteered. For example, members of the South Korean Army serve twenty-one months, while those of the Air Force serve twenty-four. This low level of variation between different positions and assignments is a pittance compared to the “two to six years” of service in the U.S. military.<sup>25</sup> With military service being a duty to the state, the military is at a loss of legal justification to assign individuals to assignments that differ significantly in duration without attaining assent unless individuals volunteer. Similarly, the Russian military requires eighteen months, the Israeli military three years, two years for women, and the Brazilian military twelve months.

As a result, conscription creates an enormous pool of human resources that circulates relatively fast. Indeed, the South Korean military’s recruit training only lasts

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<sup>24</sup> For example, athletes need to be professional athletes and must qualify a competitive process to enlist. Even then, they must serve in a military sports team. For exemption, athletes need a gold medal from either the Asian Games or the Olympics. Engineers need PhDs, which is something that is rarely achieved before the legal age limit of 28.

<sup>25</sup> “Active Duty.” *U.S. Army*, accessed October 24, 2014. <http://www.goarmy.com/about/service-options/active-duty.html/>.

for five weeks, with assignment related training lasting up to three additional weeks. The U.S. Army's basic recruit training lasts longer than that combined at ten weeks, and Advanced Individual Training usually takes even longer.<sup>26</sup> The implication of this circulation for training is obvious; to maintain a level of technical proficiency, the training system is pushed to pump soldiers out of training faster.

### *Long term security threat*

Another pressure put on training under conscription is keeping soldiers' perspective on the enemy. While the implementation of conscription itself is obviously not a causal factor for a conflict, it is certainly true the other way around. Since conscription allows the state a widened and forceful access to the nation's human resources, it has been by and large a state's policy response to an imminent security threat. Thus, conscription often coexists with a security threat to the nation. Nations like Israel, Taiwan, North Korea, Russia, and South Korea have maintained conscription in response to tangible security threats. Conscripted armies are disadvantaged in this respect opposed to volunteer armies, since volunteer armies are more likely to receive recruits that have a stronger vision of the threat. Hence, the training system receives an additional burden to maintain recruits' perspective and alertness to the threat at hand.

There is also a generational problem related with security threats. Especially for South Korea, it has been pointed out that "young Koreans are not imbued with the sense of mission that was inculcated in all Koreans for decades after the Korean War," a

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<sup>26</sup> "Soldier Life." *U.S. Army*, accessed October 31, 2014. <http://www.goarmy.com/soldier-life/becoming-a-soldier/basic-combat-training.html/>.

phenomenon that only accelerates with time.<sup>27</sup> Going further, scholars have pointed out characteristics of the current generation of young men, often referred to as millennials. A scholar has gone as far as to suggest that members of the “new generation” are “preoccupied with definitive reality rather than the vague future, and prefer to live an individualistic life with strongly defined personal views as opposed to life as a part of a group with irrational sacrifices.” As a result, there has been an ever stronger need for indoctrinative training within the military.

### **Indoctrination in training: Empirical examples from South Korea**

Thus far, we have examined why the military, and especially a conscripted one, requires a strong level of indoctrination. With that in mind, we examine the case of South Korea, a nation that enforces universal male conscription and boasts a high level of enforcement. In particular, the South Korean military’s training regime represents a classic case of a military struggling to enforce a uniform military values system on recruits, which is expressed in both the training manuals and firsthand accounts of the training process itself.

#### *Background on South Korean Conscription*

Conscription in South Korea has been in policy discussions even prior to the establishment of the current government. Internally, it was the Korean temporary government in Shanghai, set up by resistance forces, which announced military conscription as a part of its constitution in April 1919. However, the temporary

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<sup>27</sup> Donald Kirk. “South Korean Armed Forces Face Enemy Within: Suicide and Murder.” *Forbes*, August 10, 2014. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/donaldkirk/2014/08/10/s-korean-armed-forces-face-the-enemy-within-sagging-morale-suicides-and-murder/>.

government lacked the power to recruit openly on Korean soil. The South Korean government instituted the first actual conscription regime during the Korean War in August 1949, and the policy came into full swing when the South Korean army started to aggressively enforce the policy to recuperate its enormous losses from the Chinese intervention in the Korean War.<sup>28</sup> Afterwards, due to the consolidation of the Cold War dynamic between North and South Korea, as well as the politically and internationally charged standoff between the corresponding camps of great power states, both Koreas have maintained conscription.

As a result of conscription, the South Korean military has benefited in terms of scale, making it one of the strongest government branches of the South Korean government, and one of the largest militaries in Asia. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, South Korea has committed 2.8 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), 33.9 billion dollars, to its national security budget, ranking South Korea fifth in the category worldwide.<sup>29</sup> South Korea outspends Brazil and Italy, not including the military investment made by the U.S.. Not only is the military a large financial presence in South Korea, but it is also a societal one. The South Korean military drafts approximately 300,000 men per year into service.<sup>30</sup> Comparing this number to that of the national college entrance exam, which boasts an extremely high rate

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<sup>28</sup> Hong-Gu Han. "The Birth of a 'Military Barrack Country.'" *Hankyoreh*, February 2, 2002. <http://h21.hani.co.kr/arti/COLUMN/44/4532.html/>.

<sup>29</sup> Sam Perlo-Freeman and Carina Solmirano. "Trends in World Military Expenditure." *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, April 14, 2014. [http://books.sipri.org/product\\_info?c\\_product\\_id=476/](http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=476/).

<sup>30</sup> Ministry of National Defense, *National Security Statistics Collection* (국방통계연보), 2012. 67.

of attendance among high school classes,<sup>31</sup> one can bring conscription statistics into perspective. In 2012, 371,771 male students took the entrance exam, while 329,751 men enlisted in the army the same year. As a result, nearly 80% of South Korean men complete military service.<sup>32</sup> This shows that despite the fact that the Korean conscription system does allow for exemption based on health and family issues, and that avoiding military service has been a social problem for decades, conscription still has an effective hold on each generation of men coming through high school and college in South Korea.

### *Conceptual development of indoctrination in South Korean military training*

In line with the theoretically projected importance of indoctrination in training, the South Korean military treats mental commitment of soldiers – formally referred to as “Military spiritual war power” (MSWP / 정신전력)<sup>33</sup> - as one of the central pillars of its training regime. To providing an understanding of the South Korean military’s training regime, we draw from three documents: the Defense White Papers, the Military Spiritual War Power Instruction Manual (정신전력지도지침서), and the Political Training Activities Manual (정훈홍보활동지침서).

The primary goal of military training is defined as improving and maintaining the “military force” (전력) of the state. Military force is then broken down into “tangible

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<sup>31</sup> Kyung-Jin Noh. “National College Entrance Exam Attendance Rate 93.3 Percent, About 606,000 Students Present.” *MBC*, November 7, 2013.

[http://imnews.imbc.com/news/2013/society/article/3364972\\_11203.html/](http://imnews.imbc.com/news/2013/society/article/3364972_11203.html/).

<sup>32</sup> “Experience in Military Service.” *Gallup Korea*, December 19, 1991.

[https://panel.gallup.co.kr/Gate/Panel/F025.aspx?seq=1668&DaeBun...PGNO=1&date=Sun%20Oct%2012%202014%2019:44:47%20GMT-0700%20\(PDT\)/](https://panel.gallup.co.kr/Gate/Panel/F025.aspx?seq=1668&DaeBun...PGNO=1&date=Sun%20Oct%2012%202014%2019:44:47%20GMT-0700%20(PDT)/).

<sup>33</sup> Other forms of translation include “spiritual force,” “military spirit,” “mental force,” and “spiritual warfare.” For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to MSWP as “mental force.”



military force” (유형 전력) and “intangible military force” (무형 전력). In turn, intangible military force has three aspects: logistics, operational knowledge, and mental force. While logistical and operational knowledge have to do with the familiarity of each individual with his or her task, mental force concerns the willpower of those involved, and thus is the focus of our study. More specifically, mental force is defined as the “organized military willpower to positively carry out given assignments with fortified military professionalism, strict discipline, high morale, and unity as a group united around the leader.”<sup>34</sup> Aside from the grandiose language, which reflects a similar set of values iterated by the U.S. military, a point of focus is a call for “positive” commitment to tasks. Rather than referring to an upbeat attitude, “positive” commitment here means the Korean word, *neung-dong* (능동), which takes on the meaning of being voluntary and proactive, which makes a stark contrast against the forced nature of conscription.

Based on the previously established point that the military is distinct from civilian society in terms of its values, and that conscripted individuals are more likely to have contradictory values and views to the military, the goal of instilling a sense of proactivity inevitably entails a high level of psychological manipulation.<sup>35</sup> These considerations are apparent in the core documents of South Korean military training. For example, the *Guidelines for Jung-hoon Activities* describes the goal of introductory training as a process of “soldier creation” (군인 만들기) that constructs a “value system” required by

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<sup>34</sup> Center for Military Mental Education. *Mental Force Instruction Manual*. Ministry of National Defense. 1998. 31.

<sup>35</sup> George Orwell illustrates this distinction beautifully in *1984*. In the book, he outlines three stages of indoctrination: “thou shall not,” “thou shall,” and “thou art.” Thou art is the stage where one follows the rules with agency, which takes away the need for rules, the highest level of indoctrination.

the military.<sup>36</sup> The values system is in turn comprised of six components: honor, loyalty, bravery, belief in victory, commitment to battle without retreat (임전무퇴), and patriotism. In the context of training, following quote from the *Mental Force Instruction Manual* represents the military's consideration of how such values are under threat from social influences, which we have found to be an inevitable consequence of conscription and liberalization of society:

... the military also has experienced an indiscriminate influx of social phenomena; soldiers have exhibited maladaptation to life in the barracks as a result of negative values like egotism, overconfidence, and indolence; and while very limited, individuals that subscribe to radical leftism have been found in military authority circles. As such, there has been an increase of negative aspects to mental education of soldiers. As a result, there is a dire need for a routine and innovative policy to foster mental force to strengthen military force, in answer to the generational changes in context.<sup>37</sup>

Aside from the obvious political stint, which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the military's apprehensive attitude towards external social values is quite evident. To say the least, this verifies the distance between civilian and military values described by Clausewitz. The passage also mentions contextual changes, which refer to the new generations of youths that no longer contain firsthand experiences of the war. In sum, this passage shows an institutionally recognized and implemented need for indoctrination.

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<sup>36</sup> *Guidelines for Jung-hoon Activities* (정훈홍보활동지침). Ministry of National Defense. 2008. 4

<sup>37</sup> Center for Military Mental Education. *Mental Force Instruction Manual*. 1998. 30.

*Practical applications: Jung-hoon*

In its practical application, the terminological counterpart for mental force is *jung-hoon* (정훈), a program of media, lectures, training, and socio-cultural activities, that is geared towards nurturing mental force. The operational goal of *jung-hoon* is “to conduct education for allowing the military to pursue its mission to protect the Republic of Korea from external military threat and invasion,”<sup>38</sup> which resonates closely with the ideals of mental force. But how exactly are these training systems different from those of volunteer armies? Upon a review of both academic and practical literature on *jung-hoon*, we discuss three main aspects that psychologically pressure recruits and provide a means to delivering a military values system: total replacement of civilian culture, excessive use of force, and appeal to emotions.

Total replacement of civilian culture

Culture in this context is used to refer to a way of life in the most general sense. A central pillar mentioned in various *jung-hoon* guidelines is a replacement of various aspects of civilian life by generating military equivalents. In fact, the South Korean military possesses its own television show, soccer league, and troupe of celebrities; the list goes on. By recreating various aspects of civilian life, the military is not only easing the soldiers’ transition to the military, but also creating a new channel for education of military values.

A starting point of re-educating civilians is to break them away from their previous way of life, especially if one works under the assumption that civilians are

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<sup>38</sup> *Guidelines for Jung-hoon Activities*. 2008. 1

predisposed about partaking in violence, military culture, and other aspects of military life. Along these lines, recruits are refused access to any form of popular media and news of the outside world. Psychologically, an environmental displacement affects an individual's sense of "familiarity, attachment, and identity," which then leads to a state of disorientation that induces recruits to be "docile and eager to follow the lead of those with a plan."<sup>39</sup> Indeed, in the military, various measures to mollify an individual's psychology and identity are taken; individual privacy is limited by a group-oriented life, a strict management of daily schedules allow minimal individual time. Any "tools to maintain his [the soldier's] self-image" is stripped away.<sup>40</sup> An interviewee's comparison of fresh recruits and those nearing completion of basic training helps put this notion of displacement and realignment to military values into perspective:

### Interview 1

*In what ways do you think people change most during military service?*

I think people become more shameless.

*(Laughs) In what way?*

In the first week everyone's just stiff, but in the fifth week you talk about everything – sexual stuff too ... In a way, that is the real, animal side of men.

*So you're more open to others?*

It's not that you're open... Men turn more instinctive. It sort of feels like we turn more animal.

<sup>39</sup> Mindy Thompson Fullilove. "Psychiatric Implications of Displacement: Contributions from the Psychology of Place." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 153, (1996). 1518.

<sup>40</sup> Asli Ozgur Peker Dogra. *The Soldier and the Civilian: Conscription and Military Power in Turkey* (ProQuest, 2007). 22.

While not a perfect representation of displacement, this interviewee's observation of how recruits change through boot camp hints at the psychological shift incurred by training. The description seems to fit with the effects of displacement from familiar settings where each individual is afforded his own comfort and identity, while in boot camp such pretenses are dropped.

Replacement also creates an alternative source of media that recruits can seep into. The South Korean military actively invests in its own media, run centrally from Defense Media Agency (DEMA). The South Korean military provides a wide range of media services, including a television broadcast, radio station, newspapers, and movies. While this in itself is not peculiar, a notable fact is the large percentage of entertainment-oriented programs. In particular, the South Korean military fully utilizes its continuously replenished troupe of male celebrities, made accessible at a pittance for the duration of the celebrities' service. In fact, the South Korean military maintains a separate entrance category for celebrities, similar to how engineers, translators, and doctors are placed in specialized positions. These celebrities are then placed in various media stations, actors in television dramas and singers in radio. The military even goes as far as to hire famous South Korean, K-Pop girl-groups to satiate desires that the male celebrities cannot cover.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The list goes on; while each item is interesting, it is also notable that the entertainment through *jung-hoon* adapts quite readily to popular demand, which is naturally represented among recruits. For example, when Blizzard's Starcraft became the most popular mode of entertainment – South Korea had its professional league and television channel dedicated to the game – the military created a team from enlisted professional players to compete. The team was discontinued when Blizzard released Starcraft II, which was not as successful as its predecessor.

At the same time, military media is not quite identical to civilian media. Rather, the military maintains a set of parameters that both limit and direct media content available to soldiers, keeping contents in a stasis at a point where it is enjoyable and popular, but still representative of military values. The military's *jung-hoon* manuals enforce strict guidelines regarding the content of the entertainment and cultural content it provides to its recruits, with restriction of pro-North Korea rhetoric being a key feature.<sup>42</sup> By combining aspects of popular culture widely accepted among recruits and the military culture, *jung-hoon* seeks to create a holistic military life that soldiers can identify with, thereby easing the indoctrination process.

### Force

In training we find that force stands for both a limitation on other liberties and an enforcement mechanism – a stick – of imposing physical or mental violence. While it is true that all militaries employ violence during training – one can even make the argument that violence is ingrained in the predominantly masculine military culture – this argument is thus an issue of magnitude. Particularly conscription, especially in countries like South Korea where the policy is well enforced, tends to exacerbate the amount of violence in the military. Indeed, as it can be observed from militaries outside of South Korea that exercise conscription, like the Russian military, the Israeli military, the Mexican military, and so forth, the use of physical violence is institutionalized.

