

## **Gender Politics in Labor Movements in South Korea: Rethinking the ‘Progressiveness’ of Labor Movements**

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This research will attempt to reveal the gendered nature of civil society by situating these debates within the context of South Korea. In Korea little attention has been paid to women’s movements in debates concerning civil society, despite women’s active involvement in civic movements. Specifically, shedding light on labor movements which have been considered as representative of progressive social movements in Korea, this research will explore the ironic aspects of ‘progressive’ social movements and rethink the growth of civil society from a gender perspective in post-democratization South Korea. Within the context of progressive social reform movements, democratization has been one of the most fundamental issues raised by civil actors. However, the gender dimensions of women’s political activities have been marginalized within mainstream democratization debates. Gender issues addressed by women activists in labor movement organizations have been considered as weakening the basis of the laborers’ struggles for democratization.

What role will civil institutions play in addressing gender issues in the political realm? Does the development of civil society contribute to the diffusion of valuing gender equality? And, how has the women’s movement been considered within civil society? By analyzing these research questions within the context of South Korea, this research will contribute to understanding the complex interplay between feminism and other social movements and how these relations play roles either in empowering women or in discouraging their participation. Ultimately, this research will contribute to exposing how feminism both corresponds to, and is determined by, wider social movements.