

The Holy Mother Will Set Women Free:

Protestant Missionaries, Local Churches, and Women Rights in Colonial Korea

CheongYeon Won*

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Abstract

At the end of the 19th century, female missionaries from the Western world entered the Korean peninsula and contributed to establishing modern education institutes which imparted modern knowledge to the local population. Korean women who got educated in Christian schools later engaged in political movements to secure their rights during the colonial period. We study the effect of Protestantism on the female political movement using novel data on 2,478 townships and records of 15,000 pivotal figures regarding the independence movement in the Korean peninsula during the colonial period. We show that towns with a higher influence of female missionaries from the Western world had a higher female participation in independence movements, which is consistent with a stronger emphasis on female education in Protestant denominations.

Keywords: Literacy, Religion, Missionaries, Local Priests, Gender gap, Korea.

JEL Classification: I21; N35; Z12; J16.

* Won: SoDaLabs @ Monash U, Postal address: 900 Dandenong Rd, Building H, room 4.54, Caulfield East VIC 3145, Australia (email: cheongyeon.won@monash.edu)

Proposals for Sessions

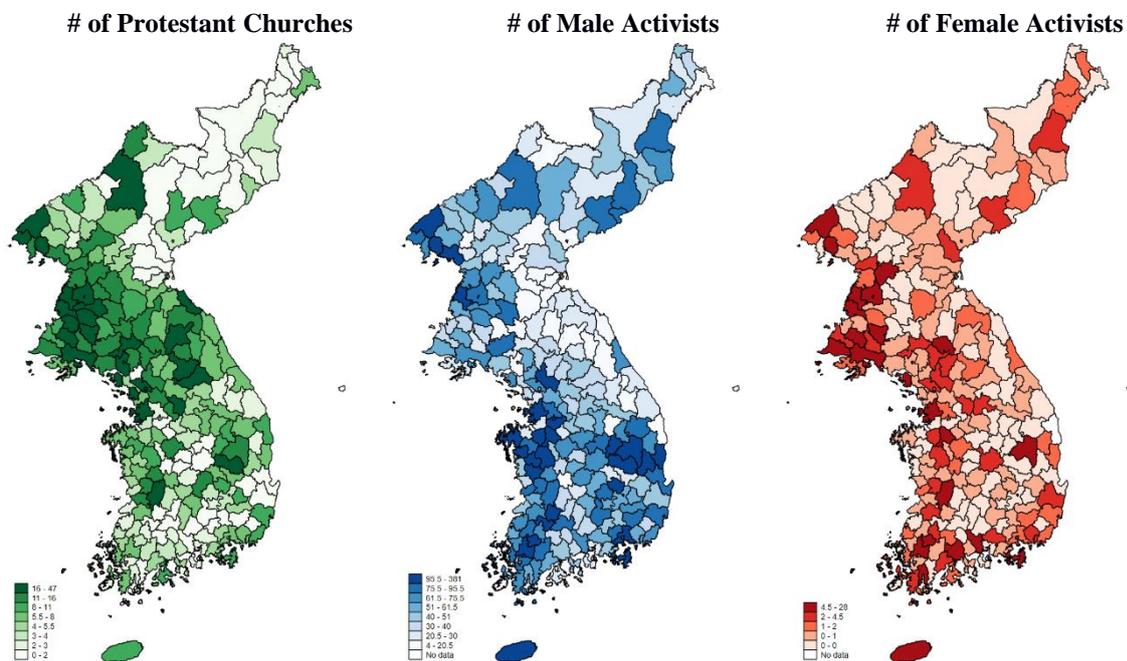
1. Research Hypothesis.

- How much did Christianity and female missionaries influence on the female political movement?
- Becker & Woessmann (2008) show that a larger share of Protestants increased the literacy rate of female. Recently, Izume et al (2022) report that places where had a church shows the higher literacy rate of female during the colonial period.
- To my best knowledge, there is still no empirical study about what educated females did to find places that use their knowledge.
- My goal is to show that educated females engaged in a lot of political movements for a better life and Protestant missionaries paved the way for them to improve their life.

2. Data

- The primary data used in this research are the Record of Merit for Independence movements in Korea, which provide the career regarding pivotal figures who contributed to liberating Korea.
- Currently, I construed data about significant figures who played a vital role in the Korean independence movement by gender at the county level. Therefore, it is possible to estimate how much Protestants related to independence activists.

[Figure 1] the distribution of birthplace of independence activists by gender.



3. Association between Protestant and independence activists.

$$\text{Number of Activists}_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{number of Churches}_i + \gamma X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

- I can test the association between them above.
- “*i*” means county level, and the number of activists means the number of females who participated in the Korean independence movement.

[Table 1] Association between Protestants and Activists

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Male		Female	
# Of Protestant Churches	1.045** (0.457)	1.479** (0.647)	0.138*** (0.036)	0.150*** (0.040)
Control	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	232	200	232	200
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R-squared	0.031	0.205	0.100	0.202
Mean of the dependent variable	60.10	62.30	2.134	1.915

Note: Robust S.E. in parentheses *** p<0.01, **<0.05, *p<0.1. Protestant means the sum of Presbyterian and Methodist, not including other denominations.

[Table 2] Association between Female Missionaries and Activists

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Male		Female	
log(Exposure of Female Missionaries)	3.041** (1.504)	3.154* (1.723)	0.670*** (0.173)	0.485*** (0.114)
Observations	232	200	232	200
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
R-squared	0.013	0.172	0.117	0.151
Mean of the dependent variable	60.10	62.30	2.134	1.915

Note: Robust S.E. in parentheses *** p<0.01, **<0.05, *p<0.1

4. Future Works.

- There will be some change in current results because I’m working on constructing panel data at town-level. If I finish the data construction, I’ll be able to control the fixed effect at town level.
- I’m plant to show the causality using an IV and matching method. In case of IV, I should check whether the data set is available.
- Ultimately, my aim is to show the causality between two factors based on the fact I found so far. And it’ll be updated by February next year.