For all militaries, there is a fundamental compromise of individual rights rooted in national security concerns. For example, recruits no longer afforded the same array of

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<sup>42</sup> “Guidelines to Cultural *Jung-Hoon* Programs.” *Ministry of National Defense*, June 1, 2006. [www.law.go.kr/flDownload.do?flSeq=1809538](http://www.law.go.kr/flDownload.do?flSeq=1809538).

individual liberties that they had as civilians, like the freedom of speech. However, more importantly, the military's need for discipline, which is threatened considerably more in conscripted militaries as we have examined previously, often leads to the justification of heavier forms of violence. In his analysis of *devrecilik*, which is the Turkish term for military hazing, Dogra quotes from a soldier, “*Devrecilik* has to exist, it is necessary. That is how discipline is established at the lower depths. It is like a ladder, you stay at the lowest level for a while, everyone else steps on you, then you work your way up.”<sup>43</sup> When asked about their opinions on this quote, past soldiers of the South Korean military largely agreed as well. An interviewee additionally shared the point that violent hazing may not require outright physical violence:

## Interview 2

*How prevalent was physical violence in your barracks?*

It wasn't common at all. We did hit laggards, but there was a major investigation into violence in the barracks right after I joined.

*So somebody put in a word?*

You can say that. But there is another way of punishing people, called absurdities (*boo-jo-ri*, 부조리).<sup>44</sup> You won't know it exactly until you actually experience it, but it generally means non-commonsensical behavior – taking stuff out on your subordinates. If somebody can't talk straight, you for example make him read a book and submit a book report every day.

*(Laughs) That's very academic.*

Of course it's not only that. It's really just making people do something totally irrelevant as a punishment to fix a certain behavior.

<sup>43</sup> Dogra. *The Soldier and the Civilian: Conscription and Military Power in Turkey*. 2007. 147.

<sup>44</sup> Absurdity does not accurately capture the meaning of the Korean word it is intended to represent, which is *boo-jo-ri* (부조리). Literally translated, it more closely means a irrationally inflicted injustice. However, as my interviewee further explains, *boo-jo-ri* in this sense means the assignment of everyday chores as a punishment.

Of course, one must not take this account as a generalizable account of all bases in South Korea. Rather, the *boo-jo-ri* was developed as a way to circumvent a specific, circumstantial investigation into violence in the interviewee's base. Thus, violence is clearly manifested in one way or another in the barracks. This culture of violence, *devrecilik* in Turkey, *dedovshcina* in Russia, and *kun-ki*<sup>45</sup> in South Korea, are similar in that they are normative methods of instilling discipline.

Another evidence of the need for violence in conscription is presented by the formation of a semi-institutionalized culture of hazing in conscripted militaries, semi-institutionalized meaning that hazing as a practice is condemned officially, but nevertheless widespread and even condoned by the commissioned leadership. Hazing is based on the strict, hierarchical relationship between men of different ranks. For example, a past member of the military police in South Korea describes a process in which the military specifically utilizes the relationship between a superior and his subordinate to implement discipline:

### Interview 3

*I imagine that people like you, who have extensive exposure to the public and media (the military police is used to control traffic and stand guard at public events), have to maintain a particularly high level of discipline. How does the training process shape that?*

We train inside the barracks until the big day, like driving tests. In the field, men are grouped into two's, one superior and one subordinate.

*How was that relationship? When you were with your superior or, later, your subordinate?*

You gel together with each other... with a lot of verbal violence. (Laughs)

<sup>45</sup> *Kun-ki* (군기) in English means, in literal meaning, military spirit. However, in the Korean connotation, it most closely resembles discipline.



Furthermore, in cases of deaths and serious brutalities that actually merited formal investigation, higher-ranking officers were found complicit and sometimes even accused of participating in the violence. While it is difficult to openly access information about officer complicity and violence owing to the military's exclusive nature, reports shore up intermittently as a result of outstandingly egregious cases of abuse. For example, in 2014, two back-to-back cases of military abuse and murder caused a widespread public uproar, which prompted an extensive media coverage on military violence overall.<sup>46</sup> A particular discovery during this time of scrutiny was the lack of information, or the unwillingness to admit awareness, regarding the crimes at the military leadership, as officials of the Ministry of National Defense, including the minister and his predecessor, announced that they had only become aware of the issues through external sources.<sup>47</sup> What this shows is that the military leadership holds a low level of concern for violence within the military, which supports the use of force as a means to educate recruits.

In sum, we have reaffirmed our previous logic that conscription leads to a larger concern about maintaining discipline in the military, due to an influx of contradictory values held by a wide spectrum of civilians that the military is forced to accept. In response, the military forms a stronger, more institutionalized culture of violence to mollify individuals and instill new values. Indeed, while it is not so much that the

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<sup>46</sup> The first case was the previously mentioned attack by sergeant Lim - first names are kept confidential. The second case concerned a private Yoon, who had been beaten to death by his superiors. These two cases, occurring only months apart (April 7<sup>th</sup> and June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014), created a synergy effect that placed blame on the military system.

<sup>47</sup> Oie-Hyun Kim. "The Leadership Didn't Know? Spreading Allegations of Military Cover-Ups." *Hankyoreh*, August 7, 2014. <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/defense/649996.html/>.

military leadership institutionally directs violence against dissenters to military values, since the military is officially the masculine characteristics of the military population and the relative lack of respect for individual rights make violence a ready option in the military socialization process.

### Emotional appeal

The notion of enhancing group unity through a common enemy figure is a widely accepted notion in psychology and psychoanalysis. On one hand, the presence of hostilities between groups allows for stronger empathy within each group, which serves to override other existing differences that may have hampered with harmonization.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, scholars like Lacan – based off of Freud’s theory on libido - have additionally shown that the presence of an outside antagonist allows for the diffusion of aggression and frustration that inevitably builds up within a group.<sup>49</sup> As such, the pre-established presence of North Korea as a state enemy is a convenient, if not essential, tool for creating a set of shared views, and thus a common identity, among military recruits.

Accordingly, North Korea is woven into various parts of the South Korean training program. To build on the image of North Korea as a tangible antagonist, *jung-hoon* has often employed examples of not only North Korean attacks on South Korea, but also interestingly the case of Vietnam, which has been cited as a case of “internal subversion” by a weaker communist side that led to the defeat of a stronger,

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<sup>48</sup> George Simmel. *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*. (Simon and Schuster, 2010). 17-19.

<sup>49</sup> Yannis Stavrakakis and Nikos Chrysoloras. "(I can't Get no) Enjoyment: Lacanian Theory and the Analysis of Nationalism." *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 11, no. 2 (August 2006): 5-6.

internationally supported capitalist and democratic side.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, training emphasizes the immediacy of the danger posed by North Korea to prioritize the issue in recruits' minds. For instance, past servicemen of the military have affirmed that the military stresses the presence of North Korean spies and subverts in South Korea, bringing the threat much closer to home:

#### Interview 4

*Tell me about how the Vietnamese War is used in mental training in the military.*

The logic is this. South Vietnam went down because a small group of internal spies overwhelmed the majority. It says ... that things like economic power can be useless. The society will fall when a minority armed with strong mental force raises confusion from within.

In fact, the military has sometimes even gone as far as to target domestic figures, especially those in South Korean politics, as supporters of North Korea. While the political implications of this is discussed at length in the next chapter, the immediate relevance of this is that the military is again attempting to create sources of threat closer to home. Indeed, such intent has doubly incentivized the military to propagate information about alleged South Korean supporters of North Korea during its official training sessions, something that has been widely protested by the left.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Joon-Ok Kim. "Newfound Strangeness of Reserves Training." *Joong-Ang Ilbo*, October 24, 2012. [http://article.joins.com/news/article/article.asp?total\\_id=9678710/](http://article.joins.com/news/article/article.asp?total_id=9678710/); While the article itself relays firsthand experiences from reserves training, personal interviews by the author confirm that the Vietnamese example has been cited in training taking place during military service as well.

<sup>51</sup> Office of Ji-Won Park. "Park: "Democratic Party Attacked as North Korea Supporters at Reserve Training." *Park Ji-Won Stories*, April 15, 2013. [http://www.jwp615.com/m/m.html?mode=view&uid=59134&start=0&mp=5&where=&key\\_word=/](http://www.jwp615.com/m/m.html?mode=view&uid=59134&start=0&mp=5&where=&key_word=/).

### *Jung-hoon* and suicide

Such is the overview of the *jung-hoon* program and its functions. Our observations show that the military has created a range of institutions and cultures that it is aimed at 1) rendering recruits' minds accessible through displacement and previously accepted channels like popular media, 2) weaving in military values into the daily lives of the recruits through a total replacement of recruits' previous lifestyles, and 3) constructing a shared identity through the enemy figure of North Korea. The highly developed nature of these methods attest to the level of incompatibility that exists between military values and civilian values among recruits, especially because conscription does not allow for selection based upon aptitude or sympathy with military values. By recreating a social and cultural experience, the military is essentially mimicking the process through which individuals have formed their own values as civilians.

Indeed, due to the large gap between civilian values and the military's expectations of soldiers, the resulting transition is often highly stressful for recruits. This of course is exacerbated by the violence, the displacement, and other tactics previously mentioned as key mental aspects of training. An indicative proxy expression of the high level of incompatibility and the potency of manipulative training in the Korean military is suicide, which helps put the sheer level of stress received by recruits into perspective. If a military has a higher need for indoctrination, especially under circumstances where violence is justified, we hypothesize that the level of suicide will be higher for conscripted militaries. To that end, South Korean military suicide rates, and its civilian

counterpart, are compared against that of the United States. Comparing the percentage of suicides among total deaths in the military in South Korea and the U.S., one can find that suicide is responsible for a significantly larger number of deaths in the military under the South Korean model. In the U.S., suicide occupied 14.2 percent of the total number of deaths in the military on average from 2004 to 2010.<sup>52</sup> During the same period, the same figure for South Korea was 59.8 percent.<sup>53</sup>

While that difference is significant, it needs to qualify through a comparison against suicide rates in the civilian population. And in fact, the South Korean public actually shows a similarly high rate of suicides as well compared to the United States. While still lower than figures from the military, suicide in South Korea accounted for 27.3 percent of deaths for teens, and 43.3 percent of deaths for individuals in their twenties, with no significant differences between the sexes. In each age category, suicide was the leading cause of death.<sup>54</sup> For Americans on the other hand, the Center for Disease Control reports that suicide accounted for 14.3 percent of deaths for individuals between the ages of 20 and 24, and 12.5 percent for those between 25 and 34.<sup>55</sup> While the figures for the South Koreans generally are still lower than that of the South Korean soldiers, the difference there is significantly less profound. The same comparison of the United States shows a remarkable consistency. Does suicide not matter as much after all?

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<sup>52</sup> “Active Duty Military Deaths by Year and Manner.” *Military Defense Casualty Analysis System*, accessed October 29, 2014. [https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report\\_by\\_year\\_manner.xhtml/](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report_by_year_manner.xhtml/).

<sup>53</sup> “Account of Fatal Incidents in the Military.” *National Barometer*, accessed October 29, 2014. <http://www.index.go.kr/potal/enaraldx/idxField/userPageCh.do/>.

<sup>54</sup> Jae-Won Lee and Joon-Hang Song. *Statistics on Causes of Death*. Statistics Korea, 2013. 8.

<sup>55</sup> Melonie Heron. “Deaths: Leading Causes for 2009.” *National Vital Statistics Reports* 61, no. 7 (October 2012): 25. [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr61/nvsr61\\_07.pdf/](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr61/nvsr61_07.pdf/).

Unfortunately, it still does. Starting with the figures from the United States, the consistency actually shows that the military is more apt at preventing suicides. Ranging from the Gulf War to the current entanglement in Afghanistan, the U.S. military has been embroiled in actual military conflicts, on foreign ground at that. This exposure to battle takes an obvious toll on the minds of soldiers, the most visible measure being the frequency of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among the soldiers, which is a casual factor of depression and suicide.<sup>56</sup> While figures vary across by wars, the National Institute of Health reports that approximately 18 percent of veterans from the Vietnam War, Gulf War, Afghanistan, and Iraq are afflicted with PTSD.<sup>57</sup> Compared to the U.S. public, the U.S. military is therefore a sample biased towards suicide. The fact that figures are consistent across military and civilian statistics on suicide is thus a testament to the suicide prevention resources available in the military. On the other hand, PTSD in the South Korean military is inadequately documented, in part due to its lack of actual, full-on warfare.<sup>58</sup> In the absence of any assessment of PTSD, a recent research by the South Korean Security Management Institute has relied on only six interviewees with actual combat experience from the series of maritime battles with North Korea and the Cheonan attack to conduct a study.<sup>59</sup> Given this lack of research and concern, combined with the lack of systematic exposure to combat, PTSD seems less relevant in the South Korean context. Then, the higher rate of suicide in the South Korean military is attributed

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<sup>56</sup> Herbert Hendin and Ann Pollinger Haas "Suicide and Guilt as Manifestations of PTSD in Vietnam Combat Veterans." *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 148, no. 5 (May 1991): 586-591.

<sup>57</sup> "PTSD: A Growing Epidemic." *National Institute of Health Medline Plus* 4, no.1 (Winter 2009): 10-14. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/magazine/issues/winter09/articles/winter09pg10-14.html/>.

<sup>58</sup> Il-Young Lim. "Serious PTSD Affliction Among Veterans, But Inadequate Management." *Seoul Shinmun*, May 28, 2013. <http://www.seoul.co.kr/news/newsView.php?id=20130528003004/>.

<sup>59</sup> Ki-Jung Kim. *Research on Management of Foreign Deployed Soldiers' PTSD*. Security Management Institute. January 2013.

to more to other factors than battle stress – among which we here have demonstrated that the training system is the primary culprit.

Taking into account the fact that the South Korean military is not engaged in active combat like the U.S. military, the soaring figures show an even more disturbing account of the mental stress received by South Korean soldiers. We refer to the South Korean case as a “model” because the roots of military violence – hazing – is shared by other nations. For example, while the data was not collected over the same time period as previous statistics, the Russian military, with a similar conscription policy as South Korea, also exhibited similarly high suicides as a percentage of all military deaths.<sup>60</sup>

In conclusion, conscription allows the military access to a wide pool of labor without being restricted by compensation and the difficulties of competing with other career options. However, at the same time, the wide pool of labor through which all Korean men pass through during their twenties obligates the military to accept an uncomfortably wide spectrum of ideologies, personal beliefs, and backgrounds. With the observation that a major part of civilian lifestyle and values are not compatible with that of the military, we conclude that the military cannot help but develop a more stringent form of indoctrination in the military, and have reviewed the detailed measures that are enforced by South Korea and its *jung-hoon* program. One side effect of *jung-hoon*, owing to its high level of manipulation and fast-paced change, was high rates of suicide in the

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<sup>60</sup> Vladimir Mukhin. “Non-Combat Casualties; Half of Deaths in the Military are Suicides.” *Defense and Security*, August 24, 2007.  
[http://www.lexisnexis.com/lncui2api/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T20840796543&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29\\_T20840796547&cisb=22\\_T20840796546&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=172571&docNo=4/](http://www.lexisnexis.com/lncui2api/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T20840796543&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T20840796547&cisb=22_T20840796546&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=172571&docNo=4/).

military. With this analysis, we now consider the possibilities of its abuse, especially given the hypothesis that the South Korean military is political biased domestically.



## Chapter II: The Political Bias of the Military

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The previous chapter has demonstrated how the South Korean armed forces have responded to challenges of incorporating conscripted men into its culture by employing more psychologically manipulative training methods, aimed at creating soldiers out of individuals, some of whom were not even fit mentally or have conflicting values with the military. This channel of influence raises a concern regarding its abuses. In particular, this chapter proposes the possibility that the South Korean military is not independent from the civilian political sphere, and even biased ideologically. Should this be true, indoctrination would become a tangible worry for the development of South Korean democracy and civil-military relations. Hence, it is the goal of this chapter to analyze whether, why, and how much the military is biased with regards to the businesses of domestic politics. In the first half of the chapter, we invoke the concept of “mission creep” to explain how the military has come to involve itself in domestic politics through an anticommunist stance developed through the inter-Korean conflict. The remainder of the chapter is dedicated to examining empirical manifestations of the military’s political bias in its interaction with civilian society and politics.

