Gender Inequality and Patriarchal Order Reexamined

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Abstract

This paper explores the fundamental principles and mechanisms of the patriarchal order that facilitate the production of gender inequality in contemporary Korea. Instead of focusing on the external forces such as the industrialization or globalization, it pays attention to internal ones, examining how they interact to generate gender inequality in specific historical context. The ideology of the male breadwinner has worked very closely with the state, global capital, and class ideology in various and subtle ways. Women were included in rapid industrialization as cheap labor, while they were forced out of the workforce during the financial crisis because they were not regarded as primary breadwinners.

Patrilineality is another generative mechanism that facilitates the production and maintenance of gender inequality. Hojuje *(family-head system), the concentrated representation of patrilineality, has institutionalized women to relegation as second-class citizens. The paper concludes that gender inequality cannot be mitigated unless gender politics directly intervene to tackle the fundamental principles of patriarchal order.*

Keywords: gender inequality, male breadwinner, patrilineality, gender politics, gender discrimination, patriarchal order, *hojuje*

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Introduction

Many studies assert that Korean society is gendered,[1] from class structure to the state and labor market (Jo J. 2003; Cho and Jo 1994, 2000; Moon 1998). Not only public space, but also cyberspace has been argued to be gendered (Chang 2003). Even silence is gendered (Yang 1998). The gendered representation of women's labor activism is further described in academic discourse (Kim H. 1999). Though gender discrimination is legally prohibited, gender inequality is visible and ubiquitous in all areas. Feminist scholars claim that gender equality is a mere myth in contemporary Korea, and studies prove that women are disadvantaged in the labor market, legal status, welfare, and even love (Jeon B. 1998; Kang 1998; Kim S. 1998; Kim Y. 1998; Yi Bak 1998).

A growing number of studies that have tried to explain gender inequality have come to the realization that gender inequality cannot be understood without tackling the fundamental question of patriarchal order. Conventional social and economic variables are limited in their ability to explain the deep-rooted gender inequality in Korean society. For example, human capital variables such as education or working hours do not appropriately explain gender inequality in wage differentials (Jang 2000; Park 1988; Bai and Cho 1995). Furthermore, the relationship between class and gender in job mobility clearly demonstrates that determinants of job mobility for women are quite different from men, due to distinctively gendered employment regimes in Korea (Shin 2004). In other words, specific mechanisms systematically generate gender inequality.

This paper explores the fundamental principles and mechanisms of the patriarchal order that facilitate the production of gender inequality in contemporary Korea. Instead of focusing on external

1. Here, "gendered" implies not only a gender-based structure but also the way gender difference is translated and mediated into gender inequality. Even though some theorists question the sex-gender dichotomy, this paper uses "gender" as a useful analytical concept that is complex, relational, and is more than a synonym for "sex," "female," or "woman."

forces such as industrialization or globalization, it focuses on internal mechanisms such as the ideologies of the male breadwinner and patrilineality, and examines how they interact to generate gender inequality in Korea's specific historical context. The paper reviews and discusses the most distinctive gender equality issues that have risen in the periods of rapid industrialization, the IMF financial crisis, and the current post-authoritarian era.

Gender Inequality Statistics: The Gendered Division of Labor

The division of labor along gender lines is still quite marked in Korean society, as shown in Table 1. As of 2000, 74.2% of males in Korea are economically active (labor force participation, LFP), while only 48.6% of females are economically active. Of females, 34.3% are not in the labor force due to the demands of housework and childcare, while 2.2% of males are not, for the same reason. From 1990, females' LFP rate has stabilized between 47.0% and 49.5%. It reached a high of 49.5% in 1997 and dropped to 48.5% in 2000.[2] In other words, gender division is patterned in such a way as to exclude half of the population of females from the labor force. And the pattern suggests that males and females are not merely different, but also unequal in various ways.

