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The Power of the Ideology of Gender Equality and the Limitations of
State Bureaucracy: Paradoxes in the Institutionalization of
Gender Equality Policies in South Korea

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

Se-Hyun Cho

Committee in Charge:

Professor Christena Turner, Chair
Professor Suzanne Brenner
Professor Maria Charles
Professor Jeffrey Haydu
Professor Christine Hunefeldt-Frode

2010

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University of California, San Diego

2010

DEDICATION

To My Family

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
FP Act	The Framework Act on Family Policy
GAD	Gender and Development
GDPR	Gender Discrimination Prevention and Relief Act
GEFC	National Assembly Gender Equality and Family Committee
HF Act	The Framework Act on Healthy Family
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JCFS	Joint Committee of the Legislation of the Framework Act on Family Support
KNCW	Korean National Council for Women
KWAU	Korean Women's Association United
KWDI	Korean Women's Development Institute
LJC	National Assembly Legislation and Judiciary Committee
MOHW	Ministry of Health and Welfare
MOL	Ministry of Labor
MPA 2	Ministry of Political Affairs No.2
PCWA	Presidential Commission on Women
WBDA	Women's Basic Development Act
WID	Women in Development
WPEC	Women's Policy Evaluation Committee

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Power of the Ideology of Gender Equality and the Limitations of
State Bureaucracy: Paradoxes in the Institutionalization of
Gender Equality Policies in South Korea

by

Se-Hyun Cho

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor Christena Turner, Chair

This research seeks to explain the paradoxes of policy efforts made by Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) in Korea. Korea established a Ministry to redress gender inequality and succeeded in passing numerous legislation guaranteeing formal equal rights for women, which won Korea a UN designation as an exemplary case. However, the paradox of the institutionalization of gender equality within a special unit for the promotion of women was that the more powerful the institution became, the less ideological freedom it enjoyed. Thus, even with the progressive feminist activism's support and the institution's improved status, they failed to reach many of their gender equality goals and to change gender norms and practices through which the labor market and the modern family operate.

Specifically, employment policies created more employment for women in order to improve women's economic independence, but they also channeled them into female-typed low-paid occupations such as care workers. MOGEF's endeavors to bring greater equality among families through abolishing the concept of the family failed. MOGEF's efforts to increase men's responsibility within the family produced policy programs that did not go beyond a minimal change in the way men and women live.

I distinguish five mechanisms that are responsible for the paradoxical policy outcomes- 1) competing state goals and MOGEF's pursuit of gender equality within the context of state-wide goals, 2) MOGEF's relationships with civil society as a democratic polity, 3) MOGEF as a ministry operating within the logic of bureaucracy in its search for power, 4) the strategic actions of the actors taking advantage of political and discursive opportunities, and 5) the co-existence of multiple versions of gender equality norms. These mechanisms resulted in MOGEF's dilemma. The endeavor to institutionalize gender equality within the state bureaucracy could result in crippling disadvantages in pursuing more fundamental changes to core gender equality norms.

My account highlights the interaction between international and domestic conditions; non-linear development into gender equal society; and mechanisms of stage gender policy making, something which has been ignored in previous research on gender policies.

Keywords: Women, government policies, Korean feminist activism, female labor force participation, family, globalization

I. Introduction

Based on the achievements that we made [in the legal revisions and women's advancement], Korea became a model case of the proactive national machineries for women's equality. On behalf of Korean Presidential Committee of Women's Affairs (PCWA), we were invited to present the Korean case in the 43rd [UN] Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting in New York in 1999 (PCWA, 2000:14).

Every year, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), a designated body exclusively focusing on improving gender equality and women's status worldwide and setting the global standards of gender equality policies, has a meeting at New York to evaluate different nations' efforts on gender equality.¹ In 1999 and in 2000, CSW selected the Korean case as a model case for its achievement in legislative reforms (Jones, 2006:123).

This research started from several questions that are raised by this Korean state effort and its success as evaluated by the international community. Why did the Korean state - seemingly a gender conservative state - try to improve women's status? Furthermore, how can we reconcile images of Korea as a "traditional Asian country" where women suffer from the consequences of Confucian ideologies with the UN recognition of its accomplishments in the area of women's formal equality? Can we assume that the Korean state responded to international norms and pressures or were there domestic factors that led to strategic policy decisions? And what are the possible results of state involvement in redressing gender inequality? My thesis will analyze state, social movement, and civil society actors and their interactions domestically and internationally to better understand how and why the Korean state organized and

¹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/index.html#about>

reorganized gender equality policies as it did over the period from 1983 to the present.

The Korean achievements that were recognized as a model case were made by the accumulated cooperative efforts of state agencies and women's activism starting with the 1983 creation of the Korean Women's Development Institution (KWDI), in 1988 the establishment of the Ministry of Political Affairs 2 (MPA 2) and its institutional expansion into the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) in 2005. In particular, establishing special state apparatus for the advancement of women which UN calls 'national machineries' has been a "standard feature of most contemporary governments" and "has gained a globally evaluated symbolic meaning" (Berkovitch, 1999:163).

While the establishment of such government agencies is certainly a strong sign of the state's "conformity" to a global standard set of formal laws, policies, and institutions (Meyer, 2004), it does not give a clear answer to the question of 'what happens next?' Is this the success the feminists were trying to achieve? Is this the end of the story about the efforts to achieve a fundamental change to core gendered power relations and the entrenched normative gender roles? My dissertation begins with the premise that the answer is 'no' and it starts with the attempts to answer the questions 'what happens next and why'.

The question deserves further investigation because even if creating a women's policy machinery² was possible through the combination of international discursive

² I follow the definition of women's policy machineries by Stetson and Mazur (1995) as the state bureaucratic institution in charge of policies specific to women. Women's policy machineries exist in the various ministries as focal points of MOGEF but this dissertation focuses on the MOGEF and its

and domestic political supports, we notice that after its initial formation in 1983, it went through the fluctuating history in the last three decades. There have been increasing, not decreasing, controversies over pro-women's policies, more resistance from diverse opponents to the organization, greater bureaucratic turf battles, which resulted in an institution that became culturally more sensitive and politically less radical. The paradox of the institutionalization of gender equality ideologies within a special unit for the promotion of women was that the more powerful the institution became, the less ideological freedom it enjoyed. Thus they failed to reach many of their gender equality goals and to change gender norms and practices through which the labor market and the modern family operate. In the next section I expand my discussion of the paradoxes created by state efforts to increase women's economic autonomy and to change the ideology of the family. I also explore the suitability of MOGEF policies as cases that highlight this struggle. Then I discuss the analytical foci and theoretical implications, followed by a discussion of research methods used in this project. And finally, I outline the organization of this thesis.

A. Paradoxes of State Efforts to Increase Gender Equality and MOGEF Policy Efforts as Cases

In this dissertation, I focus on the two different dimensions of gender inequality that MOGEF made an effort to redress - women's restricted access to the labor market that impedes their economic independence and gender-structured family units that is undergirded by the institution of "the modern family" (Stacey, 1990).

predecessors.

Even with the establishment of MOGE -the organization founded by partly the efforts of women's movement with the aim of pursuing the abolishment of the gendered division of labor- we find that the institutional efforts to increase women's labor force participation reproduce the ideology of division of labor, not decrease it. Also, while the institution became more powerful with its jurisdictional expansion into family policies due to the support of progressive feminist activism and the presidency, the institution failed in changing the concept of the modern nuclear family and failed to foster equal domestic responsibility. Analyzing the case of MOGEF's policy efforts, this dissertation answers the question of what mechanisms created policy programs that are nearly opposite the ideals of gender equality supported by MOGEF.

This dissertation problematizes the paradox of the institutional development through the examination of Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2005-2007)'s policy efforts made by the 'femocrats'. I define femocrats as bureaucrats with feminist ideas occupying policy making positions and include former feminist activists and scholars joined in women's policy machineries and bureaucrats pursuing their careers in gender equality policies (Eisenstein, 1996; Watson, 1990:5; Stetson and Mazur, 1995). Even with the existence of femocrats within the organization exclusively focusing on women's equality, we still find the limited state efforts to change gendered power relations.

Among different historical stages of the organization that spanned from the 1988 Ministry of Political Affairs 2 (MPA 2) to the present MOGEF (2010), my

analysis is focused on MOGEF (2005-2007).³ The various historical junctures in which MOGEF was operating illustrate how the vision of gender equality was translated into practice in different ways at different times. I examine its relationship with other bureaucracies, with the wide state-goal, and its interaction with civil society actors.

MOGEF (2005-2008) expanded its jurisdiction to the largest extent yet in the history of the institution. This expansion was due mainly to efforts of the femocratic leadership and the bureaucratic advances from previous incarnations of MOGEF. However, ironically, with the expansion, MOGEF experienced more conflicts with other bureaucracies. MOGEF is a good case study for an analysis of the power struggle among bureaucratic organizations and the subsequent influences on its institutional operations and policies.

Another irony is that as MOGEF expanded and controlled more policy arenas, its ideological freedom was significantly reduced due to the more complicated relationships with civil society groups. The previous institutions such as MPA 2 had a close relationships with conservative organizations (Korean National Council of Women: KNCW) who were actively involved in the establishment of the first women's policy machinery. After political democratization, MOGE (2000-2005) was actively engaged in the cooperative relationships with the progressive feminist activists (Korean Women's Association United: KWAU). The overall political arena influenced which groups the ministry could strategically ally with.

³ For more detailed description of the history of MOGEF, see Chapter II.

In contrast, both conservative and progressive civil society organizations had close access to MOGEF's policy making process, particularly after MOGEF started family policies. Considering the importance of civil society women's activism for Korean women's policy machineries and its policy orientations,⁴ looking at an institution that had to include various civil society organizations holding very different gender ideologies provides a more dynamic understanding of the many facets of negotiations and influences. The process is not as straight-forward as it would first seem.

In order to address the mechanisms leading to the paradoxical outcome of the institutionalization of gender equality ideologies, I analyze MOGEF's policy making processes and its successes and failures in increasing gender equality. Particularly the analysis focuses on the areas of women's labor force participation (Chapter III and Chapter IV) and the efforts to reconstruct the family through respect for diverse families and equal responsibility for domestic life (Chapter V and Chapter VI). MOGEF made an effort to increase the number of women in the labor market but also tried to change the gender structured family through which gender roles are practiced. However, these efforts are not restricted to the area of gender problems that feminist activism and the Ministry strived to solve. They were anchored to the state's goals of competing desires to enter the global economy and at the same time to solve domestic social problems.

MOGEF's policy efforts to increase female labor force participation,

⁴ For further discussion of the relationship between women's movement organizations and women's policy machineries, see Chapter II.

particularly for women in their 30s and 40s, were realized paradoxically through programs creating more service jobs, which reproduced the association of women with caring work. The state's economic and labor concerns influenced MOGEF policy. In order to ensure survival in global market competition, the state emphasized an increase in labor flexibility and equal opportunities to participate in the labor market. The state tried to employ 'idle' labor forces such as women and the aged by providing training and supportive policies. As a way to create more jobs, the state looked for industries that could expand and absorb the new labor force, such as the service sector.

In addition to trying to increase gender equality in the labor force, MOGEF also tried to promote equality within and among families. However, these efforts failed even with the progressive feminist activism's support and the institution's improved status. MOGEF's endeavors to bring greater equality among families through abolishing the concept of the Family failed. MOGEF's efforts to increase men's responsibility within the family ironically produced policy programs that did not go beyond a minimal change in the way men and women live.

These efforts at restructuring the family became embedded in the state imperatives of solving large social problems- the precipitating birth rate, increasing elderly population, and increasing divorce rate. The 'crisis' of a decreasing productive labor force and the increasing social burden of supporting an aging population and family welfares would hamper national economic growth (Government of Korea, 2006). Therefore, the state made an attempt to set up social infrastructure such as increasing daycare services, increasing parental leave, introducing monetary

incentives for childbirth, and raising individual consciousness of the importance of childbirth and family stability. MOGEF's policy initiatives to infuse the idea of equality in family issues became 'one' of the perspectives to solve pressing state-wide imperatives.

The femocrats' ambitions to redress gender inequality in Korean society are seen in two policy efforts, which take advantage of the political opportunities presented in the larger socio-political context. The femocrats had two foci: changing society through an increase in women's participation in the economy and through reconstruction of the ideology of the family and gendered division of labor within the family. However, the femocrats had to make strategic choices in which they shifted between long-term goals and short-term practical measures. Their long-term aim was to redress gendered power structures in the labor market and in the family. Short-term solutions included mitigating the sharp M-curve by increasing housewives' labor force participation in service occupations and coaxing men into a different life style without provoking strong resistance.

The two areas of policy programs also demonstrate that the efforts to redress inequality in opportunity to work and unequal power relations within the domestic life from a long-term versus short-term vision are constrained by multiple institutional dimensions. As can be seen in the two policy areas, embracing fundamental change in gendered structure and norms is both less effective in terms of bureaucratic goal accomplishment and less acceptable in terms of cultural resonance. The case of MOGEF's dilemmas illustrates that the endeavor to institutionalize gender equality

within the state bureaucracy could result in crippling disadvantages in pursuing more fundamental changes to core gender equality norms.

This dissertation argues that in the femocrats' strategic choice of policy programs, the institutional constraints mediate the organizational ideological influences. While femocrats pursued social changes and MOGEF was an institutionalized organization with designation of improving gender equality, the social, political, and cultural norms as well as administrative practices under which the femocrats worked produced policy programs that fell short of their ambitions.

B. Mechanisms and Analytic Foci: State, Ministry, and Actors

This dissertation addresses mechanisms that produced these paradoxes on the level of the state, ministry, and actors. The women's policy machinery operates on these three levels through its complex institutional dimensions- as a vanguard organization of gender equality, as a part of the state organization, and as a bureaucracy.

This dissertation analyzes the institutional development and subsequent limited policies from the perspective that "organizations may make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please" (Brint and Karabel, 1991:346). The women's policy machinery pursued changing society through attempts to expand women's equal opportunity to economic activity and to bring greater equality within and among families. However, this dimension as a vanguard organization for equality sometimes conflicted with two other organizational dimensions- as a part of the state and an

organization with bureaucratic exigencies to address. I also emphasize the actors, not only looking at the institutional dimensions of power and ideologies, but also at their relationships with civil society groups holding different ideologies, and the influences of these relationships on the policy making processes. In doing so, I look for the actors' discursive strategies and limitations.

I distinguish five mechanisms that are responsible for the paradoxes- 1) competing state goals and MOGEF's pursuit of gender equality within the context of state-wide goals, 2) MOGEF's relationships with civil society as a democratic polity, 3) MOGEF as a ministry operating within the logic of bureaucracy in its search for power, 4) the strategic actions of the actors taking advantage of political and discursive opportunities, and 5) the co-existence of multiple versions of gender equality norms.

First, realization of gender equity can never be the sole national priority because the state is an entity within which diverse actors strive to accomplish multiple goals at the same time (Dahlerup, 1975; Stetson and Mazur, 1995; 2010; Randall and Waylen, 1998; Jones, 2006). Since the state actors are aware of the influence that increasing gender equality would have on the nation's international standing, they cannot deny global standards with respect to women's rights. However, the extent to which the international norm provides them with a cognitive and normative framework is not always clear. In other words, state actors are not all on the same page regarding how much and what kind of gender equality they want and how to achieve it. Therefore, in order to analyze how the international discourse on gender equality

works its way into certain political settings, it is necessary to investigate the practical fit between the norm and the political priorities.

The state's use of gender equality for the achievement of national goals has been noted by feminist scholars (Zelman, 1982; Cho and Lee, 1989; Besse, 1996; Dore and Molyneux, 2000; Jones, 2006). Opening the state to the international stage and using women's promotion issues to achieve domestic political, social, and economic goals have been important mechanisms leading the Korean state to establish a state organization and support for gender equality policies (Cho, H., 1996; Kim, 2005; Jones, 2006). The establishment and development of a state agency with globally recognized symbolic meaning was possible because the state's goals for national prosperity intersected with evolving state efforts to enforce gender equality policies. Whether it was under the authoritarian state or after democratization, there existed a state goal which advancing women's status served. Over the past three decades, the complex interactions have changed among diverse factors such as characteristics of the state (i.e. authoritarian government and democratized state), presidential leadership, political spaces open to civil society organizations, and the state's increasing exposure to international pressures on social, economic and cultural arenas. These factors changed over time and had a profound influence on the change in the orientation of gender equality policies. For instance, the policy initiatives and programs made by MOGEF under the progressive regime of President Noh Mu Hyun were tuned to the goals of the regime, which focused mainly on social economic imperatives such as the increasing global economic competition, low-birth rate,

increasing old population, and a perceived increase in ‘family disruption’.

In its broader state-wide relationships, MOGEF’s policy programs redressing gender inequality were circumscribed by broader state-wide goals and political configurations and political norms. Under this context, women’s policy machineries pursue women’s advancement in tune with the state-wide goals, among which gender equality was not the priority, as discussed above. The organization’s policy goals and vision were at the intersection of state-wide social economic goals and international trends regarding gender equality policies. The competing ideas and the actors’ negotiations are embedded not only within the institution, but within a complex web of institutional relationships. For instance, while MOGEF actors adopted gender equality ideology, other state actors emphasized different international mandates such as neo-liberal individualism and economic reforms available to them. Moreover, MOGEF actors could not ignore them in relation to other institutions and broader political economic goals.

The second mechanism is MOGEF’s relationships with civil society organizations. Since the institution is a state organization within a democratic political landscape, the femocrats must consider the demands from civil society organizations in the policy making process, even if they are not always consistent with the femocrats’ goals and visions. The institution was expected to be in an ideologically balanced position in its relationship with civil society organizations, which held a broad spectrum of gender norms and beliefs. This expectation of an ideological balance was particularly strong when the institution’s efforts to enact social change

touched deeply rooted cultural perceptions.

The third mechanism is the logic of the bureaucratic power dynamics that MOGEF complied with for survival as a ministry. While the institutional ideology (of gender equality) shaped bureaucratic interest (Bourdieu, 1981; Swidler, 1986; Dimaggio and Powell, 1991), at the same time it was influenced by strategic actions supporting institutional interests, such as looking for an expansion of its jurisdiction into new policy areas. While the establishment of a state agency on gender equality was apparently an example of a globally homogeneous phenomenon, the establishment of the organization did not automatically lead it to be thriving organization. Maintaining the organization's power necessitated bureaucratic and political strategies by bureaucrats and women's movement activists. From the beginning of the ministry, the actors consistently made an attempt to increase its organizational power. They wanted to realize the norm of gender equality, which required a powerful state ministry. They also had to fight for this goal in an arena where the status of women's policies and the gender consciousness of the bureaucrats were relatively lower than other policy areas.

Paying attention to the strategies of the actors leads to an analysis of individual agency, the forth mechanism. In addition to the institutional influences on policy making processes, this dissertation delves into individual's strategies as a mechanism leading to policy programs with limitations. In order to have a fuller picture of the state attempts to increase gender equality, we need to take a closer look at who the actors were in the global and the local contexts, what their goals were, and how they

achieved them.

Previous research on the diffusion of world culture viewed actors as “enactors” and the policies they made were an “enactment” of the universal cultural norms (Meyer et al., 1997: 159) and thus it was criticized for being an overly structuralist account (Campbell, 2002). To the contrary, this dissertation makes an attempt to inject agency by examining actors’ strategic actions on the micro-level. I emphasize that the use of gender egalitarian norms which fit to political opportunities were “active, creative, and constitutive” (McAdam et al., 2001:16) action. Yet, at the same time the actions are constrained by the net of institutional dimensions of the women’s policy machineries within which femocrats operated. Looking at the complicated relationship between structure and agency - institutional constraints and the strategies of the actors- leads us to see the back and forth nature of advancement into a full gender equality.