With regards to previous literature on the issue of political bias of the military, there is a significant depth in the field of civil-military relations. Numerous scholars were quick to point out that political bias is not a binary variable in the military. Rather, different militaries, and different members within a military, would possess differing degrees of political bias. On one hand, the bias could be passive, mostly resulting from naturally occurring selection biases, and thus too weak to motivate action. On the other

hand, bias could be strong enough to inspire active action from the military that favors some political action or party over another. Janowitz has written on the U.S. military in 1960, “military officers are willing to identify themselves as conservatives, if only because such an identification permits political perspectives without violation of nonpartisanship.”<sup>61</sup> Indeed, while Janowitz’s survey data shows that 66.9 percent of military personnel respondents identified wholly or a little conservative,<sup>62</sup> he also implies that the values of the military are often aligned with conservatism, hence being able to identify as conservative but still be politically neutral. Different scholars have subsequently echoed such observations.<sup>63</sup>

### **Securitization of ideology and politicization of security**

Given the ideologically charged nature of the inter-Korean conflict, the South Korean military’s enemy has been communism, a system of thought that is most manifested through policy discourse. As a result, the South Korean military has turned inwards in terms of its security mission. However, in the process of seeking communist enemies in the domestic realm, the military has developed a political bias against not only communism, but also the liberal/left<sup>64</sup> more generally, which has been passed down to the

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<sup>61</sup> Janowitz, Morris. *The Professional Soldier, a Social and Political Portrait*. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960), page 236-238.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Mark Thompson. “Does the Military Vote Really Lean Republican?” *Time*, November 5, 2012, <http://swampland.time.com/2012/11/05/does-the-military-vote-really-lean-republican/>; Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn. “The Gap: Soldiers, Civilians, and their Mutual Misunderstanding.” *National Interest*, issue 61 (Fall 2000): 31-33.

<sup>64</sup> The connotation of the word “liberal” is different in South Korea, in that it is more closely related to “left.” As Jang-Yeop Hwang, the highest-ranking North Korean official to defect to the South, argues that South Korean society has a strong tendency to label liberals as socialists, and socialists as communists. While this is not grounded on a firm understanding of these concepts, the historical experiences of South Koreans have hollowed out the terminology enough for them to be used interchangeably. While we will

level of individual soldiers through training. To elaborate upon this point in more detail, we argue that the military's mission has a political side to it, in that the military views not only communists as a security threat, but also the political ideology of communism as a threat. Furthermore, the military's mission has expanded into the domestic sphere of South Korea.

*Anticommunism in the South Korean military*

For the military to view liberal influences in domestic politics as a threat, it must have made an ideological connection between the liberal politicians and communists. However, just the fact that the South Korean military has been embroiled in conflict against North Koreans does not imply that it has developed an anticommunist attitude in the ideological sense. Furthermore, for the purposes of this study, it would be useful in any case to gauge how strong the military's ideological concerns are. In answer to these questions, we argue that while perception of threat has stemmed from the immediate violence from North Koreans, the nature of communism as an ideology of governance has led the military to conflate the security threats with communist concepts. Then, we analyze the manifestations of this political attitude in the training system of the South Korean military.

Communism is not inherently violent, or threatening; it is just an ideology regarding governance with a particular regards to distribution of economic resources. However, in the specific context of the Cold War, political allegiances were forged upon ideological affiliation between the capitalist camp led by the U.S. and the communist

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continue to use the word liberal throughout this paper where needed, the point is that its nuance in Korean still means "leftist."

camp led by the Soviet Union. As a result, political ideology was securitized and being communist presented a threat to the capitalist camp, and vice versa. In viewing matters through the lens of affiliation, however, it seems that there is little room for actual involvement of ideological factors in the conflict. In fact, in reviewing records from the decades directly following the Korean War, Nam-Hee Lee reports “analyses of various textbooks on anticommunism show very little discussion about the history or main tenets of communism or discussion of why or what to oppose about communism; the education was mainly about the demonization of communism and communists.”<sup>65</sup>

The critical question here is the causal direction between ideology and communist identity. How do you identify communists? Is a person communist if he advocates for more redistributive tax policies? Is he a communist if he opposes the current regime? Clearly, there is no lucid method to exogenously define somebody as communist, unless the individual in question professes his or her support for communism voluntarily. This dilemma is doubly strong given the conundrum that an established knowledge of communism was only a sufficient condition for being communist, not a necessary condition. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to make the case that all communists, like the soldiers that were at the forefront of the communist battlefield, had a working knowledge of communism. This also accounts for Nam-Hee Lee’s point on anticommunist education that fear of communism did not require knowledge of what communism actually was – even a majority of the communists themselves did not have an idea.

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<sup>65</sup> Nam-Hee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 85.

So a communist could or could not subscribe to communism; a political allegiance to a communist regime was the surest ground to label an individual communist. But communism, being an ideology, posed a constant threat of infiltration to the South Korean military, especially because it was so near to the communist world. In particular, communism was invisible, which heightened suspicion. What do we mean by invisible? In defining conflicts, political scientists use the word cleavage, which is a defining characteristic that separates groups. Among different cleavages, we make the distinction of visible versus invisible identities. Visible identities are cleavages that can be visually discerned, including mainly race, ethnicity, and religions that are more readily identified visually through apparel and symbols. On the other hand, some forms of identity are invisible, primarily because they are thought-processes. Unless any other visual identities overlap, it is impossible to find out visually if an individual is on one side of the cleavage or the other. The implications of this invisibility are enormous in that it gives grounds for suspicion.

This invisibility in turn feeds on the security threat to create fear and suspicion. Such a fear was behind the Red Scare and McCarthyism in the U.S. during the Cold War. At the same time, it has opened possibilities for more abuses of state authority in the name of national security, since accusations were possible, and difficult to disprove. In South Korea, the government passed a set of legislation in December 1948 called *gook-bo-bup*, or National Security Act (NSA), to a similar purpose. The NSA banned the instruction of communist studies, support of the North Korean regime, and so forth,

effectively providing the legal basis for communist accusations.<sup>66</sup> In this frenzy, the logic that was created was that while not all communists knew about communism, anyone with communist beliefs had to be communist. Under this assumption, the ideological tenets of communism, and the individuals that side with them, also became a security threat because they imply a communist identity. There was even a court case where an individual was found guilty of violating the NSA for leading a protest against a South Korea-United States joint military training, an issue with clear partisan interests.<sup>67</sup> In other words, any proponent of communist policies and, most importantly, policies from liberal parties that were ideologically aligned or at least similar with communists, became targetable enemies.

#### *Anticommunist rhetoric in the military*

In sum, we have examined how the inter-Korean conflict has adopted an ideological front, diagnosing the process as a conflation between the identity of the enemy and communist ideology, brought on by heightened fear and suspicion endemic to the historical context of the conflict. But how much of these sentiments would the military of today embody? Through a review of publicly available internal documents of the military, we argue that the military's mission to protect the country against the communist North has preserved the anticommunist attitude of the Korean War better than any other institution in South Korea.

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<sup>66</sup> The full text of the laws can be found here: "National Security Act." *National Legislation Information Center*, accessed November 1, 2014. <http://www.law.go.kr/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=116750&efYd=20120701#0000/>.

<sup>67</sup> "Courts: Leading Protests Against ROK-US Joint Military Training Guilty of NSA." *Donga-Ilbo*, September 27, 2014. <http://news.donga.com/3/03/20140927/66754536/1/>.

An obvious place to start is the South Korean Ministry of National Defense. The Ministry publishes the *National Defense White Paper* every two years, the most recent of which is the 2012 edition.<sup>68</sup> The White Paper states, “As long as threats persist, the perpetrating entities – the North Korean regime and the North Korean army – are our enemies.”<sup>69</sup> While this seems politically innocuous enough, the North Korean regime is of course a communist regime, in reference to the North Korean Laborer’s Party. On the other hand, the South Korean military’s *Code of Military Service* states that the mission of the South Korean military is to “protect free democracy and contribute to the reunification of our nation.”<sup>70</sup> However, the essence of a liberal democracy is its openness to all political opinions, among which is communism. Thus, while, the South Korean military’s involvement in a war to protect democracy is fine, its decision to defend democracy against communism has inevitably involved the military in politics. This was the case even outside of the South Korean militaries, for many militaries engaged in the Cold War like the U.S. military. However, for the Korean military, such a dynamic has continued for decades due to the persistence of the North Korean communist regime. Thus it was granted a far larger timeframe to consolidate and institutionalize its anticommunist stance. However, the military would quickly realize that the lines between various ideologies are vague, particularly between socialism, communism, and even the general ideological spectrum of the left. Indeed, such concepts were confounded in the

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<sup>68</sup> The 2014 edition is yet to be released.

<sup>69</sup> *Defense White Papers*. Ministry of National Defense (2012).  
[http://www.mnd.go.kr/user/mnd/upload/pblictN/PBLICTNEBOOK\\_201308060946041630.pdf/](http://www.mnd.go.kr/user/mnd/upload/pblictN/PBLICTNEBOOK_201308060946041630.pdf/). 36

<sup>70</sup> “Code of Military Service.” *National Center for Legislation*.  
<http://www.law.go.kr/LSW/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=128315#0000/>. Accessed November 3, 2014. Article 4.

public mind for decades in South Korea,<sup>71</sup> the implications of which in the military's behavior in the domestic realm are discussed in the second half of this chapter.

Furthermore, subsequent references to North Korea, especially in terms of education and training policies, reaffirm the military's view of communism. The South Korean Defense Security Command, which is the branch of the military that deals with terrorism, spy activities, and intelligence operations, provides the following characteristics of suspected North Korean spies and spy activities:

- 1) People who create an internet café with the purpose of learning about communist ideology, or support the political ideology of North Korea,
- 2) People who, using the internet or texting, try to organize violent labor strikes with the goal of attaining North Korean socialism,
- 3) People who deny free democracy and propagandize social revolution, and argue for the creation of a socialist state,
- 4) People who stay involved in school council in universities and lead education of communist theories,
- 5) People who create documents supporting the abolishment of capitalism or overthrowing the current regime.
- 6) People who spread rumors at anti-American or anti-government demonstrations and tries to instigate violence.<sup>72</sup>

This description is especially important because it its closest to the civilian sector. Clearly, these supposed characteristics of spies is that they focus immensely on communist ideologies, even banning academic examinations of the subject.

### *Expansion of the military mission*

Having reviewed the process through which the military has adopted a politicized mission through its struggle against communism, we now discuss how the military's

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<sup>71</sup> Su-Yong Lee. "Comparative Analysis of Socialism, Communism, and Democracy: Examination of Reasons Behind the Confusion" *Protection of the Nation* 16, no. 5 (1989): 2.  
<http://dlps.nanet.go.kr/SearchDetailView.do?cn=KINX2011083642&sysid=nhn#/>.

<sup>72</sup> "Typology of suspected spy activity," *Defense Security Command*, accessed September 17, 2014, <http://www.dsc.mil.kr/anbo.do?setForward=anboDoubt/>.



mission forces it to pay attention to and intervene in domestic politics. To this end, we use two levels of analysis: the military's domestic pivot and its "mission creep." Through this theory, we explain how the South Korean military, a highly professionalized military that has seen decades of stable civil-military relations, can still intervene in domestic politics.

The domestic pivot of the military regards the shift of the military's mission from a defense against external security threats to a more stabilizing and policing role in the domestic realm. In fact, the pivot is a trend; as Mary Kaldor demonstrates in her analysis of non-state actors and asymmetrical warfare, the number of militaries engaged in domestic missions has increased drastically since the conclusion of WWII, owing to a number of factors like technological improvements communication and weapons technology, identity politics, and post-WWII grievances.<sup>73</sup> While communist activity in South Korea is nowhere close to non-state actors like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and the like, there is a similar dynamic in that the military has turned inwards to tighten security against infiltration. This trend is more or less expected, especially due to the previously mentioned "invisibility" of communism and the South Korean military's apparent concern towards communist infiltration in South Korean society.

However, the South Korean military has not limited itself to the role of rooting out communists. The reason expansion is a concern is because of the military's "mission creep," described as "logic of a dynamic situation in which the success of the original

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<sup>73</sup> Mary Kaldor. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

mission depends on picking up additional missions.”<sup>74</sup> Given the immediate conceptual application of mission creep, the relative depth of the military’s expertise in security matters can lead the military to often perceive civilian leadership and its policies as impediments to the successes of its mission. In this respect, the conciliatory policy line – the Sunshine policy - of the liberal parties, like the Democrat Party, are naturally perceived as adversarial to the military’s interests. Thus, the military would, in its professional pursuit of national security, be forced to involve itself in domestic politics.

Furthermore, there is a cultural aspect supporting the strength of the military’s bias in the domestic realm. Scholars have found a sense of moral and political direction about civilian governance, of how it was ‘supposed to be,’ rooted in the military’s leadership. Samuel Fitch, from his interviews of military personnel from Latin American countries, observed that the interviewees possessed “an implied understanding of what politics, in particular democratic politics, should be.”<sup>75</sup> The findings of both Feaver and Janowitz also substantiate Fitch’s claim, as they report similar findings within the U.S. military, despite the fact that the U.S. is regarded as one of the most democratically developed and stable systems in the world, particularly in terms of its control of the military.<sup>76</sup> This aspect of the military’s culture can supplement the military’s sense of expertise in security matters, lending more weight to a perceived need for change when civilian authority impedes the military’s mission in a domestic setting.

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<sup>74</sup> Lawrence A. Yates. "Military Stability and Support Operations: Analogies, Patterns and Recurring Themes." *Military Review* 77, no. 4 (Jul, 1997): 51.

<sup>75</sup> Samuel J. Fitch. "Bridging the Conceptual Gap: Latin American Military Views of Democracy, Politics, and Policy." (Unpublished manuscript, University of Colorado at Boulder, 2001).

<sup>76</sup> Morris. Janowitz. *The Professional Soldier, a Social and Political Portrait*. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960), 6; Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn. "The Gap: Soldiers, Civilians, and their Mutual Misunderstanding." *National Interest*, Issue 61 (Fall 2000): 31.

In the specific context of the South Korean military, it was its perceived threat of communism, more importantly concerns of its proliferation, which triggered the mission expansion. As iterated above, it was impossible to identify somebody as communist exogenously; making matters worse, South Korea was geographically near the communist camp, with Seoul being nearer to Pyongyang than it was to Busan, a South Korean port city in the south.

### **Political bias in the military in the domestic realm**

Now we turn to the question of the military's political bias in the domestic politics of South Korea. Previously, we have presented analyses supporting the politicization of the military through the expansion of its mission. Continuing this line of argument, we argue in this section that South Korean liberals, as a line of policies and political stances, has been presented as a threat to the military. More specifically, there have been contextual factors relating communism and the liberals, thus provoking the military's attention, which we verify with empirical examples of the military's actions in politics.

#### *Communism and the South Korean left*

So far, we have verified that the military has a politically anticommunist stance, and has expanded into the domestic realm. The remaining question is then how the military has come to be biased against liberal politicians, if their mission, even political, is against communism. We make the argument that the military's mission has come to flag these politicians as threats to national security, based on a variety of connections between South Korean liberal politicians and communism. As such, this section examines

a number of political developments that have instilled this sense of connection. A reason is that the liberals has been borne into a polity dominated by the conservatives, and thus had to adopt a dialectical platform that was critical of rightist policies including those towards North Korea. Furthermore, a segment of the left, named the ultra-liberals, have been ostensibly supportive of North Korea, which has led the entire leftist section of South Korea's political spectrum, from the center-left onwards, as a whole to take on some of the blame.