The pattern found among those who were economically active by age clearly shows that males and females are unequal in the labor market (Table 2). Males and females start diverging in their economic activities from the age of 25-29. This pattern implies that as they reach marriageable age, they enter completely different tracks: men become "economically active," while women turn to housework and childcare.[3] The gendered division of labor is most distinct between

2. In the early industrialization period, between 1960–1980, females' LFP rate increased rapidly. The increase was partly due to industrial transformation and partly due to the problem of defining "economic activities" for women.
3. In 2000, the mean age for first marriage is 26.5 for women and 29.3 for men (KNSO 2001a).

Table 1. Gender Differences in Economic Activities

(Unit: %)

		Male	Female
Economically active	Employed	69.5	45.3
	Unemployed	4.7	3.3
	Subtotal	74.2	48.6
Noneconomically active	Housework/childcare	2.2	34.3
	Schooling	13.0	11.1
	Aged	3.6	3.7
	Others	7.0	2.3
	Subtotal	25.8	51.4
Total		100.0	100.0

Sources: KNSO (2000a).

the ages of 30-34. According to Table 2, males are most active between the ages of 30-34, whereas most females are inactive during the age when the burden of childcare is high. It is a widely acknowledged fact that family constraints are the building blocks of a gendered division of labor. These constraints have not been significantly mitigated with the advent of economic development or industrial transformation, questioning the validity of the "development thesis" which claims that women's status has been improved.

Gender inequality manifests as wage differentials and inequities in employment status as well. Wage differentials by gender are mostly due to the fact that females are concentrated in low-paying small sized companies, or that they work in unstable, temporary occupations. As of 2000, females earn 63.2% of the male wage on average. Wage differentials between males and females are not explained by differences in education backgrounds. The share of female workers employed in small companies with fewer than five workers amounts to 64% of the total female labor force (KNSO 2001b). As of 2000, temporary female workers amount to 68.9% of the total female wage-workers. Females almost always comprise of more than half of all temporary workers. Regular workers constitute only 19.1%. As many

Table 2. Differential Position of Males and Females in Economic Activities by Age

Age	Economically Active	Non-economically Active	Housework/ Childcare	Schooling	Aged	Others
			Male			
15-19	11.5 (14.5)	88.5	0.8	83.5	0.0	4.2
20-24	52.4 (12.1)	47.6	1.8	34.2	0.0	11.6
25-29	84.0 (6.9)	16.0	0.8	9.4	0.0	5.7
30-34	95.3 (4.3)	4.7	0.6	0.6	0.0	3.5
35-39	95.6 (3.4)	4.4	0.6	0.4	0.0	3.3
40-44	94.4 (3.4)	5.6	1.1	0.1	0.0	4.4
45-49	92.6 (4.3)	7.4	1.5	0.1	0.0	5.7
50-54	89.1 (3.5)	10.9	2.6	0.1	0.1	8.1
55-59	77.7 (4.1)	22.3	6.2	0.0	1.5	14.5
60-64	63.4 (3.0)	36.6	7.9	0.0	12.0	16.8
65-	40.6 (0.8)	59.4	7.3	0.0	39.8	12.4
Total	74.2 (4.7)	25.8	2.2	13.0	3.6	7.0
			Female			
15-19	12.4 (13.0)	87.6	1.8	84.1	0.0	1.7
20-24	60.9 (7.6)	39.1	12.0	23.1	0.0	4.0
25-29	55.7 (3.7)	44.3	39.5	2.7	0.0	2.1
30-34	48.6 (2.8)	51.4	49.5	0.6	0.0	1.2
35-39	59.1 (2.4)	40.9	39.5	0.2	0.0	1.1
40-44	63.7 (2.8)	36.3	34.8	0.1	0.0	1.4
45-49	64.7 (2.3)	35.3	33.6	0.1	0.0	1.6
50-54	55.2 (1.9)	44.8	42.5	0.1	0.0	2.2
55-59	51.1 (1.5)	48.9	45.3	0.0	0.3	3.3
60-64	45.9 (0.9)	54.1	48.4	0.0	2.5	3.2
65-	22.8 (0.2)	77.2	41.1	0.0	31.8	4.3
Total	48.6 (3.3)	51.4	34.3	11.1	3.7	2.3

Source: KNSO (2001b).