Finally, I argue that the different meanings of gender equality used by state and non-state actors and the cultural contests surrounding these diverse meanings contributed to MOGEF’s limited policy efforts to increase gender equality. The concept of gender equality alters meaning in different contexts. The actors prioritize one meaning over another in the processes of contestation (Lombardo et al., 2009). For example, to some actors, policy efforts providing women with opportunity to work can be a good form of equality. But if these policies lead to the destabilization of the family, they may consider it a bad form of equality. To some actors, policy efforts granting women maternal leave is ok but ones enforcing men to use paternal leave are too progressive. Some actors might think it is not radical enough to introduce the

paternal leave system because it still does not change the institution of the modern nuclear family.

Therefore, attention to the diverse range of gender equality norms that influences the actors' various framings of their goals allows us to analyze how and why transformative visions of gender equality are translated into pragmatic policy efforts or fail. The transformative visions attempting fundamental changes in gender norms and gendered practices are not shared by everyone. Therefore, sometimes actors use more widely shared meanings of gender equality to achieve their short term goals and at the same time claim fundamental changes in gender norms and practices to achieve their eventual goal. Sometimes when the actors' transformative visions and goals look like they are going beyond the threshold of progressiveness (i.e. destabilize the family), the entrenched norms resonate with people more strongly and become more powerful in the hands of social political conservatives in their fight to resist the changes.

The thrust of my argument in this dissertation is that the institutionalization of the gender equality ideologies can offer opportunities of innovation in women's inequality but at the same time sets boundaries on the possibilities of innovation by forming compromises. The compromises produce the paradox of institutionalization- a nearly opposite outcome to the ideal of abolishing gendered norms and practices- through a complex organizational context, the actors' strategies, and competing definitions of gender equality. Once the institution is established, the institution is placed in the labyrinth of additional institutional dimensions. Diverse actors operate

within this web and make an attempt to achieve their goals with various definitions of gender equality. The ideological effects of the establishment of the organization on policy programs are mediated through the multiple organizational dimensions, and actors' strategies to achieve their own definition of gender equality.

C. Theoretical Considerations

Previous research has presumed a world wide trend toward increasing efforts to address gender inequality and gradual improvement in gender equality itself. However, the mechanisms that explain empirical patterns and outcomes have seldom been identified. In search of the mechanisms, this dissertation makes an attempt to first, identify the interaction between global and local influences on the increase in gender equality through the analytic focus on domestic institutional constraints, the role of agency and the contestation of the meaning of gender equality. Second, this dissertation is grounded on the theoretical assumptions of mixed progress toward gender equality made by previous research regarding the non-linear nature of increases in gender equality. At the same time, this dissertation fills gaps in previous research by identifying the institutional mechanisms leading to uneven paths to a more gender equal society. In looking for the mechanisms, this dissertation borrows historical institutionalism for institutional constraints and social movement theories, particularly framing theories and political opportunities theories.

1. Searching for the Interaction between Global and Local

The increasing efforts to redress gender inequality is generally analyzed by two bodies of literature - one focuses on the ideological egalitarianism as a world norm that is adopted by neo-institutionalists (Meyer et al., 1997; Ramirez et al., 1997; Berkovitch, 1999; Boyle, 2002); the other focuses on domestic political and economic modernization underlying the rising status of women (Goode, 1963; Parsons, 1970; Inkeles and Smith, 1974; Jackson, 1998; Estevez-Abe et al., 2003; Giele, 2006). I believe that probing the interaction between the global norm and the local structural change will contribute to a deeper understanding of the forces underlying the ongoing efforts to increase women's equality.

Neo-institutionalists are interested in the global trend- that is, the increase in policies and state organizations to redress gender inequality. The scholars explain it as a diffusion of "world culture." According to this theoretical position, the value of egalitarianism grounded in Western liberal individualism is an increasingly influential world-cultural principle. It is one of the core components of the modern state, and nation-states make an effort to improve the status of women as a sign of endorsing global normative standards and as an effort to improve their international standings.

For example, Berkovitch (1999) finds the global embracement of women's economic rights as a subset of human rights. This redefinition results in the emergence of equal pay laws, the decline of protective laws, and the expansion of maternity provisions. Also she insists that establishment of government organizations designated to deal with women's issues has increased worldwide since the 1980s. She emphasizes the discourse-shaping roles of international organizations such as the ILO and the UN

in legitimizing women's equal economic rights as human rights and the necessity of bureaucratic organization in nation-states.

Similarly, Ramirez et al. (1997) find worldwide and regional patterns in the acquisition of women's suffrage. They assert that world models and international standards of political citizenship have been more consequential than domestic influences on the universalization of women's suffrage from 1800 to 1990.

The other strand of literature is based on structural-functional theories that emphasize internal conditions such as domestic political and economic situations as important factors explaining women's status improvement (Goode, 1963; Inkeles and Smith, 1974; Jackson, 1998; Kerr et al., [1960] 1994; Estevez-Abe et al., 2003). For example, on the political level, the interest-based approach points out that state actors surrounding women's issues have their own gender-related interests and play a major role in gender policy making. Powerful men in modern political structures pursue policies that favor women since women have become a significant electoral power (Jackson, 1998).

On the economic level, theories of convergence in the modern stratification system posit that the improvement of women's status is caused by industrialization and modernization (Goode, 1953; Inkeles and Smith, 1974; Kerr et al., [1960] 1994). According to this theoretical position, modern practices such as bureaucratic personnel allocation and educational and technical certification necessitate the allocation of jobs based on merits rather than ascription, which is considered to be a pre-industrial value.

Both camps of scholars explain what delegitimizes and erodes gender-based

inequalities and leads to gradual social changes in gender regimes. In one case, global norms are themselves an independent catalyst for change, and in the other it is local economic and organizational exigencies that produce the value changes. Notwithstanding the insights of each prong of literature, the interaction between the two elements - international pressure toward gender equality norms and domestic social, political, and economic structural changes- should be studied in order to draw a fuller picture of the increase in gender equality. This combination is what my dissertation explores.

On the one hand, watching domestic policy makers and civil society organizations adopting the normative mandates that the transnational organizations demand, leaves an analytical hole for structural functionalists to focus solely on domestic conditions in analyzing gender related policy formation processes.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore internal social economic and political conditions. In the case at hand, the plummeting birth rate and increasing old population were important social structural changes that became a pervading political discourse in the Korean policy domain. The political interests in increasing gender equality also had been an important factor in the development of the women's policy machineries. By paying attention to the interaction, this dissertation highlights the complexities in which the two elements influence on policy making processes and eventually policy output.

2. Searching for Non-linear Property of Increase in Gender Equality

Not only is the interaction important, but it is also necessary to take a closer look at the ‘nature’ of the increase in gender equality. Both of the theoretical camps discussed above assume the linear expansion of women’s equality. They conceptualize improvement in women’s status as a unidimensional and evolutionary property that changes in accordance with world trends and local exigencies. From these perspectives, gender equality increases gradually in all social economic and political areas as egalitarian norms and modernization intensify.

Neo-institutional theory scholars emphasize the global phenomenon of convergence to international standards and rules. They insist that it is driven by the diffusion of global norms through international organizations, professionals, social movements, and policy makers. The nation-states make an attempt to look good in international society by conforming to international trends even though they do not ensure implementation in practice in the local context. Global norms will eventually change the beliefs and practices of individuals through the diffusion of educational systems (Meyer, 2004).

The structural-functional explanation insists that there will be inevitable change toward women’s equality -which Jackson (1998) termed as ‘destiny’ (242). It takes the form of cost for the politician or employers to discriminate against women. Women, particularly in advanced industrial societies, became more electorally powerful. Economic exigencies do not allow discrimination based on ascription because the country must survive in the market competition.

However, the road to a gender egalitarian society is uneven. This dissertation

builds upon research that recognizes gender equality as a multi-dimensional property; thus one dimension of equality does not always guarantee another dimension of equality (Charles and Bradley, 2002; Bradley and Charles, 2004; Charles and Grusky, 2004; Mandel and Semyonov, 2006; Charles and Bradley, 2009). This body of recent research suggests that the convergence effects of egalitarian norms and modernization are uneven across diverse domains of women's lives such as the labor market, education, and within households. For example, Charles and Grusky (2004) found resilience of essentialist gender stereotyping. They found that while segregation in professional and managerial jobs decreases (which supports the structural functional theories in developed countries), sex segregation in the non-elite occupations still persists.

In a similar vein, Mandel and Semynove (2006) also addressed uneven change in gender equality in the labor market, insisting that one aspect of gender equality is achieved by the sacrifice of another aspect of it. They found that state actions such as providing daycare services and enlarging the social service sector had a two-fold effect: on the one hand they promoted women's economic activities but on the other hand women's opportunities to go higher up the ladder were limited and women were disproportionately positioned in female-typed jobs.

Scholars (Van der Lippe and Van Dijk, 2001; Gornick and Myers, 2003; Breen and Cooke, 2005; Geist, 2005) found that sex segregation persists within the household as well. While revolutionary change happened in the increase of women's social economic participation and in their high educational attainment, change in male

commitment of work and family is much slower though it is happening. Gerson (1993) termed this uneven change in gender relations as an “unfinished revolution” (x).

Despite the multiple analyses of the bumpy road to reach a gender egalitarian society, previous research has paid little attention to the mechanisms through which the efforts to increase gender equality have uneven impacts on policy programs. For example, while the prior research highlights the complexities of increasing participation in the paid economy alongside greater occupational segregation, it pays little attention to the mechanisms through which the two fold effects are generated. I will delve into the issue of mechanisms in the next section.

3. Searching for Mechanisms

In searching for the mechanisms that pave the way to the continuing fluctuation of organizational stability and the production of limited policy programs, this dissertation pays attention to power and interest. An analysis of the context of power within which the women’s policy machinery operated in its relations with other state organizations and with civil society organizations allows us to look at the limited political spaces faced by the femocrats seeking increased organizational power. At the same time, it allows us to see that femocrats making policy programs “takes place within larger fields of power and social structure” (Starr, 1982:8, quoted by Brint and Karabel, 1991: 346), which leads to policy efforts with limitations or a failure.

Neo-institutionalist analysis of the diffusion of gender equality norm does not say much about the issue of power and interest (Powell and Dimaggio, 1991: 31).

Speaking fairly, neo-institutionalism analyzes the process of defining interests in “universalistic terms” and the actors as legitimized “agents of the interest” (Meyer et al., 1997: 168). However, since the state is not an entity pursuing solely gender equality norms as a goal and society is not a unity evenly advocating it, their action is modified within the social political power structure. My dissertation looks at differential structures of power in the multiple institutional dimensions of MOGEF.

In filling in gaps in the prior work, this dissertation draws upon historical institutionalism to provide an insight into the institutional constraints which set limits on the goals and strategies of actions. It allows us to unfold pieces of the profound story of the policy making processes that did not gain much attention in the previous work, particularly regarding the interaction between the domestic institutional dimensions and the global trend of increasing gender equality.

Scholars of historical institutionalism analyzed how institutions affect policy-making (Ikenberry, 1988; Hall, 1992; Thelen and Steinmo, 1992; Weir, 1992; Orren and Skowronek, 2002). Orren and Skowronek’s (2002) concept of ‘intercurrence’ helps us to understand the analysis of the various conflicting visions and ideologies occurring at the same time through examining the historical development of an institution. Using this concept, this dissertation delves into how the actors’ goals within the institution sometimes contradicted each other. The analysis enables us to see the complicated picture of the institutional arrangements and the institutional goals.

Hall (1992) insisted that institutions can guide policy by structuring the degree of power that actors exert on policy and by shaping actors’ goal setting which

eventually influences the direction of how power is exercised. Similarly, Weir (1994) found that certain institutional arrangements can offer opportunities of innovation but at the same time set boundaries on the possibilities of innovation by forming necessary compromise.

Weir (1994) also posited that institutional arrangements define the directions of ideas and interests. In other words, political institutions set boundaries on a scope of possible ideas on government action, which impacts on the later development of policy ideas. This theory allows us to see the competing ideas embedded in the institution and the actors' negotiations among them (i.e. the global norm of gender egalitarianism vs neo-liberal economic principles) within the complex web of institutions. While MOGEF actors adopted a gender equality ideology, other actors from the state institution also need to consider different international mandates available to them. Moreover, MOGEF actors cannot ignore them in relation to other institutions and broader political economic goals.

Notwithstanding the major contributions of historical institutionalism to the analysis of the role institutions play in paving a way for ideas, they pay little attention to agency. Historical institutionalists emphasize constraints of actions more than they consider the autonomy of agency, which makes their argument more of a structuralist account (Campbell, 1998; Won 2006). World culture theory has this same problem. Since advocates of the diffusion of world culture pay little attention to the mechanisms through which actors build converging modern institutions and policies, they slight the

importance of agency (Campbell, 2002).⁵

In order to amend the problem, this research focuses on the actions of the actors from both the state and civil society women's movement. Won (2006)'s analysis of the institutional development of the Ministry of Political Affairs 2, the initial form of MOGEF, also points out the structuralist account of historical institutionalism and makes an attempt to introduce agency. However, the analysis lightened ideological dimensions of the organization by mainly focusing on the organizational issues of interest and power.

In contrast, my dissertation pays closer attention to the role of actors embodying ideas in the institutional development and policy making processes. I analyze the complexities and politics of the process through which gender equality norms and the domestic social economic conditions influence the policy programs as they unfold in a certain stage of the institution. More importantly, in examining the processes, this dissertation attends to how the actors within certain institutional power configurations exploit new policy ideas grounded in both global trends and local exigencies. I then explore how they fit these to the organizational as well as normative properties of the domestic political institution. This analytic focus allows us to see how the strategic actions of the femocrats and civil society activism within the Korean political bureaucratic situation and culture shape the institutional structure and produce policies with limitations

⁵ Keck and Sikkink (1998) and Soysal (1994) are included in this research trend but their work is cited as important amendments of world culture diffusion theories for their endeavors to identify the mechanisms of diffusion and important role of actors (Campbell, 2002).

Literature from social movement theories provides a useful theoretical tool for the analysis of the role of agency. I draw upon framing theories and political opportunity theories in order to analyze the actions of the femocrats and civil society organizations to use gender equality norms to attain their multiple goals under certain political, social, economic, and cultural conditions.

Framing literature (Berbrier, 1998; d'Anjou, 1998; Davies, 1999; Kubal, 1998; Nepstad, 1997; Platt and Fraser, 1998; Tarrow, 1992; Taylor, 1999) analyzed how the actors use a cultural 'tool kit' (Swidler, 1986) constituting beliefs, values, ideologies, narratives etc. that supply actors with resources to generate new meanings of the frame. The scholars argue that actors make use of cultural resources in constructing their strategies of action and in gauging how their framings are interpreted against the existing cultural meanings (Benford and Snow, 2000). Framing theories provide insight for this dissertation in analyzing the influences of cultural framings on the actors' seizing of political opportunities at a certain historical juncture. It is also useful to analyze how diverse actors create their own versions of the meaning of gender equality and how they attempt to resonate these with pertinent audiences.

Previous research on the impact of political opportunity structures on social movements focuses on the outer constraints or facilitators such as a favorable regime structure to the movement, accessibility to political institutions, and the existence of sympathetic leaders to the social movement (Stetson and Mazur, 2010; Jones, 2006). This perspective can be applied not only to Korean women's activism but also to the institutional development and the policy making processes of MOGEF.

However, despite the political opportunities that feminist activism enjoyed with the existence of MOGEF, and despite the presidential support that MOGEF had in pursuing gender policies, we still notice the policy programs produced have limitations. Looking at how seeming opportunities operate as constraints on the part of MOGEF and feminists, this research contributes to drawing a fuller picture of the relationship between political opportunity structures and social movement outcomes.

My dissertation pays attention to the actions of mainly femocrats and actors from civil society women's organizations in the policy making processes. More importantly, I analyze femocratic leadership from the perspective of "constrained entrepreneurs" (Brint and Karabel, 1991: 348) who maneuver within the space of political opportunities and legitimate cultural models they find around them in order to reach diverse goals at one time within multiple institutional dimensions. I take a closer look at the relationship between the institutional dimensions of women's policy machineries and the use of certain cultural repertoires by civil society organizations and MOGEF femocrats in order to achieve their multiple goals. The analysis of this complex relationship makes it possible to look at the institutional mechanisms leading to the success and failure of certain frames regarding gender equality (Wisler and Giugni, 1996:104).

My research on MOGE(F) contributes to the previous literature by demonstrating how gender equality policies are constructed at the intersection of global norms and local social economic conditions and political institutions. The relationships between global and local factors have not been well understood in the

previous research. Neither has research probed the mechanisms through which gender equality as a global norm is realized into substantial policy programs that fall short of changing gender relationships. My research shows the mechanisms - the competing state goals and MOGEF's pursuing gender equality within the context of the state-wide goals, MOGEF's relationships with civil society, the logic of bureaucracy, actors' strategies, and the contested meanings of gender equality.

D. Research Methods

This dissertation is based on a detailed study of a state bureaucracy and its policy making processes interacting with civil society women's organizations at a certain historical juncture of the institutional development. In order to obtain rich information on the historical trajectories of the institution regarding the power struggle with relevant ministries, strategies of institutional expansion, its relationships with civil society women's organizations, and the actors' perception of gender equality, I conducted interviews, participant observations, and archival and documentary research in Korea.

From winter of 2006 through fall of 2009, I made several research trips to Korea, including a stay of over 9 months. These prolonged interviews made it possible for me to do comprehensive research particularly on the institutional change in 2008 and its aftermath regarding its relationships with civil society organizations, the institutional visions, and goals. It provided me a crucial gauge to estimate the influence of power on the operation of women's policy machineries.

I conducted 38 in-depth interviews with government officials, relevant policy implementation agencies, feminist activists, scholars and researchers of feminist studies and administration. I also had multiple interviews with several officials and feminist activists that include both on-site and correspondence to further deepen questions and answers along with my analysis. I started with targeted interviews by looking for officials in decision-making positions in the relevant policy programs and in leadership positions of women's organizations. From these targeted interviewees, I was able to snowball my interviewees to include the activists, scholars, and lower rank officials working on the pertinent issues of my research. The relatively tight social networking among bureaucrats, members of civil society organizations, scholars, and researchers facilitated my access to crucial resources and contacts.

The interviews provided a comprehensive body of resources on the institutional dimensions of MOGEF, as well as an understanding of the prevalent ideologies regarding gender issues that the interviewees had available to determine their line of actions. I conducted open-ended interviews but used semi-structured questionnaires suited to the interviewees to ensure their comprehensiveness. Starting interviews with simple questions about the interviewee's activities regarding policy programs, I moved to more serious questions about the challenges they experienced in achieving their goals, personal feelings about their jobs, their ideological orientations regarding policy programs they made, and opinions on the global trends of increasing gender equality. Most of the interviews were conducted at government offices and women's movement organization offices and took about 2-3 hours. Staying inside the

offices allowed me to get additional information on the bureaucratic culture, the operation of bureaucratic work, and the issues of exigencies to bureaucrats and movement organizations regarding policy programs and the institutional changes.