#### Birthright of the left and its survival

A continuous theme throughout South Korean politics is the dialectic between the conservative and liberal parties. The congruent development of South Korea's nascent government and its anticommunist, Cold War attitude, which we review at length in this section, inevitably planted a more conciliatory attitude in the rising political opposition. As a result, some of the most central security debates with regards to North Korea have been fought between political lines. For example, liberal politicians have repeatedly proposed repeal, or at least an extensive reform of the NSA, which is one of the most central debates to South Korean security. The NSA has been controversial due to its role in outlawing communism by defining it as an enemy of the state and providing the basis for legal punishment for alleged supporters of the communist ideology and the North Korean regime. In particular, the NSA bans public support of communism, communication with communists, and other forms of assistance to North Korean agents, authorizing even death or lifelong sentences for serious violations.<sup>77</sup> As the liberal parties

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<sup>77</sup> For a full text of the laws, refer to <http://www.law.go.kr/법령/국가보안법>. Please note that it is in Korean.

gained power in the aftermath of politically conservative military dictatorships, these national security policies naturally became a subject of protest.

In the early stages of political development in South Korea, Korea was ruled by an illiberal democracy at best, and often by dictators like Lee, Park, and Chun. In its nascence, the South Korean government was an regional foothold of the Western capitalist camp, led by the United States. Following the conclusion of WWII and the surrender of the Japanese Empire, capitalist and communist camps simultaneously established themselves on the Korean peninsula, effectively splitting the nation in half. When the Korean War began with the North Korean invasion in June 25th, 1950, the South Korean government took on the challenge of not only maintaining its sovereign integrity against the attacks, but also defending its citizens against communist ideology. In all, the South Korean government was a war-ridden regime from the very beginning, steeped historically and emotionally in the “Red Scare.” This formed the roots of the particularly belligerent and heavy-handed policy lines against North Koreans shared by subsequent conservative parties.

As one can suspect, the liberal party had no room to push for a Sunshine policy in the few decades following the Korean War. In fact, opposition parties were often players controlled by the conservative party regime during the dictatorships. Even when a liberal election was held after the overthrow of Chun’s rule in the 1980’s, the leftist opposition side lacked the organization and political infrastructure to compete against Noh Tae-Woo, a former general and companion of former-President Chun, who the Korean public had overthrown mere months before the elections. However, what became apparent

through the first round of elections, and the many that would follow, was that the liberal politicians would gain popularity through a platform that criticizes and addresses the shortcomings of the conservatives. Not only was this rooted in the liberal parties' historical resistance against dictatorial rule, but it was their survival strategy, as it sought to establish a political presence in an arena that was already dominated by strong conservatism fueled by anti-communist sentiments.

In this respect, policies towards North Korea were no exception. The liberal parties consequently assumed a more pacifistic stance. Of course, as we will see soon, factionalism within the liberal/left would result in a wide range of stances from a passive, trade-oriented line of policies to strong pro-North Korean stances where member politicians would express respect and proximity to the North Korean regime. However, in the meantime, the left was characterized as pursuing a liberal line of policy of international relations theory, in pursuing coexistence and trade. Such efforts were recognized on a global scale, as Kim Dae-Joong, the first liberal president of South Korea, received the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to seek coexistence with North Korea.

Hence, the liberal opposition parties to South Korean conservatism were by birth bound to be more moderate and liberal towards North Korean matters, especially in the process of establishing their own presence in the polity.

#### The ultra-liberal politicians

In particular, the recent liberalization of political discourse in South Korea has given rise to a previously impossible political stance - the ultra-liberals. Ultra-liberal

politicians have been a recent trend that has been politically weak in its own right, but one that has been highly publicized. The United Progressive Party (UPP, Tonghap-jinbodang), an unprecedented conglomeration of radicalized leftist interests, was formed in December 2011 as a merger between a number of marginalized far-left parties. Since then, the UPP has run on a platform that was overtly hypercritical of the conservatives, especially pushing for peaceful negotiations and respect for the North Korean regime. Policy-wise, the UPP has shown a particularly strong support for the deletion of the NSA. Furthermore, it has been voicing arguments against U.S.-Korea alliance, namely for initiating a pullout of all U.S. military personnel from South Korea.<sup>78</sup>

Particularly through the election of 2012, where the UPP made their first showcase in a major election, the ultra-liberals have exacerbated society-wide concern through their lack of respect to the solidarity of the Republic of Korea. In particular, the UPP has issued a large number of high profile statements that have been broadcast on national media, resulting in further generation of political rumors and society-wide backlashes. For example, Lee Jung-Hee, one of the leaders of the UPP, has referred to the South Korean government the “southern government,” which goes against the spirit of the South Korean constitution that does not recognize any other government on the Korean peninsula than itself. Lee Suk-Gee, another leader of the UPP, has not only declared U.S. influences to be a greater threat than North Korea to South Korea, but also refused to sing the national anthem as a member of the National Parliament.<sup>79</sup> In fact, Lee

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<sup>78</sup> “The UPP’s constitution, a controversy within the government.” *Hangyoreh*, November 6, 2013. <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/assembly/609906.html/>.

<sup>79</sup> Min Chan Kim. “Pro-North Korea controversy over Lee Suk-Gee on refusing the national anthem.” *News A*, August 29, 2013. <http://news.ichannela.com/3/00/20130829/57289966/1/>.

was tried under allegations of treason, propagandizing treason, and violation of national security laws. Specifically, Lee was accused of creating a “Revolutionary Organization” to subvert the South Korean government following the 2012 presidential elections. While a judgment on the issue is yet to be made, as the case was appealed up to the Supreme Court, it is undoubtedly true that the UPP has received a large amount of national attention as a threatening arm of North Korea inside the South Korean government itself.

In terms of political strategy, the extremely unpopular policy line of the UPP was a liability for the Democratic Party, the representative party of the South Korean mainstream left. However, the reason the ultra-liberals, despite being a marginalized portion of politics in South Korea, were able to make a lasting influence on the Korean public’s perception of the left in general is their lineage from prominent liberal politicians and center-left parties. The genesis of the ultra-liberals was actually an effort to consolidate the entire progressive front of South Korean politics that collapsed under factionalism and political competition among different parties internally.<sup>80</sup> The end result was a broad inclusion of different parties, like the Democratic Labor Party,<sup>81</sup> the Citizen Participation Party, and the Union for New Progressive Unity. While the specific dynamics are riddled with power plays based on schools, place of birth, and so forth, such complex origins resulted in a political ambiguity between the moderate and the ultra-liberal politicians. For example, key figures of the UPP, like Yoo Si-Min, were old guards of the mainstream left; Yoo had been a close political ally with liberal President

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<sup>80</sup> Yong-Uk Kim. “Consolidation and Despair of the Left ... An Embarrassing Year and a Half.” *Cham-Sesang*, July 27, 2012. <http://www.newscham.net/news/view.php?board=news&nid=67065>.

<sup>81</sup> The Democratic Labor Party would separate out of the United Progressive Party later and form their own party, the Justice Party.



Noh Moo-Hyun, and served as both a member of the National Parliament and the Minister of Health under Noh. Thus, the center-left politicians failed to completely disassociate themselves from public negativity against the ultra-liberals.

In turn, the moderates also made a series of political blunders that polarized the public's view of politics. We examine how the Democrat Party failed to disassociate itself from the UPP in the eyes of the public. Indeed, it actually supported UPP statements, or declined to make a statement on UPP issues in some cases. The connection between the Democrat Party and the UPP was so obvious and vulnerable that to-be-President Park Geun-Hye publicly accused the Democrat Party of having a hand in the rise of the UPP.<sup>82</sup> A key event where this became a national issue was the controversy over the Cheonan crisis, where a South Korean patrol ship was sunk by an apparent attack from North Korea. As a result, regardless of the factuality of those statements, the center-left section of South Korean politics was tied to the far left, which was in turn tied to North Koreans.

An incident that embodies such blunders was the sinking of the Cheonan. In March 2010, a torpedo near the NLL hit a 1220-ton South Korean patrol ship, sinking the ship. However, the lack of any immediate and critical evidence, as well as strong denials from North Korea, threw the entire case into a heated political debate in South Korea, and even the international community. Internationally, China and Russia stood on the side of North Korea, who denied any responsibility in the attack. In fact, Russian investigators were known to have concluded in an independent investigation that the Cheonan might

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<sup>82</sup> Ji-Sung Kim. "Park Geun-Hye: Democrat Party Also Holds Responsibility for UPP Crisis ... Outrage from the Opposition." *SBS*, June 2012. [http://news.sbs.co.kr/news/endPage.do?news\\_id=N1001212251/](http://news.sbs.co.kr/news/endPage.do?news_id=N1001212251/).

have sunk for maintenance problems.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, the UN-organized investigation and the Korean Ministry of Defense have concluded that North Korea was responsible for the attack. More importantly, during the brief period of uncertainty, political parties in South Korea also clashed on the issue. The conservative party, the Saenuri Party, has openly declared North Korea the culprit before either the government investigations or UN investigations had concluded.<sup>84</sup>

In a nutshell, the radicalized stance of the UPP not only alerted the military and the public with regards to the danger of communist infiltration in South Korean politics, but also dragged the center-left parties into the quagmire as well. Despite its status as a minority, its historical common grounds with the major center-left parties like the Democrat Party and the failure of the center-left parties in distancing themselves from the UPP has led the center-left to share a significant portion of the blame. Based on these connections, the military has also perceived a number of these figures and policies as potential security threats.

#### *The political intervention of the military*

Based on the above review of South Korea's political context, as well as the theoretical analysis in Part I regarding politicized anti-communist hatred, we now come to the most contentious hypothesis that the military is politically biased even in the domestic realm of governance. Indeed, while numerous militaries in the world have been

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<sup>83</sup> Yong-In Lee and Seung-Jun Lee. "Russia rules out torpedo 1 from the Cheonan sinking." *Hankyoreh*, July 2010. <http://media.daum.net/politics/view.html?cateid=1002&newsid=20100708234008289&p=hani/>.

<sup>84</sup> Hak-Jae Kim. "Chung Mong Jun Says North Korea is Clearly the Cause of the Cheonan Incident." *Financial News*, May 2010. [http://www.fnnews.com/view?ra=Sent0801m\\_View&corp=fnnews&arcid=00000921989652&cDateYear=2010&cDateMonth=05&cDateDay=19/](http://www.fnnews.com/view?ra=Sent0801m_View&corp=fnnews&arcid=00000921989652&cDateYear=2010&cDateMonth=05&cDateDay=19/).

diagnosed with a conservative tinge, the political bias in the South Korean military is especially dangerous because of the ideological conflict with North Korea that readily converts the nation's leftist parties and policies as a threat. While this is still a matter of degree, not a dichotomy, in that the South Korean military is not actively and openly putting down leftist politicians, our findings show that the South Korean military does view the liberal side and its line of security policies with a sense of threat from its institutional standpoint.

*Jung-hoon*, the previously mentioned term for psychological training in the military, also has been used more often for political purposes. The root of the term itself, which is *jung-chi-hoon-ryeon*, means “politics training.” In the years around the Korean War, *jung-hoon* has thus been used explicitly as a method of instilling anticommunist sentiments among the recruits. During the military dictatorships, “politics education” also took on the role of justifying the dictators’ right to rule – the specific names of rulers, like Park Jung-Hee and Chun Doo-Hwan were mentioned in the official training manuals and lauded heavily.<sup>85</sup> While the role of the military in politics is nowhere as pronounced or visible nowadays, some practices have persisted throughout the ages. Through an analysis of the military’s past interventions in elections and the political nuance of its training regime, we seek to illuminate both the military’s stance on politics as an institution and the exposure of this bias to new recruits.

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<sup>85</sup> Dong-Hwan Ahn. “The Idolization of Park Jung-Hee During *Jung-Hoon*.” *Seoul Shinmun*, March 5, 2009. <http://www.seoul.co.kr/news/newsView.php?id=20090305009012/>.

### Intervention in elections

To be sure, South Korea currently enjoys the most peaceful and stable period of civil-military relations in decades. At the same time, however, it has experienced a significant number of military interventions in politics, particularly in elections. To illustrate this point, we first review military intervention in elections during the heyday of South Korean military dictatorships, and then lead on to the more subtle forms of election intervention in current times.

While just the fact that coups have happened do not attest to any political bias in favor of a particular side in politics per say in the military, the fact that every military coup has overthrown a liberal president in favor of a conservative president is telling. For example, Lee Seung-Man, the first president of South Korea, imposed autocratic rule and actively employed check and balance tactics against the military following the Korean War.<sup>86</sup> While this inevitably resulted in a series of limits on military prerogatives that were granted during the Korean War, the military did not attempt an institution-level resistance, an astounding feat given the fact that Lee's regime was still in its infancy. However, when Yoon Bo-Sun succeeded Lee as president, the military responded with a coup barely one year after Yoon's inauguration. Led by Park Jung-Hee, South Korea would maintain not only an extremely strict stance of no negotiation and military responsiveness towards North Korea, but also pursued right-wing policies like the creation of the famous *chaebol* system and aggressive expansion of infrastructure. In turn, Choi Gyu-Ha, yet another liberal president to succeed a conservative president -

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<sup>86</sup> Young-Ik Yoo. *Reevaluating President Lee Seung-Man*. (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2006). /271-273.

President Park - was also ousted from office from a military coup by Chun Doo-Hwan December 1979.

Afterwards, while the military has kept well to the institutional boundaries of its role in state governance, subtle peeks into the political discourse within the military itself suggest a strong preference for the conservative party. In fact, in the months leading up to the 2012 National Parliament elections, the military was accused of discouraging recruits against voting for liberal, leftist parties.<sup>87</sup> Later the same year, a similar controversy flared up due to allegations that the military played a hand in supporting the to-be-President Park Geun-Hye.<sup>88</sup> While the investigations have limited the allegations to a select group of individuals, the incident is telling because President Park is a member of South Korea's major conservative party, the Saenuri Party and the daughter of the country's first military dictator, Park Jung-Hee. While most interviewees did not recall widespread or forceful intervention on their own political choices, they agreed on the existence of general political atmosphere against liberals:

### Interview 5

*Do you talk politics in the barracks?*

The leadership at our base didn't openly speak on for a particular party. However, you can still feel that they are conservatives.

*Really? In what way?*

The staff sergeants tend to be a bit more light-lipped about these things. The presidential election happened during my service. After we voted, some staff sergeants came down on this guy from Jeolla-Do, who was a leftist, and

<sup>87</sup> Jong-Dae Kim. "The Military Demands Soldiers to Not Vote for North-friendly Liberals." *Hankyoreh*, April 10, 2012. [http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/politics\\_general/527570.html/](http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/politics_general/527570.html/).

<sup>88</sup> Kyung-Sang Hwang. "The Military Concludes that Cyber-Command Intervened in Politics in an Organized Fashion." *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, July 21, 2014. [http://news.khan.co.kr/kh\\_news/khan\\_art\\_view.html?artid=201407212241545/](http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=201407212241545/).

poked fun at him asking “You didn’t vote for Park Geun Hye, did you, you son of a bitch.” (Laughs)

*And it wouldn’t be okay for a leftist staff sergeant to do the same thing to a rightist soldier?*

That’s right.

This interview captures the subtlety of the military’s public bias in terms of elections. At the same time, it also raises the point that the institutional stance of the military does not manifest fully among the soldiers, since the atmosphere described in the interview is still considerably light, where individuals are circumspect and joking in their manner of speech. Nevertheless, that is a point more fully examined in the next section; what is made sure in this section, however, is that the South Korean military has institutionally involved itself politically in elections. Indeed, there also have been additional allegations that the military specifically favored the conservative party during the 1992 presidential elections and the 2010 regional elections.<sup>89</sup> From these examples, it is noticeable that military involvement in favor of conservative parties is echoed from the 1970’s.

### Training

Another viewpoint for political bias in the military, one that is closer to the main theme of this thesis, is the military’s training regime. As mentioned before, the military’s psychological aspect of military training is based on the concept of “mental force,” which puts emphasis on altering recruits’ mentalities and value systems. However, it should be

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<sup>89</sup> Il-Sung Min. “Allegations of Cybercommand Involvement in the 2010 Regional Elections.” *Kukmin*, November 1, 2013. <http://news.kukmin.tv/news/articleView.html?idxno=2004>; “Documents Certification of Military Intervention in Elections Made Public.” *Hankeoryeh*, April 24, 1992. <http://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.nhn?articleId=1992042400289101001&edtNo=4&printCount=1&publishDate=1992-04-24&officeId=00028&pageNo=1&printNo=1218&publishType=00010/>.

noted that evidence of political bias is impossible to find on official documents for obvious reasons. Thus, we resort to garnering examples that have been picked up by the media and liberal politicians.