Note: The numbers in parentheses refer to the unemployment rate.

as 38.4% of female workers are not wageworkers. The majority of married women in the labor force are nonpaid family or self-employed workers, or paid temporary workers.

As shown in Table 3, females compose a remarkably low proportion of regular workers, though the distribution of employment status does not show a marked contrast between males and females. In temporary and daily occupations, female workers outnumber male workers, while females occupy only one fourth of the regular workforce.

Table 3. Employment Status of Males and Females

(Unit: %)

	Males	Females	Proportion of Females
Nonpaid workers	35.7	38.4	43.2
Regular workers	38.1	19.1	26.2
Temporary workers	17.1	28.5	54.2
Daily workers	9.1	14.0	51.8
Total	100.0	100.0	41.4

Source: KNSO (2000).

Besides gender segregation in the labor market, gender inequality is more visible and distinctive in terms of empowerment. In the political arena, females are overwhelmingly underrepresented, as shown in Table 4. Only 5.9% of National Assembly members are women, while women ministers make up an even lower 4.1%. Government high-ranking officials (fifth grade and above) are overwhelmingly male. High-ranking female officials make up less than 5%, though their numbers have been slowly increasing in recent years due to affirmative action policies. Noticeably, the percentage of females in government commissioned jobs has jumped from 9.2% in 1996 to 23.6% in 2000, due to the government-enforced 30% female quota. Still, the status of Korean women is far lower than other countries. According to a UNDP (United Nations Development Program) report,

the Korean gender-related development index (GDI) ranks 30th out of 80 countries. In gender empowerment measure (GEM), Korea ranks far lower, at 63rd out of 65 countries (KWDI 2000a).

Table 4. The Status of Females in Empowerment: 1985–2000

(Unit: %)

Women	1985	1990	1996	2000
Ministers	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.1
Civil servants	23.2	25.6	27.8	31.5
Higher-ranking officials (fifth grade and above)	0.5	1.9	2.5	3.7
National Assembly	2.9	1.3	3.0	5.9
Government commission	2.2	5.5	9.2	23.6

Source: Reconstructed from KWDI (2000b) and KOSIS (2003).z

"One" Working Class Overrides Gender Inequality.

According to Lie (1998), rapid industrialization has proceeded by positing gender as "a central axis of labor differentiation." In this period, the most distinctive gender issue concerns working-class women. Most studies have noted the seriousness of gender inequality, but this issue was muted during the period when the Korean economy was transforming from an agricultural to a manufacturing one, and from an assembly economy to a high quality export producer (Jeon S. 2004; Yi O. 2001; Koo 2001). As the Korean government initiated export-led industrialization,[4] males and females were differentially absorbed by industrial restructuring (Table 5). The expansion of the manufacturing industry caused a faster, more consistent increase in female employment than males'. Furthermore, married

4. In 1964, the Korean government adopted "a strategy of economic development" focusing on export-led industrialization.

women with low levels of education were drawn into the paid labor force due to labor shortages, without any consideration of their different needs. For example, despite the rapid increase of working mothers, the state did not provide childcare centers until several children, left alone without supervision, were victimized.[5] Policies did