I conducted comprehensive interviews with former and present officials from the time of MPA 2 through MOGEF (2005-2008). Officials among them were long-time incumbents from MPA 2 to MOGEF (2010 to the present). The interviews with long-term officials provided me with a detailed account of the historical change in the institutional visions, goals, women's political machineries' relationships with the change in the political landscape, social structures, and the administrative net of power.

I also had officials who had been feminist activists or feminist scholars before they held the office in MOGEF. The inception of this dissertation started from the question of why we still observe policy programs falling short of the feminist ideals. Particularly, Korea witnessed an increasing number of feminist scholars and feminist activists who had started their careers as state bureaucrats particularly since the Kim Dae-jung administration. Examining what role they played in the policy making processes and what constraints they faced offers insight into larger political considerations as well as the role of agency in policy making.

However, I was not able to get a large number of feminist activists/scholars. Ex-officials who were out of the office after their term of service and a then-present official working in MOGEF refused an interview. Even an interviewee refused to answer personal questions such as their experience working at the boundary as both a bureaucrat and an activist.

The difficulties in obtaining data from these potential informants on their roles in the policy making processes and the challenges they experienced have an empirical implication related to this dissertation. I suspect it is indirect evidence of the constraints of MOGEF within which these people operated and had a hard time in realizing their feminist ideals. Once they got in the state, they had to operate within the political norms and rules of the bureaucracy and in these processes they might have had to compromise their radical ideologies, which social movement scholars have termed the “institutionalization of social movement.” (Bush, 1992; Mayer, 1993; Tarrow, 1989). While others’ appraisals of these people swayed between positive and negative, they might not have wanted to pour out their stories. My speculation about these people can be applied to the question of what a state can do for gender equality. The efforts of women’s activism and bureaucrats institutionalized gender ideology as a state bureaucratic agency. However, the multiple institutional dimensions faced by the new agency constrained the operation of the organization, which translated progressive ideas into limited policy programs that did not reach the original goals.

To examine a more extensive story of power struggle, I also interviewed other pertinent ministries and administrative agencies such as the Ministry of Labor and a close policy staff to the President. In order to obtain hands-on experiences of policy implementation, I interviewed relevant representatives of the specialized agencies for female workforce training and family stability.

Interviews with qualified informants on Korean administration culture and scholars of feminist studies provided me with a window into their encounters with

MOGE(F) officials and their frustrations with the operation of state bureaucrats. I targeted several scholars who had experience with MOGE(F) regarding issues such as female human resource development, work-family balance and care issues, and family law legislation processes. I also sought scholars who were knowledgeable on the MOGE(F) organizational transition processes. My interviews with these scholars were valuable in that they were able to provide insight into what exactly MOGE(F) bureaucrats wanted to hear from these professionals and what MOGE(F) bureaucrats' emphases were in their policy making programs.

Since this dissertation takes a close look at the relationship between the state bureaucracy and civil society women's organizations which results in the translation of progressive ideas into limited policy programs, I also conducted extensive interviews with the relevant members of the organizations. I interviewed members of KNCW and YWCA and staff of Healthy Family Support Centers as conservative women's organizations, and activists of KWAU and KWAU member organizations including Korean Womenlink and Korean Women Workers Association (KWWA) as progressive women's organizations.

From both officials and activists, I had informants with extensive experience in international relationships such as the World Conference on Women by the UN. This helped me analyze the regional and transnational flow of ideas about gender equality, the actors' perceptions of the ideas, and their strategies to contextualize the ideas in light of domestic conditions.

Aside from interviews, I did participatory observations at events held by

Healthy Family Support Center in 2006 and the election campaign in 2007. Healthy Family Support Centers are MOGEF's family policy implementation organizations. They are mainly associated with the scholars of home economics and I categorized them as a conservative women's group regarding family policies in this dissertation.

I visited a couple education programs conducted by a local Healthy Family Support Center in Busan in 2006. Although the program was targeting unmarried couples in their 20s, there were several married couples. Also several of them attended without their partners, like me. The goal of the program was to teach the attendants how to manage conflicts within couples so that the couple could manage a 'sound and happy' family.

I also attended the annual meeting of the association of the 'Healthy Family Support Center' in 2006 in Seoul. The meeting was held to introduce model cases in the family policy implementation programs, identify challenges, and share information among the centers' staff. These engagements gave me crucial information on the ideological gap regarding family policies between conservative civil society organizations and feminist activism. I also came to understand MOGEF's bureaucratic exigencies in needing to associate with conservative organizations.

I also conducted participatory observation at the election campaign regarding women's policies that was initiated by civil society women's organizations groups and aired by a major broadcast station in 2007. This event afforded me valuable insight into the crossroad of political necessity, women's advancement, and the priorities of feminist activists.

Further systematic data on state policies, legislation, and regulations were compiled from government documents and archives: statistical reports, research and policy papers, white papers, government newsletters, annual reports, National Assembly minutes and newspapers. I also made comprehensive use of the documents, reports, and brochures put out by civil society women's movement organizations and relevant policy implementation agencies through publication and website materials.

E. Preview of Chapters

In an effort to provide the foundation for the more thematic chapters, Chapter II discusses the factors that contributed to the historical transformation of MOGEF from Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) and Women's Policy Evaluation Committee established in 1983 to its present incarnation of MOGEF. This chapter argues the intricacies of the story regarding the institutionalization of gender equality into a state body which involves the interaction of international norms, political opportunities, ideological dispositions, and bureaucratic turf-building. Chapter II also demonstrates how the state recognized gender equality policies as serving state-wide exigencies, which became political and discursive opportunities for the women's policy machineries and civil society women's organizations.

Chapter III addresses MOGEF's complex institutional dimensions which led to female human resource development policy programs that do not challenge the notion of a gendered division of labor in the labor market. I argue that being concerned about organizational survival, taking advantage of the state-wide human resource

development initiatives, and deploying diverse cultural norms regarding women's equality, MOGEF bureaucrats suited the advanced countries' practices of putting women into service sector jobs with the vision of increasing women's economic participation.

Chapter IV discusses the production of policy programs reproducing the cultural concept of the gendered division of labor even with the existence of 'successful' feminist activism. I argue that feminist activists' goals to redress the problem of the feminization of poverty and to develop anti-hegemonic cultural principles to neo-liberalism with the strategies of engaging with the state goals and resource allocation were important mechanisms. When the institutional constraints precluded policy options for fundamental change in gender norms and practices on the state part, non-institutionalized social movements made an attempt to establish a vision of social change, though it is not yet realized.

I analyze the competing norms (i.e. gender equality norms and neo-liberalism), strategies, and goals of feminist activists who concerned themselves with domestic social inequality and the attempt to synthesize global norms of gender equality with the local social philosophy of communalism. This chapter examines the ongoing contests and creations regarding the meaning of shared understandings of gender equality (i.e. a world culture of gender equality).

Chapter V addresses how multiple institutional conditions made it hard for MOGEF femocrats to pursue the ideology of gender equality in the family. In order to examine this difficulty, I analyze MOGEF's failure in revising the Healthy Family Act

through its attempts to change the definition of the family. I examine the ideological battle between conservative women's organizations and progressive feminist activists, who both advocate the issue of women's advancement but diverge on the issues of family stability and the direction of MOGEF bureaucrats' activities.

Chapter VI focuses on changes in institutional normative conditions accompanied by the creation of MOGEF and giving it jurisdiction over family policies, which I argue led to family policy programs falling short of changing power relations within the family. The chapter discusses the influences of MOGEF's institutional expansion which endowed the organization with power while at the same time limiting the possibilities in the policy arena. In the end, the policies were not adequate to change gendered norms and practices within the family.

Finally, chapter VII addresses to what extent a state bureaucracy can lead change through policy, particularly in culturally deep-rooted perceptions and ways of life. Also the concluding chapter suggests possible strategies of feminist movement and a state agency for a fundamental change in gender norms and practices.

The efforts of Korean women's policy machineries and feminist activists have been referred to as a model case in international meetings and conferences. My dissertation on the analysis of the limitations of the policy programs does not intend to devalue the efforts of femocrats and activism. Rather, through qualitative research examining the operation of the state bureaucracy and listening to the voices of agents of social change, I offer a look at how an institutionalized mission of social change can be possible and what its limitations are.

II. Transformation of the State Agency: Interactions between Global Norms and Local Factors

A. Introduction

This chapter will trace the history of Korean women's policy machineries from the establishment of the Korean Women Development Institute (KWDI) in 1983 to its transformation into MOGEF in 2010 (see Table 2-1). The fluctuating history of MOGEF itself provides a complex picture of the social and political dynamics involved in the process of institutionalizing a gender equality norm. This chapter argues that even if the history of the Korean women's policy machinery was partly influenced by global trends, the diffusion of that global norm is "not a mysterious or automatic" (Gurowitz, 1999:14) process. It was through the actors who actively deployed the global trends and local social economic and political exigencies. Moreover, the influences of the global trends on the establishment of women's policy machinery in the local political setting were not linear. The institutions themselves experienced a mixed progress in its development processes.

Table 2-1 Transformation of Korean Women's Policy Machineries

Agency	Presidents	Form
The Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) (1983-current)	Chun Du Whan (1983-1987)	A research Institute
Women's Policy Evaluation Committee (WPEC) (1983-current)		A coordinating body under the Prime Minister
Ministry of Political Affairs No. 2 (MPA 2) (1988-1997)	Roh Tae-Woo (1988-1992) Kim Young-sam (1993-1997)	A mini-ministry under the Prime Minister, designed as a coordinating body
The Presidential Commission on Women's Affairs (PCWA) (1998-2000)	Kim Dae-jung	A coordinating commission under the President's office with focal-points in 6 ministries
The Ministry of Gender Equality (MOGE) (2000-2005)	Kim Dae-jung (1998-2002) Noh Mu Hyun (2003-2007)	A genuine ministry
The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) (2005-2007)	Noh Mu Hyun (2003-2007)	A genuine ministry with additional jurisdiction over daycare services and family policies
The Ministry of Gender Equality (MOGE) (2008-2010)	Lee Myung-bak (2008-current)	A genuine ministry without daycare services and family policies
The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) (2010-current)	Lee Myōng-bak (2008-current)	A genuine ministry with family and youth policies

The creation and development of a state agency for gender equality issues was influenced at the onset by the state exigencies. There was political urgency to open the state up to the international stage, and this was interconnected with the state's interest in using the issue of women's promotion for larger domestic political, social, and economic goals such as national security and economic development.

Secondly, the Executive's gender affinity was an important factor that has been

salient particularly since Kim Dae-jung administration (1998-2002). Gender affinity is a cognitive and normative framework under which one perceives the norm of gender equality as socially and politically legitimate. I argue that the President's gender affinity was a decisive factor particularly in the face of backlash against women's advancement, which emerged after the 1997 financial crisis. At that time, Korea was widening its participation in the global market and was simultaneously promoting efficiency in public administration as an important political norm.

The last, but not least, factor is femocrats' interests in augmenting their organizational power. I argue that the bureaucratic interests were a double-edged sword in that they contributed both to the expansion and to the shrinkage of the organization. The bureaucrats' interests and strategies to overcome the structural limitations of the organization contributed to the expansion of the organization (Won, 2006). However, my research finds that change in the ideological terrain that came with the institutional transformation was accompanied by the involvement of civil society women's organizations which held a different ideological orientation to policy making processes. It had an unfavorable influence on the continuation of the organization. MOGEF contracted into MOGE in 2008.

Delving into the factors that influenced the creation and transformation of the state agency for women's advancement in Korean society, I will also analyze the resistance to the organization throughout the history of MOGEF. Resistance took many forms, including turf battles with other state organizations; bureaucrats' ignorance of gender equality issues and ridicule during MPA 2 (Ministry of Political

Affairs 2); blatant antagonism from the general public; and conservative resistance to de-familizing policies. As the organization transformed and the visibility of the organization and women's advancement increased, the organization faced more complex and multi-faceted forms of resistances from both within and without the state. Ironically, its increase in institutional power limited the ideological freedom of the institution and thus, led to less radical visions for new policies.

This chapter will start with a short history of Korean women's activism, particularly focusing on the Korean National Council of Women (KNCW) and the Korean Women's Association United (KWAU). These two organizations are the main civil society actors that contributed to the creation and transformation of the state bureaucracy to redressing gender equality. In order to provide background knowledge on Korean women's organizations' engagement with gender politics, the section will focus on their ideological orientations, participation in policy making processes, and change in their relationships with the state after democratization. The historical analysis of MOGEF's institutional transformations from the Korean Women's Development Institute to the present MOGEF will come next. The main analysis of this section will be on the factors which produced the transformation of the organization and the resistance to those efforts. Then I will move to the conclusion.

B. An Overview of the History of the Korean Women's Movement

Korean activism on women's issues can be divided into two umbrella organizations (Gelb and Palley 1994; Jones, 2006): the Korean National Council of

Women (KNCW) and the Korea Women's Association United (KWAU). KNCW was established in 1959 as a government-mobilized and funded civilian organization. Therefore, its activism was not always seen as progressive in improving Korean women's status. Due to the variety in its member organizations, which ranged from professional associations to the anti-Communist league and housewives' clubs, the agenda that KNCW pursued has been diverse as well. Some organizations affiliated with KNCW struggled to reform the Family Law, introduced political quotas, demanded equality in inheritance tax legislation, tackled sex-biased job advertisements, and consumer protection (Gelb and Palley 1994; Oh 1997). Others were mobilized to diffuse the authoritarian regime's campaigns, such as anti-natalism, frugality campaigns for economic development and anti-Communist campaigns for national security (Hwang 2001). Also, the more progressive organization KWAU has criticized KNCW for representing only the interests of middle-class women (Jones, 2006:54; Interview with KWWW activist, 2008).

KNCW has 46 member groups and approximately one million members. Using its numerical strength and extensive social networks, KNCW utilized traditional lobbying techniques such as influencing decision makers, drafting legislation, and being involved in education (Gelb and Palley, 1994:280). In addition to its size, KNCW's origin as government-mobilized organization enabled it to appeal to conservative community and political leaders (Jones, 2006).

Korean progressive feminist activism did not emerge as a major movement that was influential enough to impact women's political, social, and economic status in

Korea until democratization and KWAU's establishment in 1987, although women were politically active under the authoritarian regimes. However with democratization on the domestic front, and the collapse of the Communist-bloc on the international front, the activities of international organizations provoked feminist activism to address broader ranges of gender-specific issues (KNCW 1998; Chung, 2004; Oh-Chang, 2005).

KWAU emerged in 1987 as an umbrella group that united progressive women's organizations and exclusively targeted working-class women. Before KWAU, progressive women activists participated only in the anti-authoritarian movement, the labor movement, and the pro-reunification movement. These movements did not address women's oppression and remained in *minjung* ("the locked-out, the exploited, the down-trodden, the have-nots," Ching and Yoon, 1995:418, quoted in Jones, 2006) democracy at the expense of gender specific concerns. For example, women workers demanded "humanitarian treatment" and "economic justice" rather than focusing on gender issues, even though they were exposed to sexual and physical assault from male unionists and law enforcement groups (Kim, 1997; Koo, 2001).

Activists in the late 1980s saw the *minjung* democracy paradigm and socialist orientation in the social movement lose its relevance with the fall of the Communist bloc countries. Also, women activists realized that the *minjung* democracy frame was not sufficient to address women's subordination in Korean society. Against this backdrop, progressive women activists founded KWAU in 1987. The founding members consisted of women workers, women activists who had participated in the

student movement for democratization, and *minjung* Christian advocates.

While KNCW had more intimate relationships with government, KWAU, with its origins in the anti-authoritarian movement, had an oppositional relationship with the state until the Roh Tae Woo administration (1988-1993). Like other civil society allies KWAU considered Roh as the successor to the previous military authoritarian regime. However, KWAU started to engage with the state upon Kim Young-sam's ascension to power in 1993. Kim Young-sam's administration was the first civilian regime in Korean history. KWAU registered with the government in order to enhance its formal legitimacy and to gain access to public funds (Oh-Chang, 2005; Jones, 2006:48).

KWAU grew to include 28 organizations and 50,000 active members by 2000 (Jones, 2006). The areas that the movement was involved in also expanded to include the issues of female office workers, blue-collar workers, farmers, and housewives. KWAU also took up women's human rights, focusing on preventing violence against women, increasing child-care services for working mothers, environmental protection, as well as re-unification and peace promotion (KWAU, 1998). Despite its relatively small size and lack of appeal to the conservative community compared to KNCW, it played a major role in initiating gender equality reforms such as revisions of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEA), and legislation on sexual violence and family violence. KWAU now is recognized as a legitimate political actor, and former co-presidents of KWAU have held highly visible and prestigious positions. One was appointed a National Assembly representative, and Hahn Myung-Sook and Ji Uhn-Hee

have become ministers of MOGE. Also, a KWAU activist has been a committee member of United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Due to the differences in ideological foci, target groups, and strategies, KNCW and KWAU did not always work together, but when they did they forged strategic issue-based coalitions only. For example, they disagreed with each other on the degree of the enforcement mechanisms of the Equal Employment Act and made separate efforts for the legislation¹. On the contrary, KNCW and KWAU cooperated to support key gender policy reforms such as political quotas for women, women's employment programs, the 1995 Women's Basic Development Act (WBDA), sexual and family violence legislation, and the abolishment of the family headship system known as *hojuje*.

The groups' ideological differences and their influences on the goals and strategies of their activism became more apparent as the agenda on women's issues became more diverse. More importantly, their ideological differences became lodged in one organization, MOGEF, which complicated the organizational ideological orientation and thus forced it to be less radical than it might have been (See Chapter VI).

¹ While KNCW lobbied for the passage of EEA in 1985, none of KWAU affiliated organizations endorsed EEA. In part this was because KWAU viewed support for the legislation as a "sell-out" since it had no enforcement mechanism (Gelb and Palley 1994). However, KWAU became the initiator of the subsequent revisions of the EEA. It initiated the first reform of EEA in 1989 calling for better enforcement mechanisms and sanctions for violations. KNCW was excluded in this process due to its ideological differences and support for the original 1987 Act (Jones 2006:131).

C. The Establishment of KWDI and WPEC

[Women's] problems should be solved based on the historical context and specific condition of the nation and thus we should not go against our nation's demands and reality (Speech by Minister to Ministry of Health and Society, 1975)

[I]n the face of becoming a highly industrialized society through the development and utilization of women's labor force, it is necessary to have an institution for women's national development (explanatory note on the bill on the establishment of KWDI, 1983)

Using UN recommendations and international practices, KNCW started actively demanding the establishment of a state institution to address women's inequality in the 1970s. However, these efforts did not bear fruit until President Chun Du Whan (1980-1987) established the Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) and Women's Policy Evaluation Committee (WPEC) in 1983.

1. 1970s: Before the establishment of KWDI and WPEC

It was civil society actors, not state actors, who were more aware of the international trends in gender movements in the 1970s. Civil actors had developed networks with international non-government organizations. The state actors, on the other hand, were not keeping up with international norms on women's issues before they acceded to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1983².

² This statement is supported by the fact that female legislators and KNCW obtained the information on the UN conferences and CEDAW through their international network with the International Council of Women (ICW) not through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, when female legislators went to the second World Women's Conference in Denmark in 1980, they did not know it was the occasion that a country acceded to CEDAW (KNCW, 1993). Afterwards, Korea acceded to CEDAW in 1983 and rectified in 1985.