As Cho Gap-Je, an established rightist news media personality in South Korea, states,

Minister of National Defense Kim Kwan-Jin has strengthened *jung-hoon* programs during the Lee Myung-Bak administration to teach recruits that ‘leftist followers of North Korea are enemies of the military forces’ ... this type of *jung-hoon* has greatly altered the thoughts of soldiers and men who have gone through military service.<sup>90</sup>

Verification of this claim first came from reserve forces, where members had more freedom to share information with the outside world. The reserve forces are comprised of retired service members and are mustered once every year for training, then released from service after their sixth year. Reserve training is only held once a year for three days, which lends itself to the relative ease through which information about training content is dispersed; it is thus a valuable channel through which we can discern the political stance of the military.

Set off by a series of Twitter posts from reserve force members, parliament members and the media have publicized a collection of DVDs created by the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans’ Affairs (MPVA)<sup>91</sup> that were played at various reserve training

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<sup>90</sup> Chun-Dong Lee. “The Disappearance of Supporters of the North from the Military, and the Rise of Even More Surprising Events.” *Ohmynews*, October 29, 2014.  
[http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS\\_Web/View/at\\_pg.aspx?CNTN\\_CD=A0002048077](http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/View/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0002048077).

<sup>91</sup> The “Ministry” of Patriots and Veterans Affairs is a mistranslation that is nevertheless employed by the agency, as the term “ministry” is usually delegated to branches of the executive branch, like the Ministry of National Defense, on par with U.S. Departments.

sessions across the country. The DVDs contained material praising the political and business acumen of President Park Jung-Hee as a “legend,” and discrediting the Sunshine policy,<sup>92</sup> and denouncing popular protests as “a threat to rule of law,” all highly sensitive matters of debate in Korean society. In particular, a list of recent major popular protests in South Korea include anti-FTA protests against the U.S., protests against the National Security Act, protests in Seoul against the impeachment of President Noh Moo-Hyun, and the nationwide protests against the involvement of government agencies – including the military cyber-command – in the presidential elections of 2012. In short, most of these protests have been imbued with a predominantly leftist tinge, which is a reason why liberal politicians were so incensed at the DVDs.

When the incident caused public outcry and resulted in a government investigation, the MPVA refused to hand over the DVDs, causing further protest in the government.<sup>93</sup> Despite the self-censorship, however, there are select clips of the DVDs online that support the claims made by the liberal politicians.<sup>94</sup> In fact, Ji-Won Park, a member of the Korean National Assembly, has even protested to the Minister of National

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<sup>92</sup> Myung-Sun Jin. “The Ministry of Patriots and Veteran Affairs Release DVD Calling Anti-Government Forces are Supporters of North Korea.” *Hankyoreh*, December 23, 2012. [http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society\\_general/557211.html/](http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/557211.html/).

<sup>93</sup> Chang-Won Yoon. “The Democratic Party, Materials Denied Access by the MPVA.” *Chung-Ang Ilbo*, October 28, 2013. [http://article.joins.com/news/article/article.asp?total\\_id=12981707&ctg=10/](http://article.joins.com/news/article/article.asp?total_id=12981707&ctg=10/).

<sup>94</sup> For such clips, many of them acquired exclusively by major news agencies and therefore shown as a brief part of news reports, can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcAp03Yiv8c> (MBC), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxKYKZSH73Y> (JTBC), and <http://tvpot.daum.net/v/vff7afLT4xsC155iTC5LZzz> (actual clip from video).



Defense at Legislation and Judiciary Committee hearing that training instructors are calling the Democratic Party – a major center-left party – followers of North Korea.<sup>95</sup>

Indeed, just by the fact that the reserves were exposed to these biased material makes it a serious matter, since the reserve forces number up to 200 million men. However, it was naturally assumed that the DVDs were exposed in a more widespread manner to current soldiers. News media have subsequently confirmed that not only were the controversial DVDs circulated within the military by the Ministry of National Defense, but also that the DVDs have been played to the soldiers “some thousands of times.”<sup>96</sup> Firsthand accounts have confirmed both the existence of such DVDs, which the MPVA actually tried to deny, and regular watching sessions.<sup>97</sup>

Furthermore, an interviewee elaborates on how the political bias behind the DVD incident is not limited to this particular incident through an account of his experiences after boot camp:

### Interview 6

... I served in the Defense Security Command.<sup>98</sup> We had to attend this additional training after boot camp.

<sup>95</sup> Office of Ji-Won Park. “Park: “Democratic Party Attacked as North Korea Supporters at Reserve Training.” *Park Ji-Won Stories*, April 15, 2013.

[http://www.jwp615.com/m/m.html?mode=view&uid=59134&start=0&mp=5&where=&key\\_word=/](http://www.jwp615.com/m/m.html?mode=view&uid=59134&start=0&mp=5&where=&key_word=/).

<sup>96</sup> “DVDs Critical of ‘North Korean Supporters’ Played in Military Bases.” *Channel A*, November 4, 2013. <http://news.ichannela.com/politics/3/00/20131104/58675505/1/>.

<sup>97</sup> Ho-Jin Song. “Korean Central Intelligence Agency, Ministry of National Defense, and Ministry of Patriots and Veterans’ Affairs Deny Creation of ‘National Security DVDs.’” *Hankyoreh*, October 29, 2013. [http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/politics\\_general/609005.html](http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/politics_general/609005.html).

<sup>98</sup> The Defense Security Command (국군기무사령부) is a branch of the South Korean military that undertakes information-gathering and investigative tasks. In particular, it holds jurisdiction over domestic crimes against national security. Its mission statement says, “The Defense Security Command is in charge of investigating servicemen and military civilians for insurrection under the Criminal Code; rebellion, benefiting the enemy, leaking military secrets, and misuse of encryption under the Military Criminal Code; violations of the National Security Law, Classified Military Information Protection Act, South-North

*Where exactly did you go?*

They send us to this school after boot camp, and they do these education sessions particularly on politics. They were very critical of the past administration.

*Past administration as in...?*

They were critical of the Noh and Kim (Dae-Joong) administrations. What it feels like when you're there is that you become curious on what they would've taught when Noh or Kim was in power. They keep lecturing us that a regime shift is no good, that it will be a large threat to our security.

*Do you talk about that with fellow soldiers afterwards?*

We actually don't talk about it often. If it's a constructive and substantiated lecture, you can refute it, but it's more of just a unilateral claim. It's to the extent that ... you know, there are some things that even I don't understand about the Unified Progressives Party, but there [in training] they tell us that the Unified Progressives are communists, that people who've picked them are dogs. They really say that.

*Were there people that were actually bought over by that?*

People start to make jokes that something or someone is communist. Everyone does it in a joking way so you'd not know who's serious. But the point is that they make it a subconscious thing, that it's okay to jokingly accuse people of communism. That was really serious in the school. And when you get to your assigned base, I'm not sure about the others but the Defense Security Command is an intelligence agency, and so it has a lot to do with politics.

*Do you think the people who were lecturing actually believed all those things that they've said?*

I don't know what they think originally, but I think they come to buy into it as they preach it to others. Also, they make you clap at certain points, artificially using emotion to brainwash people.

While certainly shocking and informative, it is not possible to make normative or generalizable conclusions from this account. However, some things can be nevertheless

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Cooperation and Exchange Act, and statutes related to assembly and demonstration. With regard to private citizens, the DSC undertakes investigations involving violations of the Classified Military Information Protection Act, leakage of military secrets, and espionage charges within military premises.”

verified. For example, as we have hypothesized previously, the political bias embodied by the DVDs is not limited to that particular case. Rather, the military has a definite, institutional stance on politics that utilizes the rhetoric of national security, in that the military is biased against parties that pose a threat to national security. However, while that seems quite natural a response from a military, the fact that the threats are labeled “communist” is telling of the political nature of the military’s bias. Lastly, the interviewee’s account brings up specific mentions of names, including the nation’s two liberal presidents and the far-left United Progressives Party. This demonstrates the specificity of the military’s bias, and thus is interconnected with its specific policy stances shown by the content of the controversial DVDs.

Another example that suggests bias in the military training is the Military Mental Force Institute (MMFI /국방정신전력원). In 2012, President Park Geun-Hye reinstated the MMFI, an institution of the military that was infamous for political indoctrination during President Park Jung-Hee’s rule and had been closed by President Kim Dae-Jung, the country’s first liberal president. The fact that President Park – the daughter – had chosen to reinstate the same institution, with the same name, has created a partisan controversy on the issue. The Democrat Party announced their opposition to the MMFI in a public statement in August 2013, criticizing the history of the institution.<sup>99</sup> Given the controversy, the Institute has been particularly secretive, with none of its material available online for reference.

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<sup>99</sup> Bo-Ram Ryu. “Democrats Opposed to the Creation of MMFI.” *News1*, August 12, 2013. <http://news1.kr/articles/?1276928/>.

Given the evidence shown by a number of recent controversies regarding the military, it seems true that the military's political bias, in which it is biased against the liberal politicians on grounds of its perception of security-threatening policies, has also been exposed on a wide scale to the recruits. While it is impossible to gain a holistic knowledge of all accounts of political bias in the military, it is still concerning enough considering the strongly manipulative military training system. Indeed, despite the immediate worries regarding the military's biased relationship with domestic politics, what is more important, and is thus the ultimate goal of this paper, is how much of this political bias carries over to both current conscripts and those who have completed service.

### Chapter III: The Effects of Military Service: An Empirical Evaluation

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The previous examinations of the policy of military conscription and political bias in the military have been focused mainly on the institutional aspects. More specifically, we have examined how the military as an institution has been forced to draw more indoctrinative training methods in response to conscription, and how it has developed a political bias with regards to the domestic political arena. This chapter turns the table around to look at the issue from the public's point of view. Based on the analyses presented by the first two chapters, we propose three hypotheses regarding how the male side of the public has been affected by military service, that military service:

1. exerts generalizable effects on the value systems of South Korean males.
2. influences group opinions on national security issues.
3. influences group opinions on non-military partisan issues.

#### Methodology

Due to legality and security issues, there are no publicly available surveys done of any current military populations. Hand in hand with this difficulty, Young-Joo Chang, a scholar of *jung-hoon*, notes that academic literature on the lack of quantitative studies on troop education, with less than thirty academic articles published on the subject by 2008, despite widespread usage within the army itself.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, there are a number of valuable public opinion studies done of South Korea; in this study, we draw data from the Korean General Social Survey (KGSS) from 2003 to 2012 and the South Korean

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<sup>100</sup> Chang, Young-Joo. *A Study on Changes in the Troop Information and Education of the Republic of Korea Army*. Diss. Kyungnam University, 2008. 1-2.

survey results for “Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in the United States, China, India, Australia, and South Korea (POFP).”

Of course, the main difficulty of just using public surveys is attributing a particular trend to military service. However, there are a number of identifying details that one can use to proxy-evaluate military service. An obvious variable is gender, since all conscripted personnel are men. Any hypothesized effects of conscription thus must affect men more strongly, since men are directly exposed to the military via service while women are indirectly exposed through interaction with other men. If an observed trend and its intensity are replicated among women, then the effect is attributable to other factors that impact both genders. Gender as a variable was also highly useful in comparing results across different surveys since most surveys included gender as a variable in their survey rounds.

Another useful variable is age. The formal age window for conscription is between 19 and 24, while those with special permits – education, foreign residence, and such – are allowed to have extensions. The hard deadline for military service is 29 years of age, beyond which no permits can postpone conscription.<sup>101</sup> However, despite these allowances, survey data shows that 81.4 percent of South Korean males complete their military service during their twenties, while about an additional 9.3 percent complete it during their thirties – the rest being exempt.<sup>102</sup> Thus, it is safe to assume that age groups

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<sup>101</sup> “Military Manpower Administration Information,” *Military Manpower Administration*, accessed October 12, 2014. [http://www.mma.go.kr/kor/s\\_navigation/profile/index.html/](http://www.mma.go.kr/kor/s_navigation/profile/index.html/).

<sup>102</sup> “Barrack Life Experience,” *Gallup Korea* (August 2003), accessed October 12, 2014. <https://panel.gallup.co.kr/Gate/Panel/F025.aspx?seq=13769&DaeBu...PGNO=2&date=Sun%20Oct%2012%202014%2017:18:41%20GMT-0700%20/>.

whose range starts beyond 26 to 30 – the military service typically lasts around two years – contain males that predominantly have experienced the military.

In sum, our hypothesis is that any effect that can be attributed to conscription must first have an exclusive effect on males. Furthermore, the effect should be distinguished most between age groups before and after military service, to avoid mistaking a general trend for the effects of conscription. In reference to survey results that satisfy this distinguishing set of characteristics, we henceforth use the word “jump.”

### **Hypothesis I: The jump in military values**

The null hypothesis of our study would obviously be that there is no coherent large-scale effect of military service on men’s value systems. The difficulty of evaluating this hypothesis was finding the appropriate study, since most public surveys would contain questions, those that only proxy military values. However, the South Korean National Central Library provided a work called *A Comparative Analysis on the Psychological Traits and Spiritual Battle Strength in Military Members*, where the investigator, Hyun-Dong Choi, generated an independent survey specifically surveying values featured in the mental force and *jung-hoon* literature. From Choi’s data, we were able to affirm that there was a significant difference between the ‘army-going’ age group and the next group, which was larger than any differences between other age groups.

In his research, Choi examined men’s “view on national security,” (국가안보관) a central aspect of “mental force” (정신전력) as defined by the Ministry of National

Defense.<sup>103</sup> To evaluate the trend of “view on national security,” Choi surveyed three specific aspects of national security: view of the nation (국가관), view of the enemy (대적관), and military mentality (군인정신). He posed six questions for each aspect that ask participants to rank the strength of their faith on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 representing strongest faith or agreement, averaging the total scores to generate the data below.<sup>104</sup>

**Table 1 Male survey of mental force**

Subject	Age group	Average	Standard deviation	F(3,245)	P-value
Nation	23 and under	3.09	0.61	8.339	0.000
	24 ~ 33	3.54	0.67		
	34 ~ 43	3.61	0.73		
Enemy	23 and under	3.18	0.58	8.175	0.000
	24 ~ 33	3.49	0.51		
	34 ~ 43	3.67	0.75		
Military mentality	23 and under	3.28	0.65	16.897	0.000
	24 ~ 33	3.82	0.56		
	34 ~ 43	3.84	0.62		

Source: Hyun-Dong Choi. *A Comparative Analysis on the Psychological Traits and Spiritual Battle Strength in Military Members*. 2005.

As it can be seen from the data, all three aspects of national security beliefs make a significant jump between the age groups of 24~33 and 34~43 – responses from participants below 33 are all below the average, while those from participants 34 and

<sup>103</sup> Defense White Papers. *Ministry of National Defense* (2012).

[http://www.mnd.go.kr/user/mnd/upload/pblictN/PBLICTNEBOOK\\_201308060946041630.pdf/](http://www.mnd.go.kr/user/mnd/upload/pblictN/PBLICTNEBOOK_201308060946041630.pdf/).

<sup>104</sup> For a more detailed explanation of Choi’s methodology, refer to Section III of *A Comparative Analysis on the Psychological Traits and Spiritual Battle Strength in Military Members*.



older are always above the average. To examine differences across age groups in more detail:

**Table 2 Comparison of differences between age groups**

Subject	23 and under	Increase/ Decrease	24~33	Increase/ Decrease	34~43
Nation	3.09	+0.45	3.54	+0.07	3.61
Enemy	3.18	+0.31	3.49	+0.18	3.67
Military mentality	3.28	+0.54	3.82	+0.02	3.84

Clearly, the difference between the men below 23 and those between 23 and 33 is notably larger. And indeed, the key difference in these groups is also the percentage of people who have completed military service.