Table 5. Occupational Distribution of Males and Females, 1965–2000

Year	Professional & Administrative Managerial	Clerical	Sales	Service	Agriculture & Fishing	Production	Total
				Male			
1965	3.6	5.6	9.9	5.4	55.5	20.1	100
1975	5.4	8.4	11.0	4.6	42.4	27.1	100
1985	8.5	12.4	13.6	6.9	22.7	35.9	100
1995	19.9	10.1		*15.1	10.5	44.4	100
2000	22.7	9.6		15.9	9.1	42.7	100
				Female			
1965	1.4	1.1	15.6	8.6	63.8	9.3	100
1975	2.2	4.0	9.5	9.4	58.7	16.2	100
1985	5.4	10.2	18.3	17.0	27.6	21.4	100
1995	11.2	15.5		*32.0	13.5	27.8	100
2000	13.5	14.5		34.9	11.2	25.8	100
				Ratio of females to males			
1965	0.22	0.11	0.86	0.87	0.62	0.25	0.54
1975	0.27	0.30	0.56	1.33	0.89	0.39	0.65
1985	0.41	0.53	0.86	1.58	0.78	0.38	0.64
1995	0.38	1.03		*1.43	0.87	0.42	0.68
2000	0.39	1.05		*1.44	0.90	0.42	0.71

Sources: KEPB (1977, 1980); KNSO (1986, 1991, 1996, 2001).
Note: The data of 1995 and 2000 counted service work, including sales.

5. The Korean government opened the first two model nurseries for working mothers in factory zones in 1987.

not account for gender equality or improved working conditions for women. Up until the mid 1990s in Korea, it was not gender equality that mattered but "developing women" in social policy.[6]

All through the period of light manufacturing and heavy-chemical industrialization, Korean women were included in the "development" process by a "hypermasculine state" (Han and Ling 1998). The Korean government adopted a low wage policy with strong labor control, exerting a disproportionate influence on female workers. Although state intervention in labor control and the low wage policy were not limited to female workers, the low wage policy and the ban on labor union activities in export industries adversely affected females, as they concentrated on extra-cheap labor. Women's wages were less than half of males, despite the fact that they worked longer hours. As Lie (1998) points out, the legacy of the agrarian patriarchal ideology facilitated the construction of cheap female labor, mediated by male workers who struggled for autonomy and patriarchal status in gender-segregated households and workplaces. Male power became reified and institutionalized in offices, factories, and the state, capitalizing on the cultural practice of patriarchal authority.

In spite of such adverse effects, gender equality did not become an issue for women workers until the mid-1980s (Yi O. 2001; Koo 2001). Female workers experienced tremendous gender inequality and oppression not only in the workplace, but also in their everyday lives. They protested against exploitative working conditions and oppressive labor policies, but not against gender discrimination itself. This begs the question as to what mechanism made females endure such hardships.

According to the accounts of women labor activists, women at the time did not think these gender issues to be serious because of the overwhelming labor problems faced by both men and women. They thought of gender problems only in terms of the working class as a whole, even though labor unions often excluded women. There

6. For example, the law for gender equality, called the Korean Women's Development Institute Act, was enacted in 1996.

were even those who mobilized male workers in order to prevent female workers from organizing (Koo 2001; Jeon S. 2004). Some women unionists, who were disturbed by the fact that they had to leave the labor movement when they married, became aware that patriarchy and gender inequalities were serious problems unto themselves, apart from class inequality. But they did not link this to a wider women's movement advocating gender equality as a central goal. "Caught between capitalism and patriarchy," as Kim Seung-Kyung (1997) describes it, women workers did not know whether they had to struggle for family or class. They did not dare to attack patriarchy in the midst of class struggle. As mentioned above, state policy towards working women was literally nonexistent at the time, and it was not until the 1987 Great Workers' Struggle that gender-related laws were enacted. This law was thereafter followed by the Sex Equality in Employment Act (1987), the Employment Security and Promotion Act (1989), the Mother-Child Welfare Act (1989) and the revised Family Law (1990).

