

## **Women's Ascent: the first lady became the first female president**

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### **Abstract**

Until recently, South Korea was the typical male dominated society among East Asian countries, but gender politics have improved significantly since the late 1980s. Women's movements in the late 1980s resulted in changes of laws and policies in terms of gender inequality and women's rights, especially in relation to labour and education. The first female president of South Korea, Geun-hye Park, was elected in 2013. Because she was the "first lady" when her father ruled the country as a dictator in the 1970s, her extensive political experience encompasses the transition to democratization. During her political life, her public image has continuously changed in the media, changes that shed light on the shifts in South Korean gender politics over that time. Geun-hye Park has attempted to avoid her father's negative legacies by apologizing publicly for his human rights abuses and offering pledges targeting young adults, working class people, and women. This project assesses Geun-hye Park's political background from when she was the first lady to her presidency and reflects on how it represents changes in gender politics during South Korea's transition to democratization.