In an answer to potentially confounding variables, Choi provides an analysis of education and place of residence, where he finds that the data stays constant.<sup>105</sup> Interestingly, Choi sets out to argue that psychological well-being, correlated with stability and age, is the causal factor behind increasing faith in national security. While that would imply a reasonably gradual increase in the data, however, the data shows otherwise. Indeed, no additional analysis from Choi's work presents an alternative understanding of the sudden jump of faith in national security, which we would attribute to military service that takes place exactly during the jump.

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<sup>105</sup> Choi, Hyun-Dong. *A Comparative Analysis on the Psychological Traits and Spiritual Battle Strength in Military Members*. MS Thesis. Kyungnam University, 2005. 40-44.

Furthermore, a survey from Gallup polls shows a similar jump. The fact that Choi's findings were echoed by those of Gallup was particularly significant, as Gallup's results also show that such a trend did not exist among women.

**Table 3 Decision to return given warfare - Males**

Question	Answer choices	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 and older
Assuming that you are abroad, would you return to Korea if there is a war on the Korean peninsula?	I will return	59.7%	71.9%	76.4%	74.2%
	I will not return	31.5%	17.1%	7.2%	16.3%
	I do not know / no response	8.7%	11.0%	16.4%	9.5%

Source: "Willingness to return in event of warfare." *Gallup Korea* (December 2002)

This query from Gallup is essentially asking for a willingness to sacrifice safety to return to the war in South Korea. As one can see, there is a similar jump between the army going ages of the 20s and the 30s, after which the differences are not as significant. Furthermore, the results agree with Choi's data because willingness to sacrifice is a factor in both studies. Lastly, this statistic satisfies our second test of gender, as the results for females do not replicate this trend. Given these data, we conclude that military service, as strongly suggested by its training program, influences individuals' values. While subsequent references to other survey data will clarify further the extent of the influence, the aforementioned data independently agree with each other on the specific values-oriented nature of the influence.

## **Hypothesis II: Group opinions on national security issues**

Based on the first hypothesis, we now turn to the effects of conscription on perception of national security issues. The second hypothesis, that military service alters group opinions on national security issues, is particularly important due to its immediate policy implications. On the surface level, it involves public support for particular security policies in South Korea; however, going deeper, our previous analysis of the military's mission expansion in South Korea shows that a preference for a particular line of national security policies, especially with regards to North Korea, is ideologically aligned with political parties as well. Since hypothesis II and III involve participant responses to public issues rather than a specific evaluation of military values, we will first start with the less challenging hurdle of evaluating specific issues, namely that of accepting North Korean refugees and U.S. unilateralism in South Korea, after which we move on to the broader, and thus more challenging, questions involving lines of policy and perceptions of North Korea.

### *Acceptance of North Korean refugees*

North Korean refugees have recently become a major contention for the South Korean public. Starting in the 2000's, the number of refugees successfully reaching South Korea rose sharply to nearly a thousand per annum.<sup>106</sup> As a result, the North Korean government started abusing these channels of escape to send in spies. In fact, the method was so popular that most spies caught recently had passed into South Korea as North

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<sup>106</sup> Jung Young. "Won Jung Hwa Does Not Seem a Seasoned Spy." *Radio Free Asia*, August 27, 2008. [http://www.rfa.org/korean/in\\_focus/defector\\_spy\\_QandA-08272008143252.html/](http://www.rfa.org/korean/in_focus/defector_spy_QandA-08272008143252.html/).

Korean escapees.<sup>107</sup> Being a North Korean escapee also made it easier for spies to be accepted in South Korean society since they no longer had to guard against speaking in northern dialects or being unaware of popular culture. The mission of these spies were mainly to gather information about other genuine escapees and military facilities in South Korea, while some were even known to be charged with assassinating escaped members of the North Korean government.<sup>108</sup>

As a result, an item on the Public Opinion and Foreign Policy survey in 2006 was dedicated to asking South Koreans to rate North Korean refugees as “a possible threat to the vital interest of South Korea.”<sup>109</sup> The results were as follows:

**Table 4 Possible threat of North Korean refugees - Males**

	(Age) 20 or younger	21-24	25-28	29-32	33-36
Critical threat	17.86%	36.11%	39.02%	18.18%	26.09%
Important but not critical	50.00%	47.22%	46.34%	45.45%	43.48%
Not important	25.00%	16.67%	12.20%	36.36%	28.26%
Not available	7.14%	0%	2.44%	0%	2.17%

Source: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in the United States, China, India, Australia, and South Korea, 2006.

<sup>107</sup>Dong-Ryeol Yoo. "The Need for a Policy Response to Disguised Spies and Information Gathering Capacity." *North Korea* 466, no. 466 (2010): 41.

<sup>108</sup>Yong-Soo Jung. "Disguised Escapees, The New Typology of North Korean Spies." *Chung-Ang Ilbo*, April 21, 2010. [http://article.joins.com/news/article/article.asp?Total\\_ID=4121511/](http://article.joins.com/news/article/article.asp?Total_ID=4121511/).

<sup>109</sup>Questionnaire. *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in the United States, China, India, Australia, and South Korea*. 2006.

As it is clear in the data, there is a jump right during the ages of conscription, which is highlighted by the fact that the same grid of statistics for women shows no such trend. Evidently, the perception of North Korean refugees as a critical threat as a percentage in the age groups rises by nearly twofold. On the other hand, the percentage of people who see the refugees as a trivial issue is halved to only 12.2% between the youngest Korean males and those between 25 and 28, demonstrating a rise of concerns on the issue, as well as an increase of those that think the issue was critical, while the perception that they are not important falls. Thus, we can conclude that military service plays a role in raising the perception of threat for an issue as specific as accepting North Korean refugees.

#### *U.S. military activities in South Korea*

The U.S. has had a longstanding relationship with South Korea that spans military, economic, and political dimensions. However, there has been a rise in anti-American views in South Korea recently due to the perception that the U.S. is unilaterally imposing policies on South Korea. Militarily, a leading cause of concern has been the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which has made it more difficult for Korean courts to try U.S. soldiers for crimes done in South Korea among many other things. Another source of controversy was wartime operational control, which was essentially a right to authority during war. Currently, the U.S. holds a significant say in how even the South Korean military would operate during a war on the Korean peninsula. As a result of the resulting series of controversies, the KGSS has asked South Koreans to rate “U.S. unilateralism” as a threat to South Korea’s interests.

**Table 5 Possible threat of U.S. unilateralism - Male**

	(Age) 20 or younger	21-24	25-28	29-32	33-36
Critical threat	25%	8.33%	7.32%	11.36%	8.7%
Important but not critical	64.29%	50.00%	39.02%	47.73%	56.52%
Not important	7.14%	41.67%	51.22%	38.64%	28.26%
Not available	3.57%	0%	2.44%	2.27%	6.52%

Source: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in the United States, China, India, Australia, and South Korea, 2006.

The jump is even more evident here. What is striking is the sudden increase of South Korean males that think U.S. unilateralism is not a threatening issue for South Korea, which rises from 7.14% nearly fivefold to 41.67%, after which it sustains itself to a gradual decline. The jump on the other end is just as evident as well. This fits perfectly with the high degree of cooperation between the South Korean military and the U.S. military, as well as the widely held notion that the U.S. serves as a deterrent against North Korean invasion.

*View of North Korea: A broader perspective*

However, the effects of military conscription in survey results become more opaque as we step away from individual issues to look at broader perceptions, like affinity to North Korea, support for the Sunshine policy, and so forth. For example, a KGSS item asked respondents to rate their feelings for North Korea from a score of 1 to 100, with 100 being very friendly and warm.

**Table 6 Affinity to North Korea - Males**

	24 and under	25-28	29-32	33-36	37-43	44-50
1-20	19.23%	19.15%	8.51%	15.56%	11.63%	11.11%
21-40	11.54%	6.38%	19.15%	6.67%	11.63%	11.11%
41-60	38.46%	38.30%	48.94%	46.67%	30.23%	31.94%
61-80	15.38%	27.66%	8.51%	22.22%	33.72%	37.5%
81-100	15.38%	8.51%	14.89%	8.89%	12.79%	8.33%

Source: Korean General Social Survey (KGSS) 2012

As we can see, there is no definitive trend between the age groups. An obvious explanation is the broadness of the question asked. Respondents may have answered the question with regards to either North Koreans or the North Korean government, since the question did not refer to North Korea as a political entity. However, given the symbolic representation of communism by the Kim regime and the strong sense of nationalism with regards to Koreans in general,<sup>110</sup> it is far more likely that Koreans would respond more positively to North Koreans than the North Korean communist regime.

Another way to explain the ambivalence is the South Koreans' wide view of security. Unlike many other surveys inside and outside of South Korea, KGSS has asked a question that diversifies the perceived nature of threats among individuals.

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<sup>110</sup> Jung Woo Lee and Joseph Maguire. "Road to Reunification? Unitary Korean Nationalism in South Korean Media Coverage of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games." *Sociology* 45, no. 5, Special Issue: Sociology and the 2012 Olympic Games (October 2011): 862-865.

**Table 7 Responses to North Korea – Males**

	20 or younger	21-24	25-28	29-32	33-36
A country to support	0%	12.14%	3.23%	12.5%	24.24%
A country to cooperate	23.81%	10.20%	22.58%	20%	24.24%
A country to guard against	52.38%	46.94%	41.94%	50%	24.24%
A country to fight against	19.05%	30.61%	32.26%	17.5%	21.21%
Not available	4.76%	0%	0%	0%	6.06%

Source: Korean General Social Survey (KGSS), 2012.

At initial glance, there is we can see that South Korean men, as they move through conscription ages, are slightly more likely to regard North Korea with belligerency, which is to be expected of exposure to military service. However, it is also important to note the lack of any systematic decline in the other options; they merely oscillate back and forth. This dynamic speaks to the inclusive nature of ‘security,’ where any four of the choices can be incorporated as a response to threats from North Korea, while a belligerent response wins out slightly. A conceptual parallel is the realist versus liberal debate in international relations theory where both sides have correspondingly different views on how security relations ought to be sustained. In this view, liberal policies are not aimed at compromising security. Rather, both sides see each other’s policies as compromising. As such, a broad question about security is not likely to provoke a united response from a group of men sensitized to security issues; it seems that only questions that refer to specific threats to security incur such responses. The reason



this dynamic can coexist with the military's political bias and the reciprocal bias on specific security issues by the male public has to do with the survival strategy of the liberal opposition, which will be discussed in further detail later.

Another dimension behind the ambivalence of the effects of military experience on perceptions of North Korea is the distinction between an awareness of the threat and being actually threatened. In fact, a collection of Gallup poll results depict this development:

**Table 8 Gallup surveys on likeliness of war between South and North Korea**

	North Korea is likely to start an actual war	South Korea is in more danger of war with North Korea than 5 years ago	Economic sanctions are likely to provoke military retaliation from North Korea
Male	42%	15.7%	43.5%
Female	60.3%	23.6%	56.2%

Source: Gallup Polls Korea

As shown by the data, men were actually less likely to believe that war would happen between South and North Korea under various circumstances. While the data was not differentiated by age, the apparent trend of insensitivity is still consistent enough to make its implications on the study of conscription significant. Based on interviews and other data, the reason behind this trend seems to be that the men's experience in the military has granted them a level of confidence about South Korea's military superiority. In other words, it was possible for a survey to isolate this trend because the questions were worded in a specific way on whether a war was actually likely to happen or not. Thus, while this trend still lends itself to experiences built up during military service, it

also shows how some of the broader questions about North Korea and its threats could turn up vague results. In further support our interpretation about military experience and confidence, an interviewee has spoken to the issue:

### Interview 7

*How likely do you think is North Korea to start a war?*

North Korea can't start a war against us. In the army, you hear things about the North Korean army, in such detail that you'd never get it, or care to get it, outside. They don't have oil. They're too poor. We also have the U.S. too.

Regardless of how veritable this claim is, or to what extent this belief is held throughout society, it is a perception that matters in its own right, since it is a closer representation of South Korean males' attitude. Indeed, an additional finding on the same Gallup survey also turns up a concurrent figure. In lieu of the third item in Table 4, participants were also given the choice to answer that "economic sanctions will never provoke military retaliation from North Korea."<sup>111</sup> Interestingly, more than twice as many men as women selected this choice (24.5% versus 9.4%). Given the extremity of the statement, in saying that a retaliation will *never* occur, and the availability of other moderate options, this survey presents the explanation that military experience and knowledge have given men more confidence regarding the gap between the military capabilities of the two nations. Indeed, it was also not that men were inherently less responsive to threats. A similar matrix of U.S. public opinion on security threats show

<sup>111</sup> "Possibility of North Korean Military Retaliation to Economic Sanctions." *Gallup Korea*, April 22, 1994.

[https://panel.gallup.co.kr/Gate/Panel/F025.aspx?seq=5585&DaeBunr...PGNO=3&date=Fri%20Oct%2010%202014%2016:47:26%20GMT-0700%20\(PDT\)/](https://panel.gallup.co.kr/Gate/Panel/F025.aspx?seq=5585&DaeBunr...PGNO=3&date=Fri%20Oct%2010%202014%2016:47:26%20GMT-0700%20(PDT)/)

that men were just as likely to feel threatened. In fact, in the case of ISIS, men were slightly more likely to feel more threatened.<sup>112</sup>

In conclusion, the data shows that the military experience sensitizes South Korean men. However, the effects were more clearly discernible on specific issues, like accepting North Korean refugees or regarding U.S. unilateralism as a threat. On the other hand, when questions were broader, the trends became more vague. Upon inquiring upon why, we have forwarded two explanations. We have observed that the concept of security and subsequent responses are more diverse, which was evident both theoretically and empirically. Furthermore, it turned out that the different wordings of the survey items draw out responses from conscripted men in many ways by tapping into different parts of the military experience. The example referenced in this paper showed how a specific inquiry about the likeliness of war could show that men are actually less concerned about war despite being sensitized to threats.

### **Hypothesis III Influences group opinions on non-military partisan issues**

Lastly, we examine the hypothesis that military experience has biased former soldiers against policies that do not have immediate connections to security. In remembrance, the logical link supporting the antagonist relationship between liberal politicians and military was that liberals were most likely to produce policies that were threatening in the eyes of the military. With regards to this political bias, we have

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<sup>112</sup> CNN/ORC International Poll, Mar, 2014. Accessed October 11, 2014. *iPOLL Databank, The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut*. [http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data\\_access/ipoll/ipoll.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html).

confirmed that conscription and the military training system influence the opinions of the male-side of the public, at least in terms of specific issues. Then, the natural follow-up question would be to ask how much of this bias against the left from the military would carry over to domestic policies without any bearings on security. To evaluate this hypothesis, we have selected two issues that are politically charged, especially so in the context of South Korea: labor rights issues, the Korean teacher's and educational worker's union. Then, in a broader perspective, we examine the approval data for Presidents Noh Moo-Hyun and Lee Myung Bak.

*Korean teacher's and educational worker's union*

To foreign eyes, the Korean Teachers and Educational Workers Union (KTU) seem politically neutral enough. However, it is one of the most politically charged issues in South Korean politics. The organization itself was created with the aim of reforming the government's conservative education policies in 1989. As the KTU's official statement goes, "public education was distorted by military regimes such that schools were little more than propaganda centers,"<sup>113</sup> which led the KTU to intervene on behalf of educational content and policies. Due to the strongly conservative nature of the South Korean regime in the 80's, the character of the KTU naturally became more liberal, to the extent that it was challenging for even a freer flow of information about North Korea. Naturally, the KTU became conflated with partisan politics, which makes it a fitting subject of analysis.

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<sup>113</sup> "The Korean Teachers and Educational Workers Union." *Jeon Gyo Jo*, accessed November 7, 2014. <http://english.eduhope.net>.