Even before the 1975 World Women's Conference in Mexico, KNCW members started demanding the establishment of a state agency as they expanded their agenda into policy arenas in 1969 (KNCW, 1993). In 1971 after the election in which the politicians of the authoritarian regime pledged to enhance women's social status, KNCW founded a Women's Policy Promotion Commission within the organization. The commission was mandated to urge the government to establish a state agency to make good on the election pledge, insisting that it was necessary to change the paradigm of women's policies from a residual welfare policy to one that would enhance women's social, economic and political status.

The World Women's Conference in Mexico in 1975 inspired KNCW members to make specific and forceful demands that Korea to establish a state agency for women. The KNCW members, who were elites, had connections with the international women's movement, and extended themselves to the global milieu for the abolishment of discrimination against women in 1975. Through their connections with this international association, the activists acquired tools to use in their arguments against the government to found a state agency. One strategy was to refer to the global standing of the nation of Korea as a modern country. A KNCW member who led the efforts wrote:

Korea is making an effort with all its strength in order not to fall behind in the international environment, but the women's liberation movement still remains in a pre-modern status... If we want to develop into an advanced country and be recognized as a modern country in the world, women, constituting half of the population, should be advanced, and both men and women have to be modernized. The urgent task to modernize women and accomplish gender equity is very important and it belongs to the state. Women's problems are not issues that women can solve by themselves any longer, so the government has to recognize the seriousness of the

issues and has to establish a ministry of women as soon as possible. Given that even underdeveloped countries from Asia and Africa have already created national facilities (in an effort to follow the action plan of the first World Women's Conference), that our nation, a developing country, does not have one is a shame (KNCW, 1976: 24).

However, their efforts to create a state agency were in vain until 1983 when the Korean government established KWDI and WPEC. The activists underwent many difficulties and it took a great deal of time before anything happened. When the government did finally put things in motion, it established a research institute and a government commission, which was not a standing agency fully mandated for women's advancement. This is evidence that domestic social and political priorities were not aligned with international norms. The Korean government did not see fit to bring about a state agency during this time.

The state actors were informed of the international practices on enhancing women's status, but they were not really active in integrating a gender equality norm within the domestic context because the issue of women's advancement was not compatible with the state's social, political, and economic priorities. They were more conscious of Korea's economic and political circumstances with which a domestic role for women was more compatible than women's promotion. This is well illustrated in the "Year of Korean Women" speech given in 1975, which followed the "Year of World Women" by the Minister to the Ministry of Health and Society. This ministry had a mandate on women's welfare policies particularly regarding lower class women's welfare:

This year is "Year of World Women" that the UN declared urging an interest in women's issues. Upon this declaration, the government declares this year as the "Year of Korean Women." It is the demand of the time that nations around the world must

focus their wisdom on their nations' continuous development and world peace, and they want women as well as men to participate in this development processes by cultivating their potential. Despite these demands of the time, there still exist obstacles such as historically deep-rooted values, traditional practices and institutions. To do away with these obstacles is what both men and women commonly should pursue. *However, the problem should be solved based on the historical context and specific condition of the nation and thus we should not go against our nation's demands and reality. If not, (getting rid of the obstacles) will only result in confusion and lead to the break down (of the society).* ... Today we are facing the warlike Communist North Korea that tries to communize the Korean peninsula and the economic crisis resulting from the world economic recession and shortage of resources. *With this domestic situation and keeping pace with the international trends in mind, we have to practice the goal of the "year of world women" -equality, peace, development. In order to do this, women themselves have to cultivate their competence to enhance their status and show themselves being equal with men by behaving in a creative and logical way...* Without human resource development for women and their active social participation, we cannot achieve national prosperity, and the history of our nation will be limited to be the history of half. Therefore, elite women as well as ordinary women have to break with conventional practices and values, *cultivate female virtue by leading a happy family life that is women's duty*, and further realize the reality of the nation. *Women who are in charge of child bearing have to actively participate in the family planning project since the rapidly increasing population is the biggest obstacle of the national development.* (KWDL, 1997: 83-84. Emphasis is mine.)

When the communist threat from North Korea and the national economic development were firm grounds against the infringement on human rights under the dictatorship of Park Jung-hee during 1970s, the global norm of gender equality did not much matter in the domestic political processes. While the Minister referred the International Year of Women, the advancement of women is limited to 'social' realms and the family. Women's advancement is treated more as an individual responsibility than as a social structural problem to be addressed. Under these conditions, the international trends regarding gender equality did not work their way into the Korean political process well enough to establish a state agency, regardless of the logical ground they provided the KNCW activists and female legislators.

2. 1980s: Compatibility between the state's priorities with women's advancement and the establishment of KWDI and WPEC

The efforts of KNCW came to fruition for the first time when KWDI and WPEC were established in 1983. As a government think-tank, KWDI's mandate was to do women's policy-oriented research, to provide women's leadership training, to develop vocational guidance programs and welfare programs, to provide support for civic women's organizations, and to build international cooperation (KNCW, 1983, 194:23). The WPEC was under the Prime Minister's office and it consisted of Ministers and civilian experts. It held annual or biannual meetings to develop a policy agenda based on the research results done by KWDI, monitored the implementation of women-related policies by relevant ministries, and evaluated the impact of the policies on women's status. However, from 1983 until 1992 they held only 11 meetings (Won, 2006).

The female legislators who wrote the bill to establish KWDI using the international norm played an important role (KNCW, 1993: 27-28). With their experiences of participating in the second World Women Conference in Copenhagen where they proclaimed that Korea would have a state institution for women's equality (Won, 2006), the female legislators kept persuading other legislators within the party so the agenda did not lose priority. Finally, they succeeded in having KWDI and WPEC established.

However, a large factor that influenced women's ability to take advantage of the international norm was the fit between the political purposes of the regime and the necessity of having a state institution on women. The establishment of KWDI and

WPEC was made possible when the state recognized that redressing gender equality issues served the state's goal of building political legitimacy and taking an advantageous position in the international stage regarding national security.

Domestically, the creation of KWDI and WPEC was made possible when Chun Du Whan tried to improve his political legitimacy and relations with civil society after his seizure of presidential power in a 1980 coup d'état. Since the regime was desperate to divert public attention away from human rights abuses by the state and toward positive political images of social welfare and progressive politics, the establishment of the two agencies and demonstration of government policy by those agencies were necessary gestures to call attention to public opinion (Jones, 2006; Interview MOGEF official 1, 2007; Interview with Former MOGEF official 2, 2007)

Internationally, there was pressure surrounding the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to set up government agencies to redress discrimination against women. This provided opportunities to women legislators to convince the president to support the establishment of KWDI and WPEC. Rather than endorsing an increase in gender equality as a state priority, it came more out of the state's interest in becoming an active member of the UN, which would allow Korea to gain an advantageous position in its relationship with North Korea (National Assembly FAC, 1981, 108-8). Establishing KWDI was one of the steps to be a rectifier country of CEDAW (Kang, 2000; Won, 2006; Jones, 2006). Acceding to CEDAW required the establishment of a women's policy machinery, and was one of the ways to improve Korea's international

standing as an active state which was following the international trends and not falling behind other countries (National Assembly FAC, 123-11, 1984).

Since it was a time when progressive feminist activists were not exposed to the international practices (Kang, 2000) and had not begun engaging with the government to solve women's issues, the vision of conservative women's activism on women's issues was dominant in the political arena. As an organization that declared itself an "institutionalized women's organization that advocates close cooperation with the government and society" (KNCW, 1993:245), KNCW's activism was not revolutionary enough to demand change in gendered division of labor between the private and public spheres. This point is evidenced in the 1983 resolution as follows.

We pledge to concentrate our efforts to cultivate ourselves for a sound society and to raise our children so that they can adjust in the new open society (KNCW, 1993:299)

The resolution illustrates that KNCW saw women's primary responsibility to be in the private arena, with such activities as child rearing and consumption.

KNCW activists looked outside the domestic sphere for ideas and support. They connected themselves with the international women's rights movement, yet Korean activists only adopted elements from other international actors if those ideas matched their own conservative political orientations. It is well evidenced in KNCW's modest activism on the equality issue compared to its strong activism on the issue of women's participation in the national development processes. The point also holds for the female legislators who had been working on the establishment of a national agency in collaboration with KNCW. The bill they proposed for the establishment of KWDI put it as follows:

We strongly believe that *not clashing with the traditional value of our society*, KWDI will be a big contribution to make women's policies that will actively enable *women's competency to contribute to accomplish a just and prosperous country* as well as policies for efficient welfare provision for unfortunate women (National Assembly HSC, 114-18, 1982: 3. Emphasis is mine).

Considering that the feminist agenda is a social change that occurs through a shift of power between men and women, the project of enhancing women's status through the establishment of a state agency seems to be less progressive when it does not aim at changing the existing culture and structure undergirding women's subordination. The conservative political orientation and less progressive perspective of women held by the main agency later became the basis of the vision of the next organization MPA 2, as well.

Demands from the major actors were not aimed at the kind of social structural change that could have brought resistance from social political conservatives. Therefore, gender affinity of the regime was a less decisive factor than its compatibility with political priorities for establishing a state institution for women.

This compatibility is well illustrated in the explanatory note on the KWDI law agenda:

Particularly it is necessary to establish KWDI *because the regime's priority is to build a welfare society that everyone can benefit from in terms of social and economic development. And in the face of becoming a highly industrialized society through the development and utilization of women's labor force, it is necessary to have an institution for women's national development. Moreover, we comply with the international trend regarding women's policies including the UN by establishing KWDI and mandating that it do research on women's issues, women's vocational training, and support women's organizations.* (National Assembly HSC, 1982, 114-18: 4. Emphasis is mine).

The major actors' selection of the development issue over equality and their taking a less-progressive view of women's issues were both consistent with Korea's wider development goals.

The establishment of KWDI was a watershed event in the history of the state agency because it provided the women's policy agencies established later with a policy agenda along with statistics on women, international practices, and the UN's recommendations (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2007). After democratization, progressive feminist activists also built a close network with KWDI, which served as an information window (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008). It also provided the women's policy agencies with personnel such as the positions of director and ministers, who were equipped with information on gender equality issues which the bureaucrats lacked.

D. The Establishment of MPA2 (1988-1997)

The KNCW's efforts to establish a bureaucratic unit designated exclusively for women's issues continued. They were not satisfied with KWDI and WPEC. The first fruit of this effort was 1) the Ministry of Political Affairs No.2 (MPA 2) in 1988, which functioned until 1997. With the concerted efforts from progressive feminist activism after democratization, MPA 2 evolved to 2) the Presidential Commission on Women's Affairs (PCWA) from 1998 to 2000. It was replaced with 3) the Ministry of Gender Equality (MOGE) from 2001 to 2004, which then transferred to 4) the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) from 2005, and shrunk to 5) the Ministry of Gender Equality (MOGE) in 2008, which then re-expanded into 6) the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) in 2010 to the present (See Table 2-1).

MPA 2 was established in 1988 and it was initially mandated to deal with social and cultural services focusing on women, youth, and elderly affairs. However, youth and elderly affairs overlapped with other ministries and women leaders demanded a government body devoted to women's issues, so in 1990 MPA 2's focus was narrowed to women's affairs (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007; former MOGEF official 2, 2007).

Despite its focus on women's policies only, as being not an implementation organization but a staff organization, MPA 2's main functions were limited to making a survey of public opinion, publicizing women related policies, developing a policy agenda for supervising KWDI, and holding WPEC meeting to coordinate women-related ministries' policies such as the Ministry of Labor (MOL) and Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW). Under these mandates, MPA 2 made an attempt to increase women's participation in the government, it improved women's access to vocational training and educational facilities, and it supervised legislative reforms regarding equal employment, childcare, and family law (Won, 2006).

1. The Compatibility between the State Priorities and Addressing Women's Issues

[I]f women's policies should change the orientation by abolishing discrimination and contributing to national development, the role of MPA 2 will be expanded (Speech by the President Roh Tae Woo, MPA 2, 1990, 2:2)

The political environment surrounding the establishment of MPA2 was different from that of KWDI and WPEC. Civil society became much stronger after the 1987 "People's Uprising" for democratization and the military's concession to hold

democratic elections. Under these circumstances, the conservative women's group KNCW and women legislators pressed 1987 presidential election candidates to establish a permanent government agency devoted to women's affairs. In response to these demands, President Roh Tae Woo converted MPA 2 which had been set up to oversee the 1988 Seoul Olympics into a ministerial organization while retaining KWDI and the WPEC.

Again, rather than being due to the state actors' refined consciousness of addressing gender inequality, assigning women's affairs to MPA 2 was a more of a political expediency to make a friendly gesture to civil society after the democratization movement in 1987. Since civil society considered the regime as the political successor of the authoritarian regime of Chun Du Whan, by having an institution on women's affairs, President Roh made a political attempt to mitigate antagonism from the expanding civil society and to soften his military image associated with the previous military administration (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2007; Jones, 2006; Won, 2006).

As such, the political commitment to advance women's status was rather weak. Its weakness is well illustrated in the poor preparation for converting the organization. As a former MPA 2 bureaucrat who was involved in the process of starting the organization put it:

I was transferred to MPA2 in 1988 in charge of the general affairs of the organization, such as personnel and accounts only a week before the first minister's assumption of the office. When I went to the office on the first day, there were only 5 staff members (because everything was planned in a rush). We just had the minister sit on a couch and saluted her for the ceremony, just like playing soldiers (chuckles). I even had to take out a loan because the budget of MPA2 was not passed at the National Assembly

review. That's how we managed MPA2 in the beginning (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007).

While President Roh appointed Kim Young-Chung to the second Minister and supported her efforts to direct the organization to be fully devoted to women's issues, the support was not based on the president's gender affinity. As the President put it in his address:

[W]omen remind me of maternal affection, which is boundless. From this perspective, if women's policies should change the orientation by abolishing discrimination and contributing to national development, the role of MPA 2 will be expanded. First, women should play a leading role in dispelling from our society the tendency for extravagance that hampers the economic and social development. ... Second, it is necessary to promote women's voluntary community service in order to solve various social problems (MPA 2, 1990, 2:2)

While it is the first ministerial organization with full charge of women's policies, most of its activities were still in conjunction with KNCW, and thus the orientation remained conservative. This is clear in the frugality campaign mentioned above through which they encouraged women to contribute to national development by avoiding the "tendency for extravagance." Also, MPA 2 did not have full ministry status. It was not able to propose its own legislation, and it suffered from a lack of budget and staffing (20 staff in 1988). Thus its approach to gender equality was symbolic (Jones, 2006; Interview with feminist scholar 2, 2006).

2. Femocrats' Ideology of Gender Equality, Bureaucratic Interest and Overcoming Resistance

Now I define gender inequality as ignoring different experiences of gender, but at that time [when I worked for MPA 2] *I just pushed forward with the work whether I agreed or disagreed [with the goal of redressing gender inequality]. You have to fight, you just move ahead because that is just how a bureaucrat works* (Interview with former MOGEF official 2, 2007).

In spite of the limitations, it is important to note the efforts that several

feminist leaders of MPA 2 made to lay a groundwork for the ideological foundation of the organization in the milieu of the resistance to the organization and women's policies. The ideological basis of the organization oriented the bureaucrats' interests to expand organizational power through women's policy development. During the foundational period of the institution, this pursuit of bureaucratic interest in the niche of women's equality policies not only helped increase its organizational power, but also it reinforced the ideological orientation of the organization in the process. Bureaucrats equipped themselves with feminist knowledge and opened the path towards organizational transformation into an 'activist organization'.

The leadership to establish the organizational ideology started with the second Minister Kim Young-Chung (1989). Kim Young-Chung was a feminist scholar and also had served as a President of KWDI. She made an effort to overcome resistance from within and without the organization. Not only does resistance take the form of purposeful rejection to change, but it also exists under the bureaucrats' taken-for-granted consciousness, and thus appears as a dearth of imagination regarding social change (Huh, 2009). During this time when the visibility of the organizational function and ideological orientation and women's advancement was very low, the main forms of resistance were twofold. One was the unconscious ignorance of bureaucrats both within and without MPA 2 on the issue of women's subordination in their everyday lives. The second was the ubiquitous mockery of women's policies. They were obstacles that MPA 2 had to overcome as it settled in as a national agency charged with improving women's status, one of the mandates from the UN. The following

interview with a male MPA 2 official illustrates resistance both within and without.

When MPA 2 just started, we were like “when are we going to take out the word ‘women’ from our job descriptions?” or “how can a man can do a job on women?” And people from other ministries said to us “poor you, doing work on women”, or “you’re lucky that you have a ‘fun’ job” (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007)

The quote evidences that in the beginning, women’s policies were a nuisance even to MPA 2 bureaucrats. It was particularly because the staff was primarily recruited from the Prime Minister’s Office, and they generally lacked any gender-sensitivity training or connections with the progressive women’s movement (Jones, 2006). Bureaucrats outside belittled policies on women and they even belittled the officials of women’s policies. This resistance makes it clear we cannot treat the establishment of a national facility in and of itself as evidence of the diffusion of global norm. Looking only at the creating of a government agency does not offer us a complete picture of the diffusion.

In an effort to deal with the cultural resistance, femocrats wanted to settle the organizational ideology. Minister Kim Young-Chung began changing the policy language. This is an example of feminist leadership to improve MPA 2 and to further women’s policies within the state. As a former male official of MPA 2 put it:

It was a time when people were unfamiliar with the word “discrimination” as well as “women’s policies” (*yŏsŏng jŏngchaek*). When I went to the National Assembly meeting on (the approval of) MPA 2’s budget, they said, “Hey Mr. Cho, you have an issue with a woman (*yŏja moonje*)³.” I was like “what do you mean?” They didn’t stop using the expression of *yŏja moonje*. Minister Kim Young-Chung started using the language *yŏsŏng* in place of *yŏja* in our policies so *yŏsŏng moonje* (women’s

³ In Korean, ‘a man with a *yŏja moonje*’ can imply that he has an affair with a woman. In English, both *yŏja* and *yŏsŏng* means a woman. In Korean, the nuance of *yŏja* is less formal than *yŏsong* and *yŏja* can be used in a disparaging context as well while *yŏsong* is not. Therefore, referring the male official responsible for women’s policies as having a *yŏja moonje* means not only ridicule on the official but it also indicates despise for women’s policies.

issue) and *yŏsŏng jŏngchaek* (women's policy) became the policy words that are common now (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007).

Focusing the mandates on women's issues was not welcomed within and without MPA 2 but it became a watershed event throughout the history of the institution afterwards by starting the efforts to change the taken-for-granted attitude of disparaging women's issues. This effort continued until Minister Kwon Young-ja firmly established *yŏsŏng* in place of *yŏja* as the policy word.