The Ideology of the Male Breadwinner in the Economic Crisis

The arrival of global pressure represented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout has shown more explicitly how gender inequality is reproduced in the period of economic crisis. Since the "ideology of the male breadwinner" works alongside the interests of global capital, the IMF crisis had immediate effects on women's employment, as well as on gender relationships (Cho 2002; Jo S. 1998). While agrarian patriarchy included women in the workforce during Korea's period of development, the interests of mobile global capital have tended to utilize local patriarchy to exclude women from the workforce. Under the IMF guidelines, including the maintenance of a low-growth economy and transparency in financial management, layoffs spread throughout all sectors. Among the general mood of dismissal, women were more quickly dismissed—indeed, "IMF" was commonly said to stand for the expression, "I Am Fired." From computer operators to hospital and research staff, women of all occupa-

tions were asked to leave their workplace. Pregnant women were highest on the priority list of layoffs, followed by married women. In reaction, some women tried to maintain the appearance of being single or postpone official reporting of their marriage registration. The term "IMF *cheonyeo*" ("IMF maiden") was coined to describe this predicament. In almost all industries, rates of female layoffs were higher than males', as shown in Table 6. Larger companies also tended to lay off females more than males. In large firms with over 500 employees, the layoff rate for females was almost 1.5 times higher than males (PCWS 1999).

Table 6. The Reduction Rate of Employees by Occupation, 1997–1999

(Unit: %)

	Reduction Rate			
	July 1997–July 1998		July 1998–March 1999	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total occupation	–5.3	–8.2	–7.9	–10.8
Professional and administrative managerial	0.1	1.2	2.9	0.0
Clerical	6.9	–18.4	–7.5	–21.1
Service and sales	2.4	–6.5	–1.0	–4.9
Agriculture and fishing	5.5	3.2	–12.9	–33.1
Production	–15.3	–14.8	–14.6	–5.6

Source: PCWS (1999).

During the IMF crisis, the number of male employees was decreased by 5.3%, while females were decreased by 8.2% between July 1997 to July 1998 (Table 6). The change reflected the initial impact of IMF policies on the employment status of males and females. Later, between July 1998 to March 1999, the rate was 7.9% for males, while it was 10.8% for females. Notably, the reduction rate of female clerical workers reached as high as 18.4% in the first period and later peaked as high as 21.1%. More generally, the reduction rate for regu-

lar employees in the manufacturing industry was as high as 20.9% in the year 1997–1998. By contrast, the reduction rate of males was 12.9%, as shown in Table 7. As much as one-fourth of regular clerical female employees were laid off during that period.

More important than the extent of the reduction of female workers are the way in which the economic recession worked in the interests of the patriarchy to return women to the home, and making working women's labor short-term and cheap. Indeed, the ideology of the male breadwinner has exercised power in everyday discourse. During the IMF period, employers openly said that it was unavoidable to lay off women workers since they were not primary breadwinners. Newspapers, broadcasts and television programmers eagerly started a "campaign to restore the husband." The male breadwinner's *gi* (energy or self-esteem) was a central concern. The purpose of the campaign was to raise men's diminished *gi* that had been damaged due to unemployment and other sources of stress.

Labor unions easily agreed to the layoffs of women in order to maintain the status of the male breadwinners. The male-dominated unions bartered away the rights of female workers in the interest of male workers. In reaction, the director of the Bureau of Women in the Federation of Korean Trade Unions suggested that it was imperative to establish a mechanism that prevented discrimination as shown in the inequitable layoffs of female employees.

Table 7. Reduction Rate of Regular Employees in the Manufacturing Industry over One Year of IMF Era, 1997–1998

(Unit: 1,000, %)

	Number of Employees	Reduction Rate	
		Male	Female
Total manufacturing	2,402.2	–12.9	–20.9
Production	1,487.2	–13.1	–18.9
Clerical	914.9	–12.5	–25.3

Source: Reconstructed from PCWS (1999).