The issue became especially conflagrantly as members of the Korean Parliament in the Saeuri Party, the representative conservative party and a direct lineage from the Hannara Party, created and publicized a list of KTU members. The release of these identities was a labor-rights issue since schools could target these teachers to expel. The contention was further politicized by the fact that members of the liberal Democrat Party was involved in the business of the KTU and vice versa. As a result, the question was recognized as one of the core issues in the 2008 national elections. In inquiry, the South Korean General Election Panel Survey asked participants to rate the release of the personal information of KTU members from very good to very bad. The results were:

**Table 9 Reaction to exposure of KTU member identities - Males**

	20 and younger	21-24	25-28	29-32	33-36	37-43
Very good	0%	7.69%	11.11%	6.9%	4.88%	12.38%
Somewhat good	26.67%	26.92%	12.7%	15.52%	4.88%	15.24%
Somewhat bad	26.67%	26.92%	11.11%	17.24%	19.51%	25.71%
Very bad	33.33%	34.62%	47.62%	39.66%	58.54%	42.86%
Don't know/ No answer	13.33%	3.85%	17.46%	20.69%	12.20%	3.81%

Source: South Korean General Election Panel Study: Two Waves, 2008

Again, as it was with previous surveys, we have separated out the data first by gender, and then by age. The influences of military conscription, if any, do not qualify our tests. There is no definitive trend throughout the army going ages. In particular, the responses of those that were 20 and younger and between 21 and 24 were quite constant,

which was exactly the opposite of the case for statistics on the perception of threat on North Korean refugees or U.S. unilateralism. In addition, these results presented no significant differences between those of females.

### *Labor rights issues*

However it would be a hasty decision to dismiss the third hypothesis on the basis of one issue. The next issue on the list is labor rights. If survey results on the KTU membership controversy were subject to the confounding effect of contextual factors, labor rights would provide a better sample since controversy over labor issues have persisted throughout generations.

Indeed, labor unions have been a source enormous controversy, especially given the heavily progress-oriented corporate culture of South Korea. On the downside of its fast-paced development and the “Miracle of the Han,” South Korea has created a culture of hard work that outstrips any other country in the world. In response to this culture and its base political support from the conservative party, labor unions have stepped up activities to guarantee better working conditions, shorter hours, and more benefits. Of course, this narrative is not special to South Korea. However, it is notable that some of the Korean military’s training material described these protests as attempts by North Korea and its affiliates in South Korea to sabotage the South Korean economy. For example, one of the previously mentioned training DVDs created by the MPVA attacks the 2008 public protests against beef trade with the United States as “an effort to induce

social confusion in alliance with the North Korean regime.<sup>114</sup> Thus, the issue of labor unions is imbued with a certain degree of disapproval from the military, despite the fact that it is not inherently a military issue. In other words, if influences of military indoctrination were to materialize, labor rights would be an area where it would be highly likely to do so. The 2012 KGSS item asking participants to rate their level of confidence in organized labor shows the following result:

**Table 10 Confidence in organized labor - Male**

	20 and younger	21-24	25-28	29-32	33-36
A great deal of confidence	4.76%	6.12%	6.45%	7.50%	6.06%
Only some confidence	71.43%	63.27%	61.29%	55%	45.45%
Hardly any confidence	23.81%	30.61%	32.26%	35%	48.48%
DK/Refusal	0%	0%	0%	2.5%	0%

Source: KGSS 2012

There is indeed a drop in the number of respondents that entrust “only some confidence” in organized labor, while the number rises for those that “hardly” trust organized labor. Then, the contention comes down to the second test, which involves gender:

<sup>114</sup> Min-Suk Kim. “Beef Protests a Conspiracy by the North?” *Ilyosisa*, November 10, 2012. <http://www.ilyosisa.co.kr/news/quickViewArticleView.html?idxno=25858/>.

**Table 11 Confidence in organized labor - Female**

	20 and younger	21-24	25-28	29-32	33-36
A great deal of confidence	5%	8.57%	9.09%	2.94%	6.29%
Only some confidence	62.5%	57.14%	50%	70.59%	53.13%
Hardly any confidence	27.5%	34.29%	36.36%	20.59%	40.63%
DK/Refusal	5%	0%	4.55%	5.88%	0%

Source: KGSS 2012

Alas, there is an exact same trend among females. There is a number of ex-post explanations of why this is so. For example, early twenties tend to be the age when individuals enter into their first job. However, especially in Korean society, many of these jobs are part-time jobs popularly referred to “arbeits,” a German word for part-time work, where many labor abuses take place.<sup>115</sup> A lack of labor assistance thus may contribute to the lost faith during the early twenties. The point is that whatever these explanations may be, they drown out any potential influences of military conscription. Thus, conscription seems to have no tangible effects on the domestic policies that are distant from security issues.

<sup>115</sup> Joong-Han, Soh. “Part-Time Workers are Ghosts... 53% Even Work Without a Labor Contract.” *Ohmynews*, June 6, 2013.

[http://www.ohmynews.com/nws\\_web/view/at\\_pg.aspx?CNTN\\_CD=A0001872822/](http://www.ohmynews.com/nws_web/view/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0001872822/). A disclaimer to be made is that the word “arbeit” only means “work” when literally translated into German. It is only in the specific context of South Korea that the word has evolved to refer to part-time, short-term work.



## Conclusion

Analysis of public opinion data from a variety of sources show that conscription is linked to a number of developments in the psychology of conscripted men and their values, as well as public policy opinions on specific security-related issues. Indeed, men's perception of security issues changed along the ages of military conscription, while no such trend was observed among women.

On the other hand, our analysis also shows that conscription seems irrelevant to broader security positions represented by political parties, or politically charged issues that were irrelevant to national security against North Korea. This can be explained by our analysis of the military's mission creep, where the military's political bias is generated by its inward perception of threat from a particular political side. While the military as an institution had been more closely tied to politics, and therefore exhibiting bias on domestic, non-military issues as well, the bias did not extend to the soldiers, or at least not strongly enough for the bias to manifest itself through public opinion data.

In terms of our findings, there are two main discussions left. First of all, we examine how sensitivity to specific issues can have wide-reaching repercussions on domestic politics. Then, in terms of our methodology, we will conclude with a discussion of the limitations of public opinion surveys, and their potentially confounding effects on broader inquiries on political bias.

## **Chapter IV: Policy implication of findings**

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In the previous chapter, we have examined a number of survey results that affirm the influences of military service on the minds of Korean males. Taking these findings, Chapter IV applies them to real-life examples, using the group mentality of current and former South Korean conscripts to explain socio-political phenomena in South Korea. In doing so, we conclude that our findings have broader implications throughout South Korean society particularly in South Korean politics where specific security issues were raised as debates. In particular, we discuss two issues: rigid stance to liberalization of security policies and a concentration of male interests into a quasi-interest group of veterans. To conclude, we discuss the limitations of our study and the subsequent direction for future studies on this topic.

### **Rigid stance to liberalization**

Based on the finding of Chapters II and III, there is a seeming contradiction in the findings. On one hand, the increased focus and bias on security issues are true, how would the Sunshine policy have worked? In a broader scope, how did liberal parties that have advocated for the Sunshine policy gain power? Indeed, while the history of liberal democracy in South Korea is too short to discern any trends or patterns, it is nevertheless true that there has been a back-to-back election of liberal presidents, Presidents Kim Dae-Joong and Noh Moo-Hyun. Furthermore, these presidents have successfully established landmark achievements in South-North relations, particularly in the areas of tourism, executive communication, and economic cooperation. President Kim even received a Nobel Peace Prize for these efforts.

The answer is that the South Korea still maintains a core system of security laws and institutions against North Korea. The liberal candidates intentionally avoided these issues during elections while appealing for progress on areas like trade and tourism, which has had a more significant bipartisan support. In effect, the liberals had engaged elections political compromise, by being willing to let the more contentious issues slide while aiming to build up liberalization through other means. Thus, the South remains illiberal at least with regards to the specific security issues that had the potential to aggravate the public. Indeed, this serves as an explanation as to why the data in Chapter II showed the military experience as a significant influence on specific issues, while having no effect on broader issues. The broader liberal policy line did not actively push for liberalization of certain sensitive defense issues, and did not invoke security-related concerns from past servicemen. Indeed, the fact that issues were narrow makes it easier in terms of campaigning strategies to disenfranchise unattractive issues from the general policy line.

In particular, we point to the persistence of numerous conservative security measures throughout the liberal presidencies. With the election of President Kim Dae-Jung and the subsequent election of President Noh Moo-Hyun, the liberals enjoyed a ten-year long hold on the presidency. To be sure, South Korea has seen an enormous increase of bilateral trade and cooperation with North Korea. For example, data on aid flows to North Korea clearly demonstrates the policy change between President Roh and Lee in 2008, as conservative-side Lee cuts aid to North Korea drastically.

**Table 12 South Korean aid flows to North Korea**

N = 100,000,000 Korean Won

Year		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Government aid	No-strings aid	1313	1,360	2,273	1,983	438	294	204	65
	Food aid	1359	1,787	0	1,505	0	0	0	0
Private aid		1558	779	709	909	725	377	200	131
Total		4230	3,926	2,982	4,397	1,163	671	404	196

Source: e-Nara Barometers

[http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=2784](http://www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=2784)

Other monumental developments also marked the liberal reign. President Kim was able to participate in the first ever South-North summit meeting in Pyongyang, which led to subsequent participations by President Noh. The Kaesong Industrial Complex was created in Kaesong, North Korea, funded by South Korean investment and staffed by North Korean labor.

However, at the same time, the back-to-back liberal presidencies failed to win over on the nation's key security issues, namely that of the National Security Act, which is still firmly in place today, and U.S. unilateralism. The U.S. forces not only are still present in South Korea, but they also retain wartime operational control (WOC) over South Korean forces; in terms of their relations to the South Korean civilian public, the U.S. military has also raised controversy through their apparent legal immunity through the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

Indeed, the liberals avoided controversy on these issues due to public sentiments – in which we have shown military conscription plays a significant role - during elections. If men were indoctrinated For instance, many expected Kim to push legislative action to repeal the NSA, or at least pass revisions to ease the NSA’s power and standards. This belief especially stemmed from Kim’s personal history with the NSA, as he had been repeatedly imprisoned and even sentenced to death by articles in the NSA during the rule of Park Jung-Hee.<sup>116</sup> However, during the elections of 1997, when President was elected, his platform excluded any significant mention of the NSA.<sup>117</sup> However, after his election, Kim expressed his beliefs about the NSA in public a number of times, including his statement in January 2001 that “the security laws [NSA] are practically out of touch with reality ... Even though North Korea would not liberalize their laws, we should do it anyways to show our superiority.”<sup>118</sup> Clearly, Kim had the intentions of changing the NSA, which has two implications. First, it is obvious that this issue was kept out of the election campaign due to its sensitivity among the public. Second, the Kim administration was unable, not unwilling, to push through with revisions of the NSA during its tenure.

Compared to Kim, Noh was even more vocal about the NSA, going further to advocate for its repeal. He referred to the NSA as an “anachronistic instrument that belongs in the museum,” and, unlike his predecessor, continued his critical rhetoric against the NSA even after his term had ended. In addition, Noh had a much more

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<sup>116</sup> Dang Kim. “Kim and Noh’s Choices and the Repeal of the NSA.” *Ohmynews*, April 9, 2010. [http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS\\_Web/view/at\\_pg.aspx?CNTN\\_CD=A0000209076/](http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/view/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0000209076/).

<sup>117</sup> “Evaluation of the Kim Administration’s Platform Successes.” *Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice*, accessed November 8, 2014. [http://www.ccej.or.kr/index.php?document\\_srl=114872/](http://www.ccej.or.kr/index.php?document_srl=114872/).

<sup>118</sup> Chan-Soo Park and Bo-Hyup Kim. “National Security Act: Speedy Revision of the NSA Regardless of North Korean Labor Code.” *Hankyoreh*, January 14, 2001. <http://legacy.www.hani.co.kr/section-003000000/2001/003000000200101142309003.html/>.

pronounced stance on the status of the U.S. military in South Korea as well. In a public statement, the president heavily criticized his past successors for failing to retrieve the wartime operational control, calling it a “humiliating affair, one that military personnel ought to be ashamed of.”<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, during his speech at the 58<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of the South Korean Independence Day, Noh argued for increased military independence from the U.S.<sup>120</sup> In fact, it was during Noh’s administration that the anti-American sentiments, and support for relocation and a possible removal of the U.S. forces, flared.<sup>121</sup>

As clear as President Noh’s stance was, however, there were surprisingly little results. Like President Kim, Noh’s election platform did not include any mention of the NSA. Furthermore, points about the status of the U.S. military presence in South Korea were limited to “improving the security cooperation between Korea and the U.S.”<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, even after election, the administration in the end failed to implement policy changes either area. Indeed, after Noh stepped out of office, the two consecutive conservative presidencies agreed on a quasi-indefinite postponement for retrieving wartime operational control.

As we can see, successful liberal administrations have strategically avoided pressing their stance on sensitive security issues, which explains how liberals could have

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<sup>119</sup> The full statement is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DamJug3WL5A/>.

<sup>120</sup> Noh Moo-Hyun. “Congratulatory Speech at 58<sup>th</sup> Independence Day.” August 15, 2003.

[http://ko.wikisource.org/wiki/제 58 주년\\_광복절\\_경축사](http://ko.wikisource.org/wiki/제_58_주년_광복절_경축사)

<sup>121</sup> A key event for anti-American sentiments during Noh’s administration was the deaths of two girls – Hyo-Soon and Mi-Sun. They were driven over by U.S. military vehicles, which was later blamed on the U.S. soldiers on a nationwide scale. The U.S. refused to hand over jurisdiction on the case to South Korea after the Noh administration had made demands, which sparked public anger; later, the U.S. martial court in Camp Casey declared innocence based on the SOFA. Regardless of the truth of the matters, this created a rise in anti-American sentiments throughout the country.

<sup>122</sup> “Election Platform – National Security.” *Presidential Archives*. Accessed November 9, 2014.

[http://knowhow.pa.go.kr/roh/vision\\_1/policy/view.asp?bid=3&pid=181&cp=1&num=15/](http://knowhow.pa.go.kr/roh/vision_1/policy/view.asp?bid=3&pid=181&cp=1&num=15/).

had their successes despite well-established indoctrination and bias in the military. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of a low-key, shushed stance on sensitive security issues during elections and a visible increase in volume after being elected for both Kim and Noh shows that these men have deliberately chosen to keep the NSA controversy, the wartime operational controls, and other issues silent. While both Kim and Noh then tried to initiate policies during their term in office, even that failed as a cause of public pushback. Since these issues were narrow in scope and specific, which this study has found to be most charged by the political dynamic of conscription, liberal politicians were able to exclude or diminish them in favor of issues with larger bipartisan support. This is supported by the comeback made by each liberal administration to revive these issues after being elected.

### **Concentration of male interests**

A meta-argument based on the first two hypotheses in Chapter III that we have, in whole or in part, proven to be true is that military service concentrates the interests and attention of South Korean males on issues that are related to military service and defense. In a recent episode in Korean pop culture, soldiers reacted vehemently against the comeback of a popular pop star, MC Mong, who had allegedly evaded military service by removing a number of his teeth.<sup>123</sup> When MC Mong's title song, "Miss Me or Diss Me" made it to the top of multiple charts, the public, especially past soldiers, responded by raising hits on a military marching song, "The Torchlight of Anticommunism," which

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<sup>123</sup> While the courts have decided otherwise, the public was never fully convinced of the star's innocence. There were also rumors that the Ministry of Defense proposed MC Mong a chance to serve in the military despite his age of 30 that he turned down, which was not well-received by the public.

later overtook MC Mong's song on the charts. Indeed, looking at military service as an occupation, albeit short-term, one can even argue that conscription forms a wide interest group among males with vague interests. In fact, as noted previously in the literature review, Vasquez has found that democratic countries with conscription tends to have less casualties in war, because the public, with its higher percentage of past military men, were more critical of policies exposing soldiers to danger.<sup>124</sup> While South Korea's situation is more static, meaning that the government has less chances to deploy soldiers elsewhere anyways, the concentration of male interests have led to consequences regarding domestic politics.