In order to overcome the institutional limitations and cultural resistances, the MPA 2 bureaucrats made a continuous effort to change the status of the organization into a full ministry internally. They planned a law agenda and blueprinted an organizational structure (Interview with former MOGEF official 1 2007; former MOGEF official 2; Won, 2006). The efforts to augment the institutional power were grounded in a women's perspective and this was possible through the femocratic leaders. Minister Kim Young-Chung played an enlightening role, encouraging bureaucrats to be conscious of a gendered way of social organization. Her leadership is an exemplary case of the interaction between bureaucratic interest and organizational ideology. One of the former MPA 2 bureaucrats put it as follows:

One day, the Minister [Kim Young-Chung] huffed and puffed coming inside complaining that her heels were stuck between the blocks on the sidewalk because it had been built on men's convenience and thus it is not fair for women. I was dashed. Who would build a sidewalk with consciousness of gender equality? It took me 10 years to understand (what she was complaining about). She was talking about men's insensitivity of women's experience of wearing high-heels when they built the sidewalk. However, even though I didn't understand what the Minister Kim Young-Chung was talking about when she was complaining about the sidewalk in which her high-heels were stuck, [I did my work on redressing gender inequality]. *Once you're into a mission, the issue of accomplishing it is more imperative than your conviction. That's how a bureaucrat operates.* Now I define gender inequality as ignoring different experiences of gender, but at that time *I just pushed forward with the work*

whether I agreed or disagreed [with the goal of redressing gender inequality]. You have to fight, you just move ahead because that is just how a bureaucrat works. [Along with doing my work], I have become infected [by feminism] (chuckles). I often joke that I am both a man and a woman [chuckles]. You can't help it. While you devote yourself to the issues and develop them into policies, you get really into it and you get imbued [with a sense of feminism] (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007. Emphasis is mine.).

Having bureaucrats interested in organizational accomplishments was an important factor for the survival of the organization. The resistance outside MPA 2 put the organization in unfavorable circumstances, and this ironically made MPA 2 an incubator of femocrats. However, at the same time, if there had not been feminist leadership to change taken-for-granted gender bias, the organizational goal would not have been set to redress women's inequality. The interaction of the feminist leadership setting the organizational ideology and the bureaucrats' commitment to having a distinct mandate and to accomplishing organizational goals changed the bureaucrats from being gender-blind into being more gender-sensitive.

Organizational ideology was reinforced by the bureaucrats' accomplishment of organizational goals. This also occurred through their increased contact with international norms. At the same time, the Korean state became more conscious of its global standing. The international norm operated in the domestic political process when femocrats, committed to their bureaucratic interests, consciously used them to legitimize their policies. As an official who started her career as a femocrat in MPA 2 and also had a broad experience on the issue of MPA 2's international association put it:

I was not a feminist or anything at all. But since I started working in MPA2 as a bureaucrat and was in charge of women's policies, [I started to have a feminist perspective]. You know what is like to be a bureaucrat. They have to find some logic

to back themselves up to make a policy whether it is their own theories or from networking with academia, so I thought I needed to cooperate with civil society women's organizations. *And since the resistance was so severe and immediate from other ministries and the National Assembly, which stressed me out a lot, I had to find myself a defensible logic and orientation to women's policies. Having a network with women's activism was one way to do it.* However, women's policies from a bureaucrat's perspective should be different from feminist activism or feminist scholarship, so I had to work myself to develop my own framework to make policies. I studied a lot [on women's policies] and one time even had a tutor who was a feminist activist so that I could learn outside of my working hours. *I also looked for a logical basis to support my argument from research reports on other nations published by the international organizations, which I found really helpful. Those experiences led me to feminist perspectives that distinguish me from bureaucrats of other ministries such as Ministry of Welfare and Society. I had to survive as a bureaucrat specializing in women's policies from feminist perspective, so I exposed myself to feminist perspectives and theories that I then used to convince other bureaucrats. I learned feminism and came to have a feminist consciousness in the process through which I did my best to accomplish my work* (Interview with former MOGEF official 2; 2007. Emphasis is mine).

The interview shows that MPA 2 became a more fertile incubator of femocrats as Korea became more active in the international arena. Progressive feminist activists become engaged in the policy making processes after the civilian regime started in 1993, which I will delve into in the next section. This process of 'learning' for legitimacy was a mode of cultural diffusion in which the actors pursued the bureaucratic interest.

E. Globalization Drive, Democratization, and Legislation of Women's Basic Development Act (WBDA)

1. The Compatibility between the State Priorities and Addressing Women's Issues

The issue of improving women's status became a part of the national goals during Kim Young-sam's administration (1993-1997) because it fit well with the

national priorities that the policy makers set to upgrade Korea's international reputation. The regime's globalization drive to lead Korea out of its international isolation and embrace *segryehwa* (globalization) made the intersection of the state goals and gender equality issues more complex. The drive is symbolized by the launching of a campaign in 1995, the setting up of *Segryehwa choojin wiwŏnhoe* (Globalization Committee), and the country's ascent to the OECD. Looking at the international trend, women's social and economic participation became a sub-goal of the regime's priorities – improving quality of life that the policy makers adopted from the UN Social Development Summit in Copenhagen in 1995 (MPA 2, 1995, 23:13).

The *Segryehwa choojin wiwŏnhoe* (Globalization Committee) wrote a globalization plan, a specific section of which was devoted to women's policy. The committee consisted of MPA 2 bureaucrats, bureaucrats from other ministries, feminist scholars, KNCW and KWAU members. It also created a set of gender-related policy priorities and made "The Ten Policy Priorities for Increasing Women's Social Participation"⁴ (hereafter Ten Policy Priorities) including the legislation of the Women's Basic Development Act (WBDA) under the jurisdiction of MPA 2 in 1995.

2. Bureaucratic Interests, Coalition with Feminist Activism, and the International Trend

Democratization opened the political space for progressive feminist activism that had built up its capacity to deal with women's problems as stand-alone policy issues. President Kim Young-sam's victory in the 1992 election was viewed as a

⁴ For details of Ten Policy Priorities, see Chapter III.

victory for democracy, and his administration focused on institutional democratic reforms. Kim attempted to achieve political and economic reform by reducing corruption and curbing military power. In this vein, responding to increasingly stronger demands from civil society was important (Jones, 2006). The engagement of feminist activists being entitled as ‘legalized’ actors in women’s policy making processes provided MPA 2 bureaucrats with support to strengthen their institutional power later on. This continued until MOGEF’s contraction into MOGE in 2008.

Seizing the political opportunity of the presidential interest in improving women’s status, having support from both progressive and conservative women, and taking advantage of the Beijing Conference’s platform of action, MPA 2 femocrats were successful in including the legislation of WBDA as an agenda of “Ten Policy Priorities.” This event illustrates not only that the femocrats were aware of the international policy discourse, but also that they actively made use of the international recommendation within the domestic political opportunity structure to increase their own power. Global norms do not work automatically, but through the actors’ strategic usage of it under domestic circumstances.

The legislation of the WBDA was an important event in terms of the organizational jurisdictions and power to MPA 2 (subsequently MOGE and MOGEF). The WBDA provided MPA 2 with a mandate to head the creation of a master plan for future development and implementation of women’s policies based on the “gender mainstreaming” paradigm. This enabled the agencies to play a more active role in coordinating and supervising other ministries’ and local governments’ women-related

policy-making and implementation.

3. Bureaucratic Interest in Power and Turf Defense

While the strategies and efforts to legislate WBDA were successful, MPA 2 bureaucrats failed in putting the agenda of transforming MPA 2 into a full ministry in the Ten Policy Priorities due to the power struggle among ministries. This is evidence that state actors are not homogeneous regarding the agenda on enhancing women's status even as they make a concerted effort to globalize the nation. The actors are influenced by the globalization agenda, but they also act within the domestic institutional power structure. Paying attention to the domestic institutional structure allows us to incorporate the power dynamics into the analysis of the diffusion process of world culture.

When MPA2's power increase was discussed outside the organization for the first time, the MPA2 bureaucrats faced resistance based on bureaucratic defense of turf. While MPA 2 bureaucrats needed their own jurisdictions over gender equality policies, the bureaucrats, particularly the female bureaucrats in charge of women-related policies in other ministries, opposed the idea based on the ghettoization of women's policy areas. The status of women-related policies had always been regarded as less important. Thus, creating a ministry focusing on women's policies meant an establishment of a ghetto organization to which the female bureaucrats might be transferred, which would mean a change for the worse for them. The strong objection of female bureaucrats, not male bureaucrats, made it more difficult to include the

agenda in the Ten Policy Priorities (Cho, 1996).

F. Transformation into PCWA (1998-2000) and Legislation of the Gender Discrimination Prevention and Relief Act (GDPR)

The period of PCWA - and later on to the period of MOGE and MOGEF- presents more complexities in the number of factors influencing the institutional transformation and expansion of the organization. First, on the international level, Korea became more broadly exposed to world norms that were becoming more multi-dimensional and stronger with the expansion of neo-liberalism. With the financial crisis, the Korean state could not avoid neo-liberal reform on the economy, such as reforming a public sector based on efficiency. Pursuing the efficiency norm is not always compatible with the logic of increasing the power of women's policy machineries.

Second, on the domestic front, the long-standing oppositional politician, Kim Dae-jung, won the presidential election in 1997. He was one of the most knowledgeable and progressive among the Korean presidents in gender equality issue (Jones, 2006). It is useful to consider the Executive's gender affinity as a factor influencing the transformation and change in the power of the institution. Since the way international and domestic circumstances influence on the institutional change became more complex as discussed above, the cultural norms available to the state actors in supporting and opposing to the institution on addressing gender inequality became more diverse as well. Under these complexities, while femocrats and women's activists failed in establishing an independent women's ministry, they successfully

legislated GDPRA.

1. Overcoming Economic Crisis as Political Priority

Kim Dae-jung pledged to establish a ministry on women during his candidacy when he accepted the progressive and the conservative women's movement organizations' call for a creation of a full-fledged ministry during the 1997 election campaign. However, much to the movement organization's disappointment, with the inauguration of Kim Dae-jung, MPA 2 was modified into the Presidential Commission on Women's Affairs (PCWA) with 51 staff members.

The equality norm and efficiency norm surrounding the status of the institution on women's policies was especially salient since 1997 financial crisis. Facing the financial crisis, the new regime pushed the neo-liberal reform both in the government agency and the labor market in order to overcome the economic crisis. The neo-liberal reform on government agency influenced the way the new regime's planning on the cabinet. The cabinet was created based on the efficiency norm. That was accompanied by widespread budget cuts and smaller government size which had been globally pervasive for the national competitiveness in the global competition. Based on this logic, rather than a ministry that requires more staff and budget, a commission - PCWA - regarding women's issues was established.

In recognition of the crosscutting nature of women's issues, PCWA, as a central agency directly under the president, coordinated six Women's Focal Points (WFPs) in six ministries (i.e. Education, Health and Welfare, Labor, Home and

Government Affairs, Justice, and Agriculture and Forestry) (PCWA, 2000). The organizational structure enabled PCWA to influence formerly gender blind policy areas by expanding the idea of gender sensitive policy decisions.

The feminist activists' involvement in the policy-making process became more active during PCWA era due to Kim Dae-jung administration's efforts to open the bureaucracy to civil society. For example, the first chairwoman was a feminist scholar named Yoon Hoo-Jung, and was appointed by the President Kim. Also, the WFPs recruited outside experts from the NGO community and the legal professions in the development and implementation of new policies (Jones, 2006:171). The expansion and opening of the policy domain to the progressive feminist activism encouraged more cooperative relations between women's state institutions and feminist activists in the next stages of the institution.

2. Efforts to Expand the Organizational Power and Turf Defense

As an effort to overcome the institutional limitations, the PCWA femocrats developed a new law, the Gender Discrimination Prevention and Relief Act (GDPR) and it went into effect in July 1999. The first chairwoman, Yoon Hoo-Jung, campaigned to win presidential and ruling party support for the passage of the GDPR, which was designed as a systematic way of defining gender discrimination and expanded the role of PCWA from a coordinating organization to an agency with investigatory power (Jones 2006; Interview with former MOGEF official 2, 2007; MOGEF official 1, 2008).

The considerable oppositions from other bureaucrats were based on their territory defense. For example, the Ministry of Labor objected to the legislation of GDPRA for its own Equal Employment Opportunity Law with similar functions. The Ministry of Justice resisted to mandating judiciary power to PCWA to investigate offenses such as gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the ordinary citizen's everyday life (Jones, 2006: 170). The severe resistances required the persistent efforts of the PCWA femocrats, such as lobbying to the legislators, in order to accomplish the legislation (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2008).

3. Executive's Gender Affinity

The Executive's gender affinity played as much important role as the tenacious PCWA femocrats' efforts to legislate GDPRA. Despite the regime's decision to base the establishment of an institution on women's affairs on the efficiency norm, President Kim Dae-jung had a strong gender affinity. President Kim Dae-jung's personal and political history shaped the President's normative cognitive framework to be more sympathetic to gender equality issue. As a long-standing activist against the dictatorship, President Kim Dae-jung had a close relationship with Korean feminist activists who participated in the democratization movement during the 1970s and 1980s and he has been referred as the President with the most conscious of gender equality issue in the Korean political history (Jones, 2006; Interview with a CEDAW committeewoman, 2009).

Also, First Lady Lee Hee-ho, one of the first generation of Korean feminists, is

said to have had an influence on the President's normative affinity to gender equality. She had been the most active First Lady in influencing on the Executive's political decision regarding women's equality issues (Women News March 23, 2007; Interview with YWCA staff 2, 2008). When facing severe oppositions from the legislators and mainstream bureaucrats, the PCWA Chairwoman had strategically asked the support from the Executive to influence the majority party legislators, which made the passage of the legislation successful (Women News, March 23, 2007).

G. The Establishment of MOGE (2000), Managing Resistance and Ideological Compromise

I told him [the President] that the best way without spending too much money to build a higher national reputation is enhancing women's rights and creating MOGE (former activist and MOGE official)

There are opinions that naming the new ministry as *Yŏsŏngbu* (Ministry of Women's Affairs) could occur men's disapproval of or bias against it (remark by a legislator 2000)

1. Progressive Feminist Activism's Strategy and Femocratic Leadership

There were important political and discursive opportunities that the feminist activism took advantage of in establishing MOGE in 2000: the expansion of the feminist activism's engagement with the policy making processes since 1993 under Kim Young-sam's administration, their increased exposure to the international norm of gender equality since Beijing Women's Conference in 1995.

Having gone through the experience of PCWA, a coordinating body with less staff and power than MPA 2, conservative women's organizations, progressive feminist activists, and the femocratic leaders made a greater demand on the

transformation of the organization into a full ministry. The feminist legal scholar, Yoon Hoo-Jung, who served as a Chairwoman of PCWA made an effort to expand the power of the organization. In addition to the legislation of GDPRA, she also kept urging the establishment of MOGE to President Kim Dae-jung (Interview with former MOGEF official 2, 2007).

Particularly, the progressive feminist activists made use of the international practices and the nation's international standing in their demands of establishing MOGE. As a former activist and former MOGE official put it:

I asked President Kim Dae-jung to establish MOGE twice. You know, foundation of MOGE is not only a recommendation from UN but also a less expensive way to enhance the nation's international status. And the President was a feminist. So I told him: "the best way without spending too much money to build a higher national reputation is enhancing women's rights and creating MOGE. It is efficient to have a ministry by integrating women's policies that are scattered in different ministries. That way, the Korean case will become a model case in the UN, which will enhance Korea's international standing" (Interview with former MOGEF official 3, 2007).

The request of the progressive feminist activists illustrates that the world norm of having a full institution on women's issues did not work on its own. There existed an agency who took advantage of both the international practice and the domestic political opportunities that were available to them. And these strategies and efforts of the feminists were effective and led to President Kim Dae-jung's declaration of the creation of MOGE in his new-year speech in 2000.

2. Executive's Gender Affinity

Scholars have argued that political opportunities such as democratization and international legitimacy opened to the civil society women's organizations had a

positive impact on the advances in Korean women's gender equality, including the growth of the state bureaucracy on gender equality (Cho, 1996; Cho-Hahn, 2004; Jones, 2006). It is true that the growth of the progressive feminist activism after democratization played an important role in the expansion of the organization by having a coalition with the femocrats. The progressive feminist activists strategically took advantage of the international norm and the favorable political conditions in their efforts to expand the institution.

However, this is not adequate to explain the full picture of the MOGE(F)'s historical trajectories particularly because MOGE ended up shrinking in 2008, after its ten years of cooperative relationship with the progressive feminist activism and accomplishing progressive women's policy changes. If the establishment and development of the institution was possible with the democratized political condition which progressive feminist activism took advantage of, so was the shrinkage. Therefore, it is necessary to have an analytical leverage to explain the differential effects of democratized political conditions.

Pursuing gender equality norm for international legitimacy has a similar limitation in explaining both the expansion *and* reduction of the organizational power particularly under the presidencies that became exposed to various global norms (e.g. equality and efficiency). Scholars who insist the positive influences of the international gender equality norm on the establishment of a state bureaucracy (Cho, 2000; Cho-Hahn, 2004; Jones, 2006) did not delve into the contradiction within the components of world culture. Gender affinity as the Executive's cognitive and

normative framework to solve the tension between the norms in a more favorable way to equality leads us to a more astute analysis of the domestic conditions.

We should also pay attention to what mechanisms norms operate through in certain political conditions. I argue that depending on the decision makers' (e.g. the presidents and their staff, legislators) gender affinity, equality norms and efficiency norms can be framed as consistent or competing in the political decision making process regarding the status of a ministry on enhancing women's equality. When the decision makers' gender affinity is strong, they are more likely to reach a consistency frame: equality norms and efficiency norms can be achieved at the same time through building more powerful institution on women (i.e. expansion of the institutional turf) overcoming the political oppositions. On the contrary, when the gender affinity is weak, the decision makers are inclined to an inconsistency frame: the two cannot go together because efficiency norms have to trump equality norms. Increasing the power of women's policy machinery is a waste of national resources and thus the decision makers weaken the power of the institution. In this sense, the concept of the Executive gender affinity complements the political opportunity structure arguments by providing a more cultural explanation.

In the process of establishing MOGE, the progressive feminist activism's demand using international norm was realized when it was combined with the President's gender affinity. As women's consciousness for their equal rights and unequal system had risen, the issue of women's equality became more visible and so did the state agency on women during his administration, which resulted in social

political resistance against women's equality issues⁵. At the same time, with the strong neo-liberal economic social reform since the 1997 financial crisis, the Korean state became more broadly exposed to the contradicting global cultural norms – particularly equality and efficiency. Under these more complex and less favorable conditions for enhancing women's equality, the Executive's gender affinity, through which the president believes gender inequality still needs to be redressed, was an important factor influencing on the power increase of the women's policy institution.

Since the President had a gender affinity, with the consistency frame, he actively acknowledged the voices of the feminists and femocratic leaders on the creation of MOGE. It is well illustrated in the President's new-year speech in 2000 where he made a sudden announcement of establishing MOGE. In this speech, the President said:

The government will change PCWA into MOGE *so that dispersed women's affairs around government agencies are managed and implemented all together under one ministry*. By doing that, we will be prepared for the era of women, of which the role became important in the 21st century (Kim Dae-jung, New Year's speech⁶, 2000).

⁵ For example, the demands from female college students to abolish the Veteran Affirmative Action in the civil service entrance exam became a big controversy, which brought up men's vehement resistance. The Veteran Affirmative Action policy awards veterans 3-5 extra points in the civil service entrance exam which inhibited women's entrance in the civil service. Korean feminist activists, scholars, and femocrats (Cho-Hahn 2004; Kim K, 2005; Interview with MOGEF official 1) analyze that abolishing the Veteran Affirmative Action policy was one of the most symbolic incidents which triggered male hostility against women's equality issues and created confrontation between men and women in Korean society. The Constitutional Court ruled the policy as unconstitutional as supporting the veterans with extra points ended up depriving other social groups' equal opportunities. While all the able-bodied men were forced to do military service, the policy benefitted only small portion of men that applied for civil service entrance exam. However, men, particularly the veterans, were vehemently against this policy and they reacted by doing things such as using abusive words against women on internet and making threatening phone calls to women's organization that supported the court case (Jones 2006: 252).

