

**THE STEEL AND SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRIES OF SOUTH KOREA:  
RISING EAST ASIA AND GLOBALIZATION**

**Kyoung-ho Shin**

*Department of Psychology, Sociology, and Counseling*

*Northwest Missouri State University*

**kshin@nwmissouri.edu**

**Paul S. Ciccantell**

*Department of Sociology*

*Western Michigan University*

**paul.ciccantell@wmich.edu**

**ABSTRACT**

*In this paper, we focus on the roles of the steel and shipbuilding industries as generative sectors in Korea's rapid economic ascent. We argue that a world-systems analysis focusing on these generative sectors provides a more complete understanding of Korea's rapid economic ascent than do other theoretical models. We outline the similarities between this case and those analyzed by Bunker and Ciccantell (2005, 2007) both in terms of the central role of generative sectors in raw materials and transport industries and how the creation and growth of these two industrial sectors shaped institutional patterns and the broader economic ascent of South Korea and East Asia. Even though South Korea has not and may never become a challenger for global hegemony, its rapid ascent has helped reshape East Asia and the capitalist world-economy. We use the model of generative sectors to analyze the critical industries that underlay and shaped South Korea's ascent from a low wage, light industry base to a world leader in electronics, automobiles, and other advanced industries.*