An issue that continues to plague domestic politics as a result of this dynamic is conscription evasion. The reason evasion is a pertinent issue to politics is because many politicians abuse their authority to exempt their sons out of service. Indeed, while the abuse of political authority in South Korea is hardly limited to specifically to conscription, our findings about conscription and its effects on the group opinions of men suggest that there would be a more concentrated response, and there was. A famous example is Lee Huei-Chang, a leading conservative politician of the late 1990's and early 2000's. An interesting fact about Lee is that he ran in the presidential race in 1997 and 2002, losing against Kim Dae-Joong and Noh Moo-Hyun, respectively. Furthermore, he was actually projected to win against his liberal competition in both races.

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<sup>124</sup> Joseph Paul Vasquez III. "Shouldering the Soldiering: Democracy, Conscription, and Military Casualties." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 6 (December 2005). 870-873.



In a survey done in July 1997, Gallup published results that showed Lee ahead by 12.4 percentage points ahead of Kim, earning 37.9 percent of support.<sup>125</sup> However, directly following the polls, rival politicians announced allegations that Lee's sons deliberately evaded military service by losing weight, publishing the sons' medical records that indeed depicted a sudden drop in body weight.<sup>126</sup> Months before the election, a Gallup poll showed that Lee enjoyed 45.3 percent support from voters, while Noh only received 29.3 percent. In the polls that followed in September of the same year, Kim was leading the race with 31.9 percent support, while Lee trailed in a distant third with only 17.1 percent, almost half of the support that he had previously. The same issue came back to haunt Lee in the 2002 elections against Noh, when Lee was accused of actually abusing his political authority to influence the conscription process. As a result, Lee again suffered a drop in support. The drop was directly attributed to conscription corruption issue as additional polls showed that nearly 70 percent of Koreans believed conscription corruption as a key issue in the elections, while 66 percent believed that there was indeed corruption on the part of Lee.<sup>127</sup> In the end, Lee lost yet again, giving the presidency to Noh in a race that described as a "miraculous drama of political revolution" for Noh.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> "Candidate Support for Presidential Election." *Gallup Korea*, July 21, 1997. [https://panel.gallup.co.kr/Gate/Panel/F025.aspx?seq=10511&DaeBu...GNO=28&date=Sun%20Nov%2009%202014%2015:53:25%20GMT-0800%20\(PST\)](https://panel.gallup.co.kr/Gate/Panel/F025.aspx?seq=10511&DaeBu...GNO=28&date=Sun%20Nov%2009%202014%2015:53:25%20GMT-0800%20(PST))

<sup>126</sup> Sang-Soo Kim. "Military Medical Records of Candidate Lee's Sons Released Today." *MBC*, July 30, 1997. [http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1997/1985167\\_6187.html](http://imnews.imbc.com/20dbnews/history/1997/1985167_6187.html).

<sup>127</sup> Kyung-Jun Choi. "Lee Loses Support as a Result of Conscription Evasion." *Ohmynews*, September 6, 2002. [http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS\\_Web/view/at\\_pg.aspx?cntn\\_cd=A0000086336/](http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/view/at_pg.aspx?cntn_cd=A0000086336/).

<sup>128</sup> Sung Choi. *How Are Presidents Born: A Politics Guide to Reading the Crowd*. (Seoul: Dasan Books, 2012.) 56-57.

Indeed, corruption in conscription is a heartfelt issue for the Korean public. As a result of widespread and intense experience of the military among society, the public has been highly reactive to issues that touch upon the shared interests and values of the military. This phenomenon, especially given the indoctrinative training of the military, can definitely be counted on to continue into the future at the level of intensity that it has exhibited as long as conscription is in place.

### **Limitations and the direction forward**

Thus far, our inquiry into the effect of conscription on the political behavior of South Korean men has illuminated how the military instills its values among individuals of a wide psychological and ideological spectrum; it has shown that this channel of influence could be under risk of abuse due to the military's political bias against liberal, de-securitization policies; lastly, it has empirically demonstrated that the effects of military training under conscription is tangible and influential in terms of public policy in South Korea. However, to conclude on a constructive note, we must review the limitations of this study, namely its dependence on public opinion surveys to evaluate the influence of military service, which is quite multidimensional.

Indeed, a vast majority of surveys ask participants to either rate or select a choice, thereby limiting the complexity of individual opinions. While the techniques of cross-tabulation or regression is available to proxy-evaluate social phenomena with these variables, it is nevertheless difficult to gauge individual perceptions. For example, when asked to rate their support for North Korea, South Koreans predominantly answer negatively. However, it is natural to assume that participants will hold varying levels of

conviction behind their choices, and it is a oversimplification to state that everyone who, for example, rated North Korea's benefits to South Korea as one out of five to hold the same opinion of North Korea. The survey results are thus likely to be an understatement of the military's effects on South Korean males' response to communism. This is especially true when we take into account the emotional significance that North Korea and communism holds in South Korea as a result of longstanding history, which is both contained and deliberately utilized to unite soldiers within the military.

*The generational and developmental variable of young adults*

On a legal basis, South Korean males must enlist before the age of 24 unless they file an extension petition, which can be done for a variety of reasons like education, occupation, and family business. The hard deadline for men to enlist is 28, and no extension can postpone service beyond. Furthermore, the age of the enlistees are in fact even more concentrated due to college education. Since college education tends to get more specific towards the latter half, and because the job searching process also happens towards the end, Korean males predominantly choose to complete their military service before moving on to junior or sophomore year of college.<sup>129</sup> Due to the high number of young adults and late adolescents in the military, the developmental characteristics associated with this age group plays a role in determining the extent of the influence posed by military conscription. However, this is a dimension of developmental psychology that is not represented by the choice-based public opinion surveys.

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<sup>129</sup> 2013 Statistical Report on Military Service. *Military Manpower Administration*. May 2014. [http://www.mma.go.kr/kor/s\\_info/dev01/release0902/\\_icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/05/19/44BojkkxQ2mfD.pdf/](http://www.mma.go.kr/kor/s_info/dev01/release0902/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/05/19/44BojkkxQ2mfD.pdf/).

While physical development tends to peak in the late teens, psychological development is a continuous process throughout. Haan et al express their concern regarding a lack of attention to psychological development in young adults, relatively to that of children: “The morality of young children has been studied more thoroughly than later morality but a clearer understanding of the latter is crucial since it is the more critical issue for society.”<sup>130</sup> In fact, research has demonstrated that various stages of development stages exist throughout a life cycle.<sup>131</sup>

In tune with this research, there has been a range of studies regarding the developmental effects of military service for young men. Such studies, in addition to contributing to the literature, also demonstrate the importance of having context-specific case studies. For example, a study of the effects of service on Israeli youth has turned out that individuals experience increasing “independence, self-confidence, self-control, efficacy, self-awareness, social sensitivity, and ability for intimate relationships.”<sup>132</sup> On the other hand, a similar study done in Germany reports a falling level of “agreeableness” as a result of military service.<sup>133</sup> Another study conducted of American veterans of the Korean and Vietnamese War have described the military experience as a “turning point” in generally low-achieving lives that led to more stability.<sup>134</sup> The wide range of different

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<sup>130</sup> Norma Haan, M. Brewster Smith, and Jeanne Block. “Moral Reasoning of Young Adults.” *Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1986):183-201.

<sup>131</sup> Daniel J. Levinson. “A Conception of Adult Development.” *American Psychologist*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 1986): 3-13.

<sup>132</sup> Yechezkel Dar and Kimhi Shaul. "Military Service and Self-Perceived Maturation among Israeli Youth." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 30, no. 4 (2001). 443-445.

<sup>133</sup> Joshua J. Jackson, Felix Thoemmes, Kathrin Jonkmann, Oliver Lütke, and Ulrich Trautwein. "Military Training and Personality Trait Development: Does the Military make the Man, Or does the Man make the Military?" *Psychological Science* 23, no. 3 (March, 2012). 275.

<sup>134</sup> Glen H. Elder. "Military Times and Turning Points in Men's Lives." *Developmental Psychology* 22, no. 2 (1986): 233.

results shows that contextual factors can play a large role in the developmental aspect of conscription.

However, one crucial takeaway from this literature is that young men are affected in many different ways by military conscription, and that the political consequence that this study outlines is just one expression of this influence. However, as these scholars agree, young adulthood is still an age where individuals are more receptive towards change and are influenced by their surroundings. Thus, in comparison to public polls, a more in-depth, and preferably longitudinal, study of a specific group of conscripted individuals would be needed to accurately discern the effects of conscription on the psychology and behavior of South Korean men.

*Conflict and emotions: South Korean hatred of communism*

Now speaking of the South Korean population more generally, the surveys tend to discount the emotional responses that memories of North Korea, military service, or a combination of both incur in individuals. As previously noted, the structure of most public opinion surveys are limited to a fill-in-the-bubble format that does not take into account individuals' point of view or mental processes. Since the iteration of anticommunism and the image of North Korea as an enemy is prevalent through South Korean society, general public sentiment can overshadow military sentiments in a public poll. While soldiers may be more knowledgeable or emotionally aggressive against North Korea, their "Very concerned" is treated equal to anyone else's. These suspicions only remain suspicions in the absence of a more in-depth, psychological study. While it is not the aim of this paper to further enquire directly into this matter, the remainder of this

chapter is dedicated to examining what tangible role emotion plays in politics, and thus why this study was both limited and would benefit from emotional analyses.

Emotion is a constantly active part of human consciousness, which is inevitably involved in military training. In particular, we have identified a section in *jung-hoon* where North Korea is used to invoke an emotional response to consolidate group mentality and imbue a sense of mission among conscripts. A narrative constructed on the basis of emotions can explain social phenomena that cannot be explained by the rational choice model. In particular, in cases of deep-seated emotional triggers, like ethnic and religious oppression and warfare, the conflict between rational decisions and emotional urges become apparent, leading to sudden shifts in public opinion and support in politics. Thus, we can suspect that soldiers may have a more emotional, and therefore influential, bias against what they perceive as enemies, which in South Korea's case is North Korea. In particular, instead of arguing against the presence of rational thought, scholars have pointed out that emotional thought and responses are necessarily coexistent with rational thought.<sup>135</sup> In fact, Miller goes as far as to argue that higher interest and knowledge levels in politics are correlated with a higher emotional involvement in politics as well.<sup>136</sup>

To make practical usage of emotions in political science, especially in conflict studies, theorists have drawn together models on emotional behavior on a state level of influence. Sasley points out different ways through which emotional responses of a national polity, or any polity that shares a political identification, can be viewed in a

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<sup>135</sup> George E. Marcus. *The Sentimental Citizen: Emotion in Democratic Politics*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002). 146-147; Patrick R. Miller. "The Emotional Citizen: Emotion as a Function of Political Sophistication." *Political Psychology*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (August 2011), 593-595.

<sup>136</sup> Miller, "The Emotional Citizen: Emotion as a Function of Political Sophistication," 575-577.

simplified fashion using group psychology.<sup>137</sup> Such theories have greatly contributed to increasing the role of emotion in political studies, since emotion was mostly viewed as an intangible, insubstantial, and most importantly unobservable influence on politics. In fact, there are numerous academic publications on specific case studies of conflicts that employ emotional narratives. For example, on the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks, Paul Saurette argues that the U.S.'s position as the world hegemon and the realization of such superiority throughout America's political structure – from the voters to President Bush – resulted in an irrationally quick and drastic investment into war in Iraq.<sup>138</sup>

Going further, scholars have actually identified a number of key emotions in conflict studies and correlated them to specific behavioral patterns. Roger Petersen proposes four main categories of behavior based on emotions: fear, hatred, resentment, and rage, where each society-wide emotion is prompted by different circumstances, and result in violent responses featuring different dynamics.<sup>139</sup> While Petersen concentrates on conflicts in Eastern Europe following WWI, Long and Brecke have made a similar theoretical argument of international conflicts in general. This theory also posits emotions as a key motivator of conflict, pointing to the buildup of frustration, shame, and fear as three distinct emotional phenomena that lead to conflict.<sup>140</sup> In the context of South Korea, it is quite clear why communism would be an emotionally charged subject. However, as

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<sup>137</sup> Interestingly, the different levels of simplifying emotional responses of states to external emotional stimuli are similar to that of the levels of analysis posited by Kenneth Waltz.

<sup>138</sup> Paul Saurette. "You Dissin Me? Humiliation and Post 9/11 Global Politics." *Review of International Studies* 32, issue 3 (July 2006): 513-516.

<sup>139</sup> Roger D. Petersen. *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth – Century Eastern Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>140</sup> William J. Long and Peter Brecke. "The Emotive Causes of Recurrent International Conflicts." *Politics and the Life Sciences*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (March 2003): 31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4236683/>.

it was with the developmental aspect of young men, surveys fail to capture this aspect of anticommunism and the military's attitude, since all yes's and no's are treated equally.

Indeed, this direction would take the study into psychology, which was not the initial aim of this paper. Furthermore, despite these limitations, our study still has uncovered key connections between the military's conscription policy and political behaviors of the South Korean public, regarding sensitive security legislations and intrusions of military interests. However, it is clear that analysis of emotional development would be able to provide an additional dimension of insight into political bias of South Korean males in South Korea.



### Concluding remarks

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Military service in South Korea has been around for so long that it has become an accepted stage of life for men, like the infamous college entrance examination, the job-seeking process, and so on. Indeed, pundits half-jokingly advise South Korean men to stop talking about their adventures in the military at blind dates, lest they alienate the lady. This study has first taken off an observation of this atmosphere, where a man's military experience resonates quite often throughout his life. If most men have gone, and if military service was as important to them as they gossip, then the conscription should be a major concern for public policy, which we have shown to be the case.

Upon an examination of conscription itself, we have realized the real challenge lies with the military, not individuals, since even the most unsuitable individual had to be entrusted with a role in national security, assuming that he had passed the minimal requirements at the physical examination. Following this line of reasoning, we have unearthed a deep literature of psychological manipulation in the South Korean military system that was quite distinct from that of other nations. In turn, this channel of influence meant that individuals would take on the views of the military, which included its political biases. While the political bias was not an overtly unprofessional and praetorian bias, it was rooted in the expansion of the military mission against communism. Engaged in a battle against a system of thought, the military was naturally led to concern itself with individuals suspected of communist affiliation. In turn, communism was a political ideology representing the very far left on the ideological spectrum, meaning that some politicians – those on the left – were destined to be closer to communism than

conservatives. Considering the particularly adversarial relationship between conservatives and liberals in South Korea, the negativity of the military towards the liberals was a foreseeable problem. Taking this bias, we have tested how significant it would be in terms of public opinion, and data from a number of public opinion surveys in South Korea has shown that the effects are indeed tangible. Lastly, we have considered the implications of our findings in context of South Korean politics, and it has been shown that this finding offers a narrative behind monumental political developments, like the failure of Lee Hwei-Chang and the rise of liberal presidents, and the lack thereof, in reference to the persistence of the NSA.

However, in judging the results of this study, one must take into account a number of obstacles. Firstly, as mentioned in the initial literature review, there has been a lack of literature on this specific topic. However, given the relevance of this study and the amount of literature on other specific topics regarding conscription, like the efficacy of *jung-hoon*, it seems more likely that scholars were more deterred by the concern of politicization. Indeed, this study does propose that the military has had political bias vis-à-vis political parties, which is a truly sensitive topic in South Korea. Another limitation was that the methodology of this study, which focuses on public opinion surveys, does not capture the full spectrum of the military experience. Hence, assuming a concerned soldier would have more personal experience and conviction for national security issues, which is something that has shown through public opinion surveys despite our limitations, public surveys are likely to understate our findings. In response to this limitation, we propose that any future studies on this topic would benefit from going in more depth with hands-on research by systematically interviewing members of the military.

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