⁶ http://www.pa.go.kr/security/security_display02.html.

Establishing an agency advocating gender equality, the President framed that the equality and efficiency norms can work together. His gender affinity is also manifested in his appointment of Hahn Myung-sook, a long-time progressive feminist activist from Korean Women's Association United (KWAU) as the first minister to MOGE.

3. MOGE's Settlement and Social Political Antagonism

The fact that the MOGE was established does not show the whole complex dynamics of the operation of the global mandate in the local social political arena. Examination of the social political dynamics allows us to see the non-linear development of the organization, an institutionalized form of gender equality norm. As the institution expanded, the visibility of the institution increased and so did the prominence of women's advancement. This increase in the organization's power resulted in greater turf battles within the state and vociferous gender antagonism from the general public. In dealing with the resistance, MOGE was strategically culturally sensitive and politically less radical. The resistance is evidence of the uneven penetration of gender equality norms in the domestic social political arena among the femocrats and other actors including legislators and conservative social actors.

Turf Defense from Mainstream Bureaucrats and Cultural Sensitivity

Since the organization became a Ministry from a small Committee which did not have its own policy jurisdictions, other ministries' check to defend their own turfs and resistance to MOGE's policy efforts became noticeable. This change in the bureaucratic power dynamics was an urgent concern of Hahn Myung-sook to stabilize

the organization in a disadvantageous political ground (Interview with former MOGEF official 2, 2007). Her strategy was to maintain cooperative and close relationships and to avoid conflicts with other ministries and government agencies (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2007; former MOGEF official 2, 2007). It was a culturally sensitive strategy because the Minister understood the bureaucratic culture that Korean bureaucrats would not tolerate any infringing of clear jurisdictional boundaries.

The minister's personal character was seen as "female leadership," (Park, 2004) which symbolized a mild mannered leader. Therefore, she was not seen as hostile. This helped MOGE to gain the cooperation from antagonistic conservative social political actors. As an officer puts it:

It was the time that MOGE needed to settle down as a Ministry without causing conflicts with other ministries and Minister Hahn was the right person to do. One day we went to a local government to explain gender equality policies and the old local influential people grimaced at us. They even hated having to sit there [to listen to gender equality policies] and had a look that they were forced to be there. But once Minister Hahn gave them a speech for about an hour, they ended up loving her. She had a talent to attract people without irritating them even when she told the same story as we did. And she changed those unwilling men into saying "sure, [those policies] are necessary, we will cooperate with you." So thanks to her, MOGE was able to be stabilized at the time that men didn't even want to know about MOGE and had a strong aversion to the very existence of MOGE. [...] If the first Minister was very aggressive and pushy, it would have brought up a back-lash and MOGE was not able to settle down (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2007).

According to the interviewee's remark, the first Minister's strategy was effective in stabilizing the new-born ministry consoling resistance and antagonism, upon which the next generation of MOGE was able to accomplish radical policy changes such as the abolishment of the family headship system (*hojuje*) and legislation of the law on the prohibition on prostitution and protection of women in prostitution. Moreover, the

personal character of “mild feminine” rather than aggressiveness was required to gain the legitimacy of the organization in the milieu of gender antagonism. Even after the establishment of a women’s policy machinery, the strategies and endeavors were necessary to root the organization in the unfavorable circumstances within and without the state.

Gender Antagonism and Dilution of the Transformative Meaning of Gender Equality

In addition to the adverse political condition, the new Ministry faced clamorous outcry from general public against the legitimacy of the institution. In order to deal with this resistance, MOGE translated the global strategies of “gender” politics aiming to change men into a less revolutionary institutional vision in order to establish the organizational legitimacy on a firm base.

The general public’s discontents with the creation of MOGE are well illustrated in the process of naming the Ministry. The name of a ministry is a symbol of the institution and thus naming a ministry implies what the state actors seek to through the ministry, how they estimate the people’s sympathy with their visions, and how they want to publicize their visions to the people to obtain legitimacy. While *Yŏsŏngbu* (Ministry of Women’s Affairs) eventually became the Korean name, there was a tough debate over the symbolic meaning of the name and its resonance to the people.

The to-be MOGE bureaucrats viewed using the language of *yŏsŏng* (women) as clear to the people about the legitimacy of the existence of the organization and including men in the name of the Ministry as more or less conservative (Interview

with former MOGEF official 2, 2007). However, other political actors' understanding of the legitimacy of women's equality policies was different from the femocrats.' They believed using the language of women symbolized radical tendencies and exclusiveness. Thus they did not think this language would help the newly established ministry to obtain social and political legitimacy. This is well illustrated in the report of the National Assembly meeting on the establishment of MOGE in 2000.

There are opinions that naming the new ministry as *Yŏsŏngbu* (Ministry of Women's Affairs) could occur men's disapproval of or bias against it. Taking the opinions into account, I think it is necessary to consider names other than *Yŏsŏngbu* (Ministry of Women's Affairs) such as *Yangsŏng p'yŏngdŭngbu* (Ministry of Equality of Two-Sexes) or *Namnyŏ p'yŏngdŭngbu* (Ministry of Equality of men and women) as an agency focusing on women's policy to accomplish *yangsŏng p'yŏngdŭng sahoe* (both-sexes equal society) (National Assembly WASC, 2000, 213-1:).

Whether the name of ministry is *Yŏsŏng* (women) *bu* (ministry) (Ministry of Women's Affairs) or *Yangsŏng* (two sexes) *p'yŏngdŭng* (equality) *bu* (ministry) (Ministry of Equality of Two-Sexes) or *Namnyŏ* (men and women) *p'yŏngdŭng* (equality)*bu* (ministry) (Ministry of Equality of men and women) might not be an important matter to distinguish so long as pursuing the enhancement of women's status eventually leads to gender equal society where both men and women are liberated from the responsibilities enforced by the patriarchy through the change in the power structure. However, instead of using *yŏsŏng*(women), the legislators considered the language of *yangsŏng* (two sexes) or *namnyŏ* (men and women) to include men so as seemingly not taking away men's privilege and thus being moderate and more appealing to general public.

Eventually it turned out that the femocrats understanding of the legitimacy of

women's policies with the language of women in the name of the organization was far from that of the general public. The resistance to MOGE from the society came to surface after its establishment. Taking advantage of the dubious state of the meaning of "gender" due to the absence of a direct translation of a Korean word, which would have been laden with the unequal power structure between men and women, was an important strategy of the femocratic leadership to deal with gender antagonism and backlash against MOGE.

With the changes of women's policy paradigm from Women In Development (WID) to Gender In Development (GAD) and the introduction of gender mainstreaming strategy on the basis of the recognition that gender is socially structured, including men as a policy target for change has been an important global strategy. However, the usage of the language of "gender" entailing discrimination based on sex difference was sometimes discrepant with the original meaning in Korea. The absence of the Korean equivalent with "gender" led to the translation of the word into seemingly politically-neutral pre-existing words such as *sŏng* (sex), *yangsŏng* (two-sexes), and *namnyŏ* (men and women)⁷, and therefore, gender equality as *sŏng p'yŏngdŭng*, *yangsŏng p'yŏngdŭng*, or *namnyŏ p'yŏngdŭng*. The translation of gender with gender-neutral words put the language on a dubious state– it can be political but at the same time it can be devoid of political meaning of changing men and open the space for the discourse of "men in crisis" in the policy arena (Baden & Goetz, 1998, Kim, K., 2005; Kim and Shin, 2004).

⁷ Sometimes "gender" is used without being translated.

Through the dilution of the meaning of gender equality, femocrats tried to change the symbolic meaning of the organization from “women’s right” to “equality for both men and women.” It is institutionalized through the cultural processes of naming the Ministry in English. As a former MOGE femocrat put it:

When MOGE was established, the internet site of MOGE was down with men’s abusive language and resistance such as there should be *Namsǒngbu* (Ministry of Men’s Affairs) too if there is *Yǒsǒngbu* (Ministry of Women’s Affairs). Minister Hahn got shocked that the people’s sentimental resistance was so severe and she started to worry. For all that, we couldn’t change the Korean name to *Yangsǒng p’yǒngdǔng* (Ministry of Gender Equality⁸) just after the birth of the ministry. So when it was the time that the Ministry had to decide the English name, Minister Hahn made a decision not to include women and to include gender in the English name since the Ministry was anyways established with the goal of accomplishing gender equality [*Yangsǒng p’yǒngdǔng*, equality for both men and women] and we started pushing “gender mainstreaming” as a [symbolic] motto.

A remark made by the Minister Hahn evidences her understanding of the concept of gender and strategic twist of the concept. As she put it:

This name [Ministry of Gender Equality] illustrates the ministry’s goal of redressing inequality based on gender, not just targeting women. In other words, for example, the sexual harassment by a female superior on a male subordinate also is an issue of the Ministry to redress). It is more ideal eventually that neither men nor women experience discrimination as much as women should not be discriminated (*Newsmaker* February 15, 2000).

The Minister’s referral to sexual harassment illustrates her understanding of gender as power laden concept. However, the remark does not directly meddle with redressing men’s problem under male dominated system because changing gendered structure requires the process of male centered cultural assumption while bringing up that issue only would have resulted in MOGE’s legitimacy issue in the hostile social circumstances. The translated concept of gender equality from change in the power

⁸ Literally it is Ministry of Two-Sexes Equality.

structure to men's benefit became an important policy frame in the organization later (See Chapter VI).

H. The Transformation from MOGE to MOGEF (2005-2007)

1. Progressive Feminists, Femocratic Efforts, and Strategies

In an effort to increase its organizational power (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007; former MOGEF official 3 2007; KWAU activist 2, 2007), MOGE expanded its responsibilities to the issue of the family and requested the transfer of family responsibilities undertaken by Ministry of Health and Welfare. Putting aside the recommendation from the UN to establish a coordinating organization to infuse gender sensitivity in diverse policy issues rather than an organization with the mandates of implementing policies, having a policy authority over family matters itself was an issue even within the UN regarding the Korean case.

However, expanding the territory to family issues was an important organizational imperative because it allowed MOGE to make policies to change norms of gender norms within the family with increased power (i.e. staff and budget). The progressive feminist activists also made a strategic usage of the international discourse of the gender sensitive perspective (*sŏnginjijŏk gwanjŏm*) in their support for MOGE's expansion into Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF). They also made use of the global discourse in constructing their alternative framing of family policies to the conservative pro-family group's perspective (KWAU, 2003)⁹.

⁹ For a detailed analysis of cultural contests on the family policy paradigms, see Chapter V.

MOGE's expansion into MOGEF illustrates that the organization conformed to the domestic institutional structure not an internationally advocated form. The Korean case is well explained by neo-institutionalists' 'structural isomorphism' argument at the national level (Won, 2006). However, it is at odds with the argument at the global level (Meyer et al., 1997:152-153) and this disagreement is explained by the strategic actions of the femocrats and feminist activists who sought an organizational form with stronger power- a ministry in the Korean case.

An interview with a feminist activist, who is also a committee member of the CEDAW, illustrates the strategies of Korean femocrats in tailoring the UN recommendation to conform to the pre-existing domestic administrative organizational culture (Soysal, 1994) and at the same time to pursue the ideologies of gender equality.

One of the frequently asked questions [on the Korean case] in CEDAW [The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women] was whether it was okay for a women's policy machinery to have mandates on family policies. They were concerned about [ideologies of] the division of labor [in which] women take care of the family. Despite that, [an organization on] women can do better in the daycare service policies from gender equality perspectives and family policies. So I think it is a matter of practice. MOGE had a hard time in operating itself since it was such a small organization, and I didn't oppose to the idea to take over daycare service policies and family policies if the organization cannot do anything without some bulk of jurisdictions. And I doubt whether Ministry of Health and Welfare could do better if they take them back [since they do not have a gender sensitive perspective] (Interview with a CEDAW committee, 2008).

A bureaucratic organization cannot operate only based on the ideologies it pursues. Organizational power is an important issue to realize the ideologies. MOGE was based on and started from the mission of improving women's advancement. However, at the same time, it was a bureaucratic organization that was operating within the Korean administrative structure- jurisdictions accompanied with staff and budgets strengthen

the organizational power. The institutional constraints and the femocrats/feminists' strategies within the constraints led the organization to a Ministry with jurisdictions over family policies.

2. Executive's Gender Affinity

President Noh Mu Hyun (2003-2007), Kim Dae-jung's successor, was a progressive politician with a gender affinity (Interview with a former Presidential staff, 2006). In addition to his appointment of four female ministers, as a stubborn supporter of social change and human rights and close relationship with civil society activism (Jones, 2006), the President supported MOGE on several issues such as the abolition of the family headship system (*hojuje*) and transferring the mandates over the provision of daycare services and family policies from the Ministry of Health and Welfare to MOGE. It is well illustrated in the then-minister's endorsement of the President Noh's gender affinity.

I think President Noh is a feminist from the perspective of human rights. I had a lot of support from the President in doing my work (Interview with former MOGE official 3, 2007).

The president's gender affinity led him to the equality-efficiency consistency framework through his philosophy of social policies. The regime made various efforts to provide social welfare that were necessary for social safety net while driving efficient economic development based on neo-liberal reform. The following remark by the then-Minister to Ministry of Health and Welfare shows clearly that the President's decision to expand MOGE into MOGEF was based on his normative framework on social policies:

Since the chief of the Executive is the President, the decision on [what tasks constitute MOGEF] depends on, although we need the people's approval and support, the philosophy and principles of the President and Ministers on drawing up the government organization (National Assembly HWC 252-1, 2005:25).

More specifically, regarding gender policies, President Noh agreed with MOGE's approach to solving the domestic social problems such as low-fertility and increasing aging population while liberating women from home into labor-force. It is well evidenced in the opinion of the President's close staff on the new regime's attempt to eliminate MOGEF in 2008.

The regime transformed MOGE to MOGEF. It was because establishing gender equal family culture was urgent in order to solve the national problem of the world lowest fertility rate. [...] However, has our society changed into gender equal one so we get rid of MOGEF? Has the low fertility rate problem been solved so we do not have to worry? (*Blue House Briefing*, 2008).¹⁰

President Noh perceived the social problems should be solved from a gender equality culture within the family, which is a manifestation of his gender affinity.

The gender affinity led the President's to the consistency framework that produced MOGE's expansion into MOGEF in an attempt to solve family problems from women's standpoint. As then-Minister to Ministry of Health and Welfare put it in the National Assembly that opposed to the idea of transforming MOGE into MOGEF:

Since we are on the point that welfare service or social service is very important, the cabinet had debates over drawing up government organizations for the efficient provisions of the services. *From the Executive standpoint, it is efficient to establish Ministry of Gender Equality and Family to provide social service.* Particularly [...], last year we transferred tasks over daycare service provisions to MOGE and since [the issue of] family, women, kids are connected, *establishing [the MOGEF is an effective way to solve the problem of destabilized family, and that is the Executive decision* (National Assembly HWC 252-1, 2005:24. Emphasis is mine).

While there was a vehement opposition within the Cabinet and from the National

¹⁰ <http://blog.daum.net/cwdblog/13933237>

Assembly based on the low efficiency of expanding MOGE into MOGEF, the President pushed his idea based also on efficiency. As the opponents insisted, the efficient provision of social policies could have been achieved by the Ministry of Health and Welfare with the existing resources. However, President Noh's gender affinity led him to support MOGE's idea to have the jurisdiction over family issues.

3. Resistance within and without the Institution¹¹

Even if MOGE femocrats had the support from progressive feminist activists and the gender affinity of politically liberal presidential leader, the bureaucratic power struggle over gender policy territory reappeared in the process of institutional transformation (National Assembly HWC 252-1, 2005). Also, since policies on families are deeply related to cultural ideologies of the family, they involved a diverse population - not just women - and thus involved a broad ideological spectrum. The transformation of MOGE into MOGEF produced a cultural war between progressive feminist activists and conservative civil society actors. The hardships which MOGEF femocratic leadership and the progressive feminist activists had to undergo in the family policy making processes evidence the uneven penetration of the discourse of infusing gender perspective in a policy arena. Embracing improvement of women's advancement can be accepted but the idea of changing the family was too radical.

I. The Shrinkage of MOGEF to MOGE (2008-2010)

Having MOGE itself enables [the category of] women exist in policies and makes

¹¹ For the detailed analysis of the resistance from Ministry of Health and Welfare, MOGEF's complex institutional dimensions and conservative resistance to MOGEF, see Chapter V.

[policy makers] consider women's status in all areas [of policies] and make it possible for women to participate in the policy making processes. [...] However, MOGEF distorted the [concept] of the family from KWAU's perspective of women (former KNCW president, 2008)

When the new President Lee Myōng-bak took his office with the victory of the conservative party in the general election, the regime contracted the MOGEF back into MOGE in 2008. The case of the shrinkage of MOGEF to MOGE has an important theoretical implication because it shows that MOGEF's femocrats' and the progressive feminist activists' active use of the international standards on gender equality did not appeal to the new regime's decision makers. In addition to the fact that not all the state actors embraced global standards regarding gender equality, they were only 'an' element of world culture that is composed of several conflicting norms (Campbell, 2002).

1. Gender Affinity and Equality-Efficiency Inconsistency Frame

With the regime change after 10 years of the progressive governments, the conservative regime tried to eliminate MOGEF and assign MOGEF's tasks under newly named, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Women. The efficiency norm was regarded as an important principle of organizing the new government as in the previous progressive regime driving the neo-liberal economic reforms. However, the weak gender affinity of President Lee led the decision makers to the competing frame between equality and efficiency and eventually the efficiency norm trumped the equality norm. The weak gender affinity is well illustrated several remarks of the President Lee Myōng-bak on the status of women and MOGEF as follows:

The GNP is over \$20,000 so women's rights has been made the rapidest advancement.

And men's consciousnesses have changed (*The Hangyore*, January 19, 2008).

MOGE(F) is a ministry for women pursuing (their own political) power (*The Hangyore*, January 19, 2008).

Despite Korean women's lower social political and economic status compared to other countries that are evidenced in the international index such as the UNDP's Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), the President's perspective of women's status is that the society has changed enough to eliminate a ministry on women's inequality problems. With more numbers of women becoming visible in the social political and economic arena, their visibility became a symbol of women's social economic status enhancement and thus made the existence of the Ministry more illegitimate (Interview with a public administration scholar, 2007). Moreover, the President's perspective of MOGE(F) indicates his negative reaction to the progressive feminists who had manifested themselves in the progressive political landscape, which evidences his weak gender affinity¹². The President's weak gender affinity is also evidenced in his not taking into account of the progressive feminist activists in policy making processes regarding the issues of women and the family under his regime (Interview with Womenlink activist 1, 2009).

Since the decision makers' gender affinity is relatively weak, they used the competing frame and emphasized the efficiency norm over gender. As the femocrats and the progressive feminist activists had been doing effectively for the establishment of MOGE(F), in order to maintain the Ministry, they took advantage of the

¹² It is also said that President Lee did not have an amicable relationship with the progressive feminist activists due to feminist activists' criticism of his lack of awareness of sexual discrimination (*The Hangöyre* 2008-1-19; Interview with Womenlink activist 1, 2009).

international standards such as GEM. Also they legitimized their logic of enhancing the power of MOGEF on the basis of the nation's international prestige (KWAU, 2008; National Assembly GEFC 2008; National Assembly GAHAC, 2008). However, international standards regarding gender equality were not effective enough to override the efficiency norm. As the President Lee Myŏng-bak and his staff put it:

It is our goal to constitute a small government and make it efficient, so we should not increase the number of ministries (*The Hangyore*, February 16, 2008).

