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Living on Your Own: Single Women, Rental Housing, and Post-Revolutionary Affect in Contemporary South Korea

Jesook Song

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An ethnography of young, single women struggling to live independently in South Korea.

Living on Your Own is an ethnography of young, single women in South Korea who seek to live independently. Using extensive interviews, along with media analysis and archival research, Jesook Song traces the women's difficulties in achieving residential autonomy. Song exposes the clash between the women's burgeoning desire for independent lives and the ongoing incursion of traditional, conservative family ideology and marriage pressure into housing practices and financial institutions. She pays particular attention to the Korean rent system and the reliance on lump-sum cash even for basic subsistence, which promotes tight control of young adults' lives by family and kinship networks. The young women whose voices feature prominently in this book are a prototype of global youth in crisis: caught between aspirations for the self-development and flexible lifestyle championed by globalizing media and communication technology and the reality of their position as flexible labor in a neoliberal economy.

"This work is important to those interested in the gender politics of South Korea, as well as social scientists studying capitalism, financialization, or development." — *Gendered Perspectives on International Development*

"…Song's book focusing on single women and rental housing in South Korea is particularly welcome and useful." — *Critique of Anthropology*

Jesook Song is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Toronto. She is the author of *South Koreans in the Debt Crisis: The Creation of a Neoliberal Welfare Society* and the editor of *New Millennium South Korea: Neoliberal Capitalism and Transnational Movements*.

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