The case of the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF) offers a good example of how the ideology of the male breadwinner is well adjusted to the interests of global capital.[7] The NACF is one of the largest public enterprises in Korea, employing more than 3,000 workers. As soon as the NACF was forced to restructure, it identified 762 working couples throughout their various branches, asking them to choose which spouse should leave their job. In all cases, the female employee was first asked to leave. If she was reluctant, her husband was called in. In the end, as many as 91.2% of the layoffs in the NACF were female. The NACF insisted that wives had "volunteered" to leave, claiming that they had never forced women to act against their will, and that any decision to quit had been made exclusively between the husbands and wives.

The NACF is one example. There were many other public and private firms that forced female employees to leave the workplace under pretenses such as "honorable retirement" or "early retirement with incentives." The NACF case received widespread publicity, brought into court by enraged female workers determined to get their jobs back. Two women who had been forced to leave their jobs filed suit with the help of women's movement organizations. Besides the two litigants, 28 female professors and activists joined as plaintiffs. But the court decided that the NACF was not guilty of gender discrimination, stating that "during the IMF era," it was necessary for major public enterprises to ask employees of "relatively stable livelihoods" to leave the workplace. Women's organizations filed an immediate appeal against the lower court's decision, and lost again in the Seoul high court. The case eloquently demonstrates how deep-rooted the ideology of the male breadwinner is in Korean society.

As women were pushed into the labor market at lower wages on behalf of unemployed husbands, the issue of the male breadwinner was highlighted in terms of the question of whether these women workers would disrupt or strengthen the patriarchy at family level (Shin 2000). Moreover, the ideology of the male breadwinner worked

7. For more detail, see Cho (2002).

to increase female-headed households under the poverty line, as male-headed households were the primary recipients of pensions and employment insurance, while female-headed households were the main beneficiaries of livelihood protection and other government aid (Lee 2002). Some feminist scholars claimed that Confucian patriarchal ideology was utilized in order to justify the discharge of women from the labor market (Jo S. 1998), while others argued that global capital had used the local gender system in Korea for its own purposes; that "mobile" global capital was cooperating with a "immovable" patriarchy to extend and reproduce gender inequality (Cho 2002; Yoon 1998).

Hojuje: Patrilineality, Gendered Citizenship and Gender Inequality

The most current and controversial issue for gender politics is the abolishment of the *hojuje* (family-head system). Men and women are nominally equal before the law, yet women cannot be legal family heads in the current family-head system. The family-head system has institutionalized the legal order of succession of family headship as passed down a line of first sons. When there is no male heir, the first daughter can assume the domestic authority of the family head, but only on a temporary basis, until she marries. It has not only protected men's dominance over women in terms of maintaining patrilocal marriage, the patriarchal family, patrilineage in kinship, and the inheritance of property, but also underlies the nationalist discourse around Korean tradition, obscuring inequality in the name of "harmony."

Though there were several organized efforts to reform family law, the patrilineal family law was enforced for more than four decades without any major change until the 1989 revision was put into effect in 1991.[8] Some progress was made in the revision, but the

8. Family law, which refers to Part Four and Part Five of the Civil Act of the Republic of Korea, and which regulate kinship and the inheritance of property respectively, has been a target of public debate since its enactment in 1948.

family-head system remained intact. The attempts of feminist groups to abolish the family-head system were met by hostile reactions by self-proclaimed Confucians, and received lukewarm responses from the legislature, who were concerned about the reaction of a conservative electorate. The agenda is still in limbo in the National Assembly.

The outdated system creates myriad problems, such as a preference for sons, discrimination against women, and negative effects on children of divorcees, not to mention gendered citizenship. A distorted male/female sex ratio reflects the stubbornness of a patrilineal patriarchal order. As of 2000, the sex ratio stands at 110.2 in favor of males; but the ratio tips in favor of male children with the birth of each additional child. As of 2000, the male/female sex ratio for the first child is 106.2, 107.4 for the second, 141.7 for the third, and 166.9 for the fourth child (Table 8).