Rather than individual development of women's policies in the independent ministries, it is more efficient for them to be made in the organic relationship with social welfare policies [by being under the Ministry of Health Welfare and Women] (*Blue House Briefing*, 2008).¹³

Following the international trend of integrating several related ministries into one big ministry to enhance the efficiency of the government function, the President made a decision to eliminate MOGEF and integrate it as a bureau of the Ministry of Health Welfare and Women. While the regime with a relatively strong gender affinity supported enhancing the power of MOGE(F) by conferring policy turfs to the Ministry with the consistency frame, the regime with weak gender affinity used the inconsistency frame to get rid of the Ministry.

2. The Reverse Effect of Femocratic Strategies for Turf Expansion-Losing Conservative Women's Support

The efforts that MOGEF made to balance between the progressive feminist activists group and the conservative women's groups in dealing with the cultural war did not satisfy either group of women: the progressive feminist group criticized

¹³ <http://blog.daum.net/cwdblog/13933237>

MOGEF's family policies as reproducing the Family ideology whereas the conservative women's group criticized MOGEF for being biased to women's liberation from the home (Interview with HFSC staff 1, 2007; HFSC staff 2, 2007; KWAU activist 1 2008; KNCW member 2008; HFSC staff 3, 2009, MOGEF official 3, 2009; Womenlink activist 1, 2009). While dissatisfied, the progressive feminist activists such as KWAU demanded power increase in MOGEF¹⁴. Other women's groups from moderate to conservative women's groups did not vehemently support MOGEF's idea of enhancing institutional power (Interview with YWCA staff 1, 2008; YWCA staff 2, 2008).

Particularly, KNCW opposed to the idea of allowing the institution to continue to have a jurisdiction on the family policy issues and suggested a form of commission focusing on women's right issues only. Whether it was a form of a ministry or a commission, the ideal status of women's policy machinery and the specific way to enhance the power of the institution was not actively debated because the ideological gap between the two groups were too broad to make a strategic coalition on the issue of the family. It is well illustrated in a KNCW member's discontent with MOGEF's policy orientation.

Having MOGE itself enables [the category of] women exist in policies and makes [policy makers] consider women's status in all areas [of policies] and make it possible for women to participate in the policy making processes. [...] However, MOGEF distorted the [concept] of the family from KWAU's perspective of women. It is necessary to have a progressive perspective, but the perspective is not acceptable in

¹⁴ A progressive feminist activists group the Korean Womenlink, a member organization of KWAU did not participate in KWAU's action to oppose to the new regime's plan to eliminate MOGEF (Interview with Womenlink activist 2, 2008; Womenlink activist 3, 2008). The Korean Womenlink made their own independent effort to find a solution to strengthen the institution without a jurisdiction over family policies.

society. We should know where the average is. It is not a women's policy to benefit women only. It is a women's policy that makes the society prosperous with women's power (Interview with a KNCW member, 2008).

While the interviewee agrees on the idea of women's equality from the perspective of women's equal participation in the social economic and political arena that is facilitated by a state institution for women's policies, she is not on the same page with the progressive feminist activists regarding how to make the idea administratively viable and to what extent particularly in the areas of family policies.

The establishment of an independent state agency on women involved conservative women's association KNCW from the beginning and progressive feminist association KWAU after democratization. Under the conservative regime where KNCW had a close relationship with the regime and KWAU was less powerful in their gender politics, the demands of KNCW embracing the international practice of creating a bureaucracy on women's issues were accepted by the regime when the viewed engaging itself to the international environment was politically strategic. After democratization, with the increase in the progressive feminist activists' participation in women's policy making processes and their connection with the international gender policy discourse, their demands of a state institution for gender equality was accepted by the progressive regime. However, in the case of Lee Myung-bak regime, there did not exist the ideological fit between the conservative regime and progressive feminist activism. Therefore, strategically, the progressive feminist activists and the femocratic leadership who attempted to expand its institutional power needed broad coalition with KNCW to appeal to conservative political leaders and lend themselves to the

legitimacy of the institution.¹⁵

However, the diversity within women and their ideological differences in the orientations of the family policies (See Chapter V) led to the dissolution of women's organizations surrounding the issue of strengthening MOGEF's power. The absence of the progressive feminist activists' coalition with the conservative women's organizations crystallized the legitimacy of the conservative new regime's attempts to weaken MOGEF's power.

If the coalition constituting both conservative and progressive women were possible and they pursued the same goal of enhancing MOGEF's power in whatever form, then the conservative new regime might have not tried to eliminate MOGEF. While the new regime did not have a favorable relationship to the progressive feminist activists, it had networks with the moderate and conservative women's organizations and appointed ministers from those organizations. In the end, the regime transferred daycare services, family policies, and youth policies back to MOGE and transformed it back to MOGEF in 2010 with the Minister who didn't have a feminist background. How policies on women's right and family policies go together whether from feminist perspective or the stability of the family is yet to be seen.

J. Conclusion

The creation and the transformation of Korean women's policy machineries

¹⁵ Jones (2006) also found that the progressive feminist activists viewed the coalition with KNCW as two-edged sword. It can be strategically effective for KWAU to make a coalition with KNCW to make use of KNCW's capacity to mobilization and ideological appeal to the conservative community while they disagreed in ideology (53-54).

afterwards did not happen without any domestic social political forces. In that process, international trends to create a state agency fully mandated to redress gender inequality worked when it encountered domestic political interest and actors (i.e. women's activism, femocrats) who effectively took advantage of the global culture and local opportunities. At the same time, with the growth of the organization, sometimes the global norm had to be presented through a strategically depoliticized vision to deal with the resistance. Other times, pursuing the ideology itself led the organization to be more vulnerable to the backlash against the development of the institution, which symbolized women's advancement.

The acceptance of world culture in the domestic social political arena is not automatic and thus should not be taken-for-granted. The local actors inside and outside the state who endeavors to change their society and the resistance they meet, and their strategies to deal with it should always be considered in order to draw a complete picture of the influence of global norms. In the coming chapters, I delve into these efforts that Korean femocrats and feminist activists made in their specific policy programs. In doing so, these chapters will also analyze MOGEF's institutional constraints as a state agency, bureaucracy, its interaction with Korean civil society, and cultural contests over the meaning of gender equality.

III. MOGEF Intervention on Housewives' Employment: Mechanisms of Creating Sex-Segregating Jobs

A. Introduction

The development of the Presidential Commission of Women's Affairs (PCWA) into a full-fledged Ministry of Gender Equality (MOGE) in 2000 and its subsequent transformation into the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) in 2005 strengthened the jurisdiction of MOGE(F) in developing female human resources to promote women's labor force participation. One of MOGE(F)'s goals was to develop policy programs from a gender sensitive perspective, which would promote women's participation in the labor force and enhance the economic independence of women. While the establishment of MOGE(F) and its reform is a major accomplishment of feminists and political reformers who actively took advantage of worldwide egalitarian norms, specific policies (i.e. female labor participation programs) pursued by this institution exhibit trade-offs: policy programs aiming at enhancing women's economic independence reproduce gender essentialism under the influence of a worldwide trend toward gender equality. Examining this case sheds light on which mechanisms are responsible for this troubling contradiction.

More specifically, in spite of MOGE(F)'s efforts to address the issue of the under-participation of women, particularly those in their 30s to 40s, in the labor market, the policy programs that MOGE(F) has created do not overcome ingrained understanding of gender roles that cause the division of labor by gender. The programs

aim at putting housewives in female-friendly type occupations, such as care workers, wedding planners, and the like. These jobs offer little room for occupational advancement, few employee benefits, and they are thought to be especially appropriate for women on the basis of essentialist assumptions about women's delicate, nurturing and caring nature.

This chapter delves into the mechanisms of state gender policy making that led MOGE(F), a U.N. nominated case for its efforts to improve formal gender equality, to make policy programs that reproduce the ideology of gender roles played in the labor market. Delving into the mechanisms, this research complements two previous strands of scholarly analysis - the new institutional approach and the structural approach - concerned with the influences of global norms and local social economic necessities, and “evolution” of gender egalitarian societies. To explore why the policy programs fall short of accomplishing the feminist ideal of abolishing gendered division of labor in the labor market, I analyze the two components of the ministries. I will focus on how organizational properties as a part of state organization and as a bureaucracy interact each other in the policy making processes. Then I will address how the actors’ strategic usage of political opportunities and understanding of gender roles operating within the institution impact on the generation of policies. This analysis of mechanisms will contribute to a deeper understanding of the multi-dimensional properties acting on the changing of women’s economic status.

First, MOGEF’s creation of policy programs has been influenced by the historical legacy of Korean women’s policy agencies’ institutionalization as serving

the state-wide goals. MOGEF is deeply rooted in the ideology and strategy of Korean women's activism and in bureaucrats who link women's labor force with the issue of national economic development.¹ Given this institutional historical background, the programs were possibly influenced by the fit between MOGEF's goal to increase women's economic independence (Interview with MOGEF official 9, 2007; MOGEF official 10, 2007) and a state priority of increasing service jobs for the economic development of the country. MOGEF bureaucrats strategically link service jobs and female labor force participation with national economic prosperity.

Second, the logic of bureaucracy was another mechanism leading to policy programs which reinforced the ideology of gender division of labor in the labor market. While MOGE(F) femocrats strategically suited the broad state goals to their organizational goals, another institutional dimension characterized by the turf battle within the bureaucracy for institutional survival limited the policy ideas of MOGEF to housewives. These policy turf conflicts also constrained the institutional goals to solving the problem of the remarkably low participation of women in their 30s-40s in the labor market through the state wide policy goal of increasing social service jobs.

Did the femocrats concede to the ideology of gendered division of labor in their efforts to pull housewives into the labor market? The answer is more complex than yes or no. I argue that the femocrats' use of diverse and sometimes conflicting understandings of cultural norms regarding women's equality provided them with a

¹ For the dominance of the discourse of women's participation in the national economic development (Women In Development: WID) and women's activism's efforts to create a state agency, see Chapter II.

yardstick to measure the feasibility of policy programs for housewives given their institutional constraints. This deployment of cultural norms by the actors is the third mechanism of state gender policy making that paved the way to the limited policy programs reinforcing the gender division of labor in the labor market. Given that the femocrats' target options were limited to housewives, the shared understandings of gender norms such as traditional assumptions about housewives and their work, 'positive recognition of femininity,' and neo-liberal individualism allowed them to make those policy programs possible. Particularly, positive recognition of femininity provides them with the more complex logic of their policy programs: femininity should be respected and thus segregation in the workforce is a less urgent problem than working conditions in order to de-segregate the labor market in the long run. The complexity of the femocrats' use of diverse definitions of gender norms is evidence that the global gender egalitarian norm is not the only principle that shapes how actors construct policy programs.

Under the institutional conditions, matching housewives to social service jobs and other clerical work to get more numbers of women to work in the name of national economic development became an important aspect of MOGEF's attempts to gain power to coordinate government-wide female human resource development policies. Within the constraints, the femocrats made use of common norms of the roles of housewives and the ideas of neo-liberal individualism. At the same time, they redefined the common ideals of femininity into more positive ones to make plausible policy programs.

By exploring the mechanisms of policy making in the institutional contexts of MOGE(F) and the femocrats' strategies, this chapter provides fuller explanations about the ways in which both international and domestic elements influence policy programs aimed at women's economic independence. Even if MOGEF policy makers themselves are committed to improve women's economic status, as has been one of the global trends, specific local mechanisms contributed to policy programs which reproduce women's subordination in the unequal system of the labor market. I examine the local factors of historical context, economic development goals, bureaucratic exigencies, and existence of diverse meanings of women's equality.

MOGE(F)'s policy making processes regarding female labor force participation shed light on the transnational flow of ideas affecting women's work and its interaction with domestic conditions. For example, cases from OECD countries are important sources for MOGE(F) policies, as Korea got into OECD late in 1994. As in other post-industrial societies, manufacturing is declining in Korea and there are powerful forces that are expanding service sector employment, such as increase in the elderly population. Female participation in the labor force is embedded in the competing state priorities in the changing economic structure. Given that only 50 percent of women are employed versus 95 percent of men in Korea, the state attempted to increase women's full participation in the labor market rather than waste its human resources. In order to solve the problem, MOGE modeled its "female human resource development" programs on policies of Western European welfare states, which include providing a large number of care and service jobs to facilitate women's

entry into work force. Therefore, the Korean case can give an indication of the interaction between the global and the local by showing how norms governing female labor force participation in one region influence policy in another region and how policy makers and feminist activists interpret and strategically use those norms under certain domestic conditions.

This chapter has four main sections. First, it starts with the historical legacy of women's participation in national development and its impact on MOGEF's options regarding policy programs embedded in broader state-wide competing priorities. Second, the analysis moves to the history of the search grounded on the logic of bureaucracy by the femocrats for an institutional niche in order to have power over women's labor force participation issues. I also analyze the process through which housewives became MOGEF's focus of jurisdiction and femocrats' efforts to link housewives, national economic development, and social services jobs. Third, I will move to the analysis of femocrats' assessment of the feasibility and effectiveness of policy programs based on resonance with commonly held norms of gender role and neo-liberal individualism. I conclude with the theoretical implications of non-linear progress toward gender equality. I emphasize the implications of understanding how the strategies and goal setting of policy makers endeavoring to increase women's economic independence lead to a policy decision that recreates mechanisms of inequality.

B. Historical Legacy and Strategies: Women's Labor Force Participation for State Goal of Economic Development

1. History of the Intersection

MOGEF's counterintuitive policy became possible through the historical legacy of women's activism's ideological strategy to institutionalize women's issues as a national agenda. Women In Development (WID) paradigm - women's equal participation in the national economic development processes - has been widely used strategies of women's activism and easily accepted within the government. Particularly in Korea, national prosperity achieved through economic development has been the state's top goal and thus WID has been a good-match with this state goal. Rather than focusing on the conditions that women are facing in the labor market, female labor force participation policies have mainly been efforts to increase the "number" of women in the workforce, thus achieving women's economic autonomy.

As shown in Chapter II, the UN's Women in Development (WID) paradigm was an important ideological goal of KNCW, the association of conservative women's movement organizations. This organization was established with the goal of achieving women's equality with men and by doing so contributing to national development. It was well coordinated with Korea's economic development under Park Jung-hee dictatorship and the coordination has lingered to the present.

In 1977, KNCW demanded the creation of public organizations to increase the employment of women and the establishment of job training institutions so that both men and women could participate in the national modernization project (KNCW,

1993). However, at the Nairobi World Conference on Women in 1985, the WID paradigm was criticized for being instrumentalist – investing in women only as part of the national development process. The UN proposed a Gender and Development (GAD) paradigm which locates the cause of the inequality in male domination in allocation of power and resources rather than the exclusion of women from the development process.

Even after the Korean political regime changed in 1993 and the paradigm changed from WID to GAD in the UN discourse, the combination of priorities of economic development and WID paradigm advocated by KNCW had a lingering effect on female labor force policies. For example, taking up the slogan “men and women’s joint participation in and shared responsibility for the society,” one of the goals of the MPA 2 in 1990 was to establish women as having a leading role for national development as opposed to being passive welfare recipients (MPA 2, 1990: 3). The section of Women’s Development in seventh 5-year-plan of Economic Social Development (1992-1996) by the Ministry of Political Affairs 2 (MPA 2) says:

Prejudice against women in Korean society in general needs to be rooted out for the purpose not only of women’s development but also of improving economic efficiency and increasing the supply of female labor force (MPA 2, 1992: 3)

However, in the seventh 5-year-plan, the perspective of housewives’ roles was limited to the role of “mother and wife” who participate in the society as a form of voluntary work. Thus there was not a new specific policy program to promote married women’s economic activity.

The influence of the WID intertwined with the Korean socioeconomic situation

became clearer² in the “The Ten Policy Priorities” drawn under President Kim Young-sam’s *Segyehwa ch’ujin wiwŏnhoe* (Globalization Committee)³ in 1995. The Committee laid out Ten Policy Priorities, which included a plan for expanding childcare services and introducing after-school programs. It emphasized facilitating women’s employment, including an increase in women’s employment in the public sector through affirmative action and expansion of maternity protection through sharing the costs between public infrastructures and employers, and plans for the development of women’s skills for employment, and plans for creating social and legal conditions for ameliorating gender discrimination.

The Ten Policy Priorities were written by the first civilian regime. Connecting women’s participation in economic activity to improving national wealth was not seen as a problem because it was believed that policies for women do not necessarily contradict the vision of the state pursuing a better quality of life for every citizen. Scholars and policy advisors on female labor force issues strategically used the instrumentality of women’s contribution to increasing national competitiveness and quality of life to argue for increases in numbers of employed women. It was more effective and persuasive to emphasize that the plan was for national development by using women’s participation in society than it was to talk about improving women’s equality with men or women’s status in the society (Cho, 1996:21-22).

² The “Ten Policy Priorities for Increasing Women’s Social Participation” was more advanced than the previous 5-year-plan in terms of the perspective on gender equality. For example, introducing affirmative actions to increase the number of women employee in the public sector meant the state recognized discrimination that had excluded women from male dominated areas in the society and presented a remedy to fix it. This action did not involve in the previous 5-year-plan.

³ For Kim Young-sam administration’s globalization drive, see Chapter II.

In addition to the democratic characteristics of the regime, WID perspective was able to have a lingering effect on the Ten Policy Priorities due to the increasing necessity of pulling women out of the home to address a labor force shortage. More importantly, it was an historical change that policy makers started projecting a GNP increase, turning economically inactive married women into an economically active labor force. In the plan, the suspension of economic activity by married women between 25 and 34 years old became a national problem that was understood to have an impact on the national economy (Cho, 1996:147). Later, MOGEF female human resource development programs echoed the importance of the contribution of married women's economic participation to the increase in the GNP.

Ten Policy Priorities is also an historical juncture in terms of the discourse of femininity. The association of femininity with industrial structural change and national economic development appeared for the first time in the history of policy programs regarding female labor force participation. The policy makers adopted the acronym of 3F (female, feeling, fiction) as key words for the 21st century. They strategically emphasized femininity as necessary for the national economy that was undergoing a transformation into an industry based on knowledge and telecommunication technology. "Sensitivity and creativity" *peculiar to women* rather than physical strength were defined as necessary characteristics of the knowledge based economy (Cho, 1996:145). The WID perspective became linked to the discourse of positive recognition of femininity in MOGEF's policy making processes regarding women's labor force participation.

As knowledge based economy was one of the linchpins of the Kim Dae-Jung administration (1998-2002), brainpower and knowledge were considered to be the key components for national economic prosperity. The National Human Resource Development Plan (2002)⁴ aimed to increase the quality of human resources and efficiency in managing human resources to create a knowledge-based economy (Government of Korea, 2006:98).

Within this plan, the under-usage of the potential female workforce was pointed out as one of the problems to be addressed (Government of Korea, 2006: 98). From this awareness of the under-usage of female workers and the importance of knowledge, government wide female human resource development policy programs were adopted. Inheriting the idea of the strategic and ideological use of women's labor force for national economic development, MOGE strategically matched its institutional goal to the national goal by emphasizing the necessity of female human resources for the changing industrial structure. MOGE emphasized the demands of brainpower in knowledge based economies as opposed to the manpower that used to be the main resource for the industrial society. This emphasis blurred the sex differentiation of labor power. MOGE aimed at increasing national competitiveness by developing 'distinguished and creative female workers' and improving women's economic status and quality of life.