Table 8. Sex Ratio by Birth Order

Year / Birth order	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total	109.5	112.4	106.4	109.4	116.6	113.4	110.2
First child	110.2	120.0	106.0	106.0	108.6	105.9	106.2
Second	109.3	109.8	106.5	107.8	117.2	111.8	107.4
Third	109.1	110.8	106.9	129.2	190.8	179.4	141.7
Forth	109.4	105.5	110.2	146.8	214.1	213.9	166.9

Source: KNSO (1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000).

In the past few years, problems of “birth strikes” and “marriage sabotage” have received ample attention, but they are rarely linked to the issue of reform of the family-head system. Currently, Korean society is troubled by a low fertility rate and high divorce rate. The former is even lower than most OECD countries, and the latter has increased quite rapidly, and is the highest, next to the United States, in the world. As shown in Table 8, the divorce rate jumped from 5.9% in 1980 to 35.9% in 2000. As of 2002, one in two marriages ends in

divorce and the rate of female remarriage has increased from 4.1% in 1980 to 14.5% in 2000. With increase in divorce and remarriage rates, the patrilineal family system and the abolishment of the family-head system has become a sensitive and controversial issue. Some argue that the family will collapse if the family-head system is reformed, because it will cause even higher divorce rates. Some even argued that the abolishment of the family-head system challenges official nationalism by undermining the patrilineal family as the basic unit of the nation. Yet feminist scholars and activists continue to appeal for its removal. As Moon Seungsook (1998) argues, the refusal of abolishing the family-head system is ultimately a conservative response with a modern twist, a backlash against the swell of women's voices demanding equality (Moon 1998, 55).

Table. 9 Rates of Divorce and Remarriage

(Unit: %)

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Raw divorce rate	0.6	1.0	1.1	1.5	2.5
Divorce rate	5.9	10.3	11.4	17.1	35.9
Female remarriage rate	4.1	5.7	7.1	10.0	14.5
Male remarriage rate	6.4	7.7	8.4	10.0	13.1

Source: KNSO (1989, 1995, 2001); Quoted from KWDI (2000b).
Notes: 1) Divorce rates refer to numbers of divorces/marriages per 100.
2) Raw divorce rates refer to numbers of divorces per 1,000 persons.

Some insist that the family-head system itself should be examined as the fundamental principle supporting a patriarchal order, rather than problematizing it largely in terms of preference for sons and the gender ratio imbalance (Yang 2002). The disadvantages that the family-head system imposes on women have been considered primarily within concrete and detailed legal disputes, in cases such as a mother's relations with her children after divorce or remarriage. Although these cases show that women are widely at a disadvantage, there is

additional, more serious damage suffered by women, which is far less visible. Specifically, the system has rarely been attacked for relegating women as second-class citizens, but the continuous impact of patrilineality on reproducing gender inequality cannot be overemphasized.

Conclusion: Gender Inequality in a New Phase of Gender Politics

The ideology of the male breadwinner has worked closely with the state, global capital, and class ideology to support the patriarchal order in contemporary Korea. These ideologies have worked together in various and subtle ways, in different social contexts. Women were included in rapid industrialization as cheap labor, but were forced out of the workforce during the financial crisis because they were not regarded as primary breadwinners. While male work is defined in terms of family wages, female work is considered superfluous. The gendered division of labor itself reflects the way the ideology of the male breadwinner operates.

Besides the ideology of the male breadwinner, patrilineality is another generative mechanism that facilitates the production and maintenance of gender inequality. *Hojuje*, or the family-head system, is the very essence of patrilineality, and has subjugated women to men and the family as a whole, within the confines of normative patrilineality. Indeed, Korean women are institutionalized as second-class citizens. The ideology of the male breadwinner and the patrilineality of the family-head system are two pillars that support the patriarchal order. Gender inequality cannot be mitigated unless gender politics directly intervene to tackle the family-head system and the ideology of the male breadwinner. In the post-authoritarian period, gender inequality must face a new phase of gender politics.

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