⁴ The National Human Resource Development Plan (2002) aimed to increase the quality of human resources and the efficiency in managing human resources and to create a knowledge- based economy (Government of Korea, 2006:98).

2. The Intersection in the Era of MOGEF and Strategies

The creation of MOGEF extended the idea that female labor force participation contributes to the national economy. These ideas continued being supported because national prosperity-represented by economic development-has been one of the top priorities of the state policy.

Under the Noh Mu Hyun regime (2002-2007), women's economic participation coincided with drastic social economic changes- the aftermath of neo-liberal economic reforms, growth in joblessness, low fertility rates and an increasingly aging population. Creation of social service jobs was supported under these political priorities; increasing the sources of jobs to support national economic development and at the same time providing a "vulnerable" category of people who are away from the labor market with the opportunity to work as a means of providing a social safety net. MOGEF femocrats strategically fit this political context to their institutional goals to increase women's economic participation. This strategy of connecting the issue of improving women's economic status with the national economic goal continues through the historical development of the organization.

With the industrial structural change, Korea faced the problem of growing unemployment. In 2003, while the economic growth rate turned positive for the first time since 1980s, the number of employees decreased and the employment-to-population rate did not recover to the level of 1997, the year of the financial crisis.

The complex socio-economic changes created a sense of crisis in sustaining national development. The government made the goal of accomplishing \$20,000 GNP

per capita through both the increase in employment and economic growth. Thus job creation was set to be the first priority of the government (KDI, 2004). As task forces to create jobs, the government set up the Commission of Job Creation in 2004 and the Special Politics-Administration Joint Commission of Job Creation in 2006.

Creation of jobs under the Noh Mu-hyun regime was based on the perspective of the “practical social investment state” that combines ideas from both the neo-liberal state and the welfare state. This regime made an attempt to maximize social economic productivity through increasing labor flexibility and at the same time strengthening the social safety net. Providing “equal opportunity” through state efforts to increase investment in human resources and to pull the idle labor force into the labor market was one of the main strategies that the regime took in order to solve the social economic problems (PPAC, 2008).

At the same time, demographic trends impacted Korea. There was a low-birth rate and an aging population. South Korean women gave birth to an average 1.6 children during their lives in 1990, 1.4 in 2000, and 1.2 in 2006, one of the lowest rates among 193 countries (WHO, 2008). The aging population over 65-year-old was 9.1% of the population in 2005 and it is projected to reach 14.3% in 2018 and 20.8% in 2026 (KNSO, 2005).

This demographic change produced a sense of socio-economic “crisis.” In response, the government adopted a pro-natal policy when the fertility rate dropped to 1.17 in 2002 in order to address concerns that the increased need for social security for the aged and an increased labor shortage due to fertility decline would impede national

development. In order to deal with the low birth rate and an aging population, it set up the Presidential Committee on Aging and Future Society in 2003 and legislated the Basic Law on Low Fertility and Aged Society in 2005. This was followed by the establishment of the Presidential Committee on Aging Society in 2005

However, the importance of female labor force participation in the economic development of the country was not unanimously agreed government-wide. Despite the strengthening of the rhetoric about women's crucial roles for the development of the national economy, it seems to be only within the MOGE(F) and the office of the president that these ideas were supported. The support was not state-wide. This is well illustrated in a comment by a ministry officer about the efforts to increase employment opportunities for "youth" and a remark by an official of Ministry of Labor on the importance female labor force participation.

They always forgot [women's issues]. It did not come up to their mind that half of "the youth" is women. [...] Whenever I went to the cabinet meeting [regarding human resource development], I told them "I think I've told you enough, please recognize that women comprise half of the youth when you consider the youth and bring differentiated statistics by sex. How can we talk about the support for the youth to get a job without having differentiated statistics?" I kept insisting that we had to consider sex variable in making a decision on which jobs we supported for them but they kept forgetting. Even though when I told them they say "Oh, I see." We still didn't have sex differentiated statistics at the next meeting (Interview with Former MOGEF official 3, 2007).

This discussion highlights the state-wide low interest in women's training and employment. The ministry officer's remark sheds light on the views of state actors about the female workforce in general. If employment and training support for young, unmarried women with a high level of education and less family responsibility was

seen as a marginal issue at one of the highest levels of decision making arenas, where would the category of housewives be posited for the discussion of support?

Even Ministry of Labor bureaucrats that deal with female employment issues do not welcome women fully into the workforce.

Female economic development participant rate is 49.8% that is lower compared to advanced countries. It is because the number of jobs cannot catch up with the increasing women's desire for social economic participation ... Women's job should be created through the sustainable economic development but the increase of oil price and economic stagnation does not allow sustainable economic development. *With this recognition, in order to increase women's job MOL is doing research on decent part-time female-friendly work model that will attract more women* (National Assembly LRASC 256-3, 2005. Emphasis is mine).

The perspective of the Ministry of Labor on female labor force participation is that job creation for women follows economic development. From the Ministry of labor's point of view, in times when men (who play the major role in economic development) are having difficulties getting a full-time job, creation of full-time jobs for women doesn't seem to be a primary issue.

Female labor force participation for national economic development started getting state-wide attention when the social service sector became an important source for decent jobs for the unemployed poor in 2006. MOGEF strategically intertwined WID perspectives with the demographic crisis of the low-birth rate and quickly aging society. They emphasized the insufficient social welfare infrastructure and job creation as the first priority of the government.

With its historical inheritance MOGEF strategically embedded its policy programs in broader national goals to create service jobs aiming both at economic

development and at pulling women and older people into the labor market. MOGEF's strategy to anchor its institutional goal of increasing women's economic participation to the national economic goal was realized with its effort to socialize care services. The following remark by then-Minister to MOGEF is an illustration of MOGEF's strategy:

The president declared he will devote himself to restoring economy and hand GNP per capita \$20,000 over to the next administration in 2007. *The key to achieve GNP \$20,000 is job creation for women. As you know well, women are the only untapped resources who can get out to labor market. So MOGEF is doing its best in the creation of social service jobs* in cooperation with Ministry of Health and Welfare and Ministry of Labor (National Assembly GEFC, 2005: 12, Emphasis is mine).

Indeed, while other ministries such as the Ministry of Health and Welfare tried to promote a higher birth-rate by providing monetary supports, MOGEF insisted on the importance of institutional support such as reliable and affordable child care facilities to increase birth rate. MOGEF strategically used statistics from OECD countries that were successful in increasing their birth rates by improving the conditions for women who gave birth (i.e. socialization of care) so that women could work outside the home.

Also, MOGEF took advantage of the statistical data to show the association of women's labor force participation with the GNP per capita increase from \$10,000 to \$20,000 in advanced countries such as Sweden (69.1%→80.1%), Germany (49%→52.2%), Canada (52.5%→62.3%), and the United States (53.7%→63%) as opposed to the Korean case of 49.9% in 1997, and 50.1% in 2005.

At the same time, as the policy makers linked female characteristics to industrial structural change, MOGEF defined social service sector as jobs "favorable

for women” and related the issue of a social service sector shortage to female labor force participation. MOGEF pointed out that the female employment rate in social welfare and health services in Korea was as low as 2.4% compared to other countries such as Sweden (18.7%), Denmark (17.7%) and the United States (10.1%) (MOGEF, 2006).

Indeed, as shown in Table3-1, 65% of social service jobs were regarded as suitable for female workers.

Table 3-1 Suitableness of the Occupation (unit: 10,000)
(Government of Korea, 2007:14)

		Female	Male	Elderly/handicapped
Total	20.1(100)	13.1 (65.2)	6.5 (32.3)	0.5 (2.5)
Skilled	12.9(100)	9.4 (72.9)	3.4 (26.4)	0.0 (0)
Unskilled	7.2(100)	3.7 (51.4)	3.1 (43.1)	0.5 (6.9)

Moreover, work assumed to fit for women was care service jobs whether they are skilled or unskilled as shown in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2 Social Service Jobs Suitable for Women (unit: number (%))
(Government of Korea, 2007:15)

Occupation			Number of jobs
Total			130,880 (100.0)
Skilled	Total		94,257 (72.0)
	Childcare teacher		80,609
	Afterschool teacher		10,335
	Special education assistant		604
	Visiting nurse		1700
	Mental health practitioner		500
	Medical fee clerk		439
Unskilled	Total		36,633 (28.0)
	Full-time	Domestic work and care service	10,833
		Elderly attendant	4,683
		New-born and mother assistant	1,418
		Infant-child-sitter	799
		Assistant for family with handicapped child	192
		Assistant for the handicapped	11,000
		Assistant for multi-cultural family	208
	Part-time	Assistant for solitary elderly	7,200
		Assistant for foreign female farmer from multi-cultural family	300

C. Logic of Bureaucracy: MOGEF's Institutional Development and Housewives as a Niche

1. Turf Battle and Housewives as a Niche

The association of female labor force participation with national development has continuously influenced MOGE(F)'s strategies and policy program development and strategies. In addition, the strategies of femocrats to find a jurisdiction in housewives' labor force participation has also influenced the policies they pursued.

The perspectives of housewives' roles in national development have changed with the development of a ministry that directly addressed women's issues. The perspective change from mothers and wives to workers is an important one both ideologically and in policy formation. However, this conceptual change ironically resulted in the reinforcement of the ideology of gendered division of labor in the labor market. This trade-off can be attributed to the femocrats' strategic fitting of the state goal to increase jobs in the service industry to their goal of increasing housewives' economic participation-MOGEF's policy niche.

As MOGEF was strategically developed into a ministry by the efforts of the femocrats and women's movement, finding a niche for their own jurisdiction was crucial for the small organization to survive as a ministry. Using the strategy of linking women's labor force participation with national economic development, MOGEF focused on housewives in its effort to implement policy programs.

While MOGE(F) had a mission and a goal to coordinate government policy with women's issues, MOGE(F) has historically sought its own policy arena so that it can create its own jobs involving women's labor force participation. Without major job creation, it cannot have its own resources of manpower and budget which grant a ministry power in relation with other ministries. However, the bureaucratic battle to win territorial authority was not won. MOGE(F) was not allowed to have major jurisdiction regarding the female workforce, such as ruling on equal employment, which could have granted MOGE(F) power in dealing with sex segregation in the labor market. As a result, MOGE(F) ended up with the niche of housewives who were

considered as an economically non-active population rather than “unemployed.”

Housewives, particularly from the middle-class, who do not have the economic necessity of needing to go out to work, became one of the foci during the era of MPA 2, a predecessor of MOGEF. At this time, the work that housewives could do from the perspective of the policy makers was limited. They emphasized environmental protection, guidance for juvenile delinquents, caring for the old, working with youth, and providing guidance to women about extravagant expenditures to improve consumption habits (National Assembly GAC 152-1, 1991:2-3). Particularly, women’s participation in voluntary work for social welfare such as guidance for juvenile delinquents and caring the old and working youth was regarded as a contribution to the development of Korea as a “welfare country” (MPA 2, 1990, 2: 4) due to the lack of social welfare infrastructures. Up until before the Ten Policy Priorities, housewives were not regarded as contributors to the national development as “productive workers.” MPA 2 tried to take advantage of “idle labor power” for “voluntary workers” to supplement the less developed social welfare infrastructure.

The importance of married women’s economic participation beyond voluntary work was emphasized in the Ten Policy Priorities. However, most of this emphasis was from the Ministry of Labor, which focused on women who were already employed and supported by the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, rather than women as a category of housewives who are in a specific condition – being suspended from labor market due to child birth and rearing.

As PCWA transformed into MOGE, it was awarded the short-term job training

center for lower class women. This crucial win for the new ministry in the turf battle was an important event that influenced MOGE to start looking for its niche in the category of housewives. The battle over MOGE's jurisdictions with other ministries and its weakness as a new ministry resulted in MOGE receiving tasks with more troubles and smaller portions than other ministries. MOGE obtained the job of heading the "Center for Working Women" (*Ilhanŭn yŏsŏngŭi chip*) which was established in 1993 in the Ministry of Labor to support lower class middle-aged women's employment. A remark made by a MPA 2 retiree illustrates that as a new ministry, MOGE did not have favorable conditions to win a major battle, but instead had to settle for the minor territory of serving lower class middle-aged women.

How could we get the female workforce transferred from Ministry of Labor was one of the biggest concerns when we constituted MOGE. When the Ministry of Gender Equality was established, they were making an attempt to get the "Center for Working Women" from the Ministry of Labor (MOL) and since it did not have a major implementation jobs so it was too bad that they could not get [major] tasks from MOL. [...] For MOL, Center for Working Women was not a big pie so there was not a big fight over it. I told MOGE that they do not understand whether it [Center for Working Women] was a major task or not. It appeared big to the novice since it has some portion of budget but it is really trivial and MOGE implements projects by entrusting [them to] civil organizations. It does not grant MOGE any major authority [over gender equality]. I didn't object to have Center for Working Women transferred to MOGE but I told them it is a big loss in going after a small gain. [...] I wish they could have obtained at least 2 major jobs from the equal employment bureau of MOL (Interview with Former MOGEF official 1, 2007).

Since the Ministry of Labor would not transfer jobs about female employment involving the equal employment law, and the portion of the centers at MOL was trivial while the management of the centers was troublesome, only the Center for Working Women (*Ilhanŭn yŏsŏngŭi chip*) jobs were transformed to MOGE.

Through the task of running the “Center for Working Women” (*Ilhanŭn yŏsŏngŭi chip*) which became the “Female Human Resource Development Center” (*Yŏsŏng illyŏk kaebal sent’ŏ*), MOGE was entitled to organizational infrastructures to implement policy programs for housewives. Originally, middle class housewives who did not have to work were regarded as a potential voluntary worker group in the MPA.

2. The “Center for Working Women” (*Ilhanŭn yŏsŏngŭi chip*) originally served housewives who were lower class, middle aged women under the Ministry of Labor. The “Female Human Resource Development Center” (*Yŏsŏng illyŏk kaebal sent’ŏ*) combined these two previously separate groups under MOGE. It became an important infrastructure for MOGE’s newly defined category of “unemployed housewives” who were trying to get a job.

MOGE femocrats tried to solidify the category of housewives trying to enter the labor market as a strategy to legitimize its jurisdiction within the state-wide focus on human resource development for national economic development. When the Kim Dae-jung administration established the National Human Resource Development Plan and bureaucrats started focusing on the female workforce, instead of making major policies with far-reaching effects, MOGE focused on a more restricted area. They could have sought policies such as affirmative action for female scientists, but that program was already assigned to the Ministry of Science and Technology. While maintaining the status of the coordination body for female human resource development programs in the NHRDP, MOGE looked for its own policy program. It focused on training housewives for non-manual, service oriented jobs in middle-to-

small enterprises and made the Housewives Reemployment Training Program (H RTP).

While the importance of married women as a vital segment of the national labor force was recognized in the Ten Policy Priorities during MPA 2, there were few substantial training programs to support them. MOGE began to address this, problematizing the low economic participation of women age 25-34 (due to childcare and childrearing) and strategically fitting it to the economic situation of the small to medium sized firms' labor shortage.

As MOGE became MOGEF, it tried to establish itself as a coordinating body as well as a ministry with its own tasks on female labor force participation, solidifying housewives as its jurisdiction. With this institutional imperative, MOGEF created a bureau regarding female human resource development planning and implementation in 2005. The planning team was responsible for coordinating different tasks from diverse ministries. In one interview, a MOGEF officer reported that in addition to coordination, the implementation team's task was to discover blind spots: female-oriented policy initiatives that other ministries had overlooked. The officer said it was necessary because the Ministries of Labor and Education regard human resource development policies as their own jurisdiction (Interview with MOGEF official 2, 2007; MOL official 2). Despite this, the officer believed that female human resource development was a top priority because it underpins policies for the improvement of women's economic independence and rights, and even affects family and childcare (Interview with MOGEF official 2, 2007). The demographic groups that MOGEF bureaucrats focused on were housewives and female college students. In particular, MOGEF

officers regarded housewives as a category with low participation in the labor market that needed more training and education on professional consciousness (Interview with MOGEF official 2, 2007; MOGEF official 3, 2007; MOGEF official 5, 2007).

From March to November 2006, MOGEF invested \$5 million in training 1100 housewives in information technology. Those jobs included telemarketing, internet shopping mall, business planning and administration, tax accounting, and computerized clerical work. Service jobs such as skin care service, wedding planner, and hotel room attendant were included too (See Table 3-3). The 50 government-sponsored local Female Human Resource Development Centers were responsible for the training.

Table 3-3 Housewives Retraining Program
(MOGEF, 2007)⁵

School Lunch Specialist
Room Attendant
Wedding Planner/Consultant
Bridal Skin Care Specialists
Tele-Marketer
Internet shopping mall Establishment/ Management/ Planning
Trade Clerk
Convention Assistant
Practice of Office Automation (OA)
Tax Accounting Specialist
Computerized Accounting
Accounting for Residential Service
Internet Homepage Management

As a strategy to secure jurisdiction over female labor force policies, pursuing the niche of housewives became the MOGEF's strategy. But it was not always easy for the

⁵ www.mogef.go.kr

femocrats to implement their programs at a time when state interest in female labor force participation was little more than rhetoric and other ministries were seen to have a more legitimate jurisdiction over this issue. For example, even though MOGEF demanded a budget for the job creation project from the Ministry of Planning and Budget, the demand was not considered (National Assembly GEFC 261-1, 2006:40). In fact, the money to implement the Housewives Re-employment Training Program (HRTTP) did not come from the general budget approved by the Ministry of Planning and Budget, but from MOGEF's own funds.

2. Social Service Job Creation and Deepening the Category of Housewives

MOGEF claimed the category of housewives as its solid turf since 2006. The state-wide goal to increase social service jobs fit with MOGEF's goal to increase jobs for married women in the care service industry. This focus is a change from MOGE operations in 2002, which focused on the reemployment of housewives, equipping them with information technology and knowledge. When the government focus changed from emphasizing a knowledge-based economy to addressing the low birth rate and aging population, MOGEF in 2005 extended to another job category for housewives, the care service industry, which was seen as providing crucial welfare infrastructure.

While MOGEF had already started a Social Service Vocational Training Program in 2005 in pursuit of creating jobs for housewives, MOGEF bureaucrat's

efforts to broaden its niche were not sufficient to implement a specific program without going hand in hand with the state's priorities. MOGEF made an attempt to start the "infant-child-sitter" (*aidolbomi*) program in order to provide sitters to families in need of care services after the hours of daycare services stopped. These housewives were hired as paid voluntary workers. However, the budget to implement the program was not approved by the Ministry of Planning and Budget, one of the most powerful ministries, until social service jobs became recognized as an important source for economic development in 2006. Then the "infant-child-sitter" (*aidolbomi*) program became one of MOGEF's social service job creation responsibilities. An officer puts it:

It is necessary to have a program like this because you cannot leave your child 12 hours a day at a daycare center [when you have to work overtime]. There are families who need a temporary infant-child-sitter. And not all double-income families are affluent to afford a babysitter [from a private agency]. [...] For the high-income family, [even if they can afford it,] they don't trust a babysitter from a private agency so this program can provide a high-quality sitter.[...] But however earnestly we persuaded the Ministry of Planning and Budget that we should implement this program, they just asked why we need another program while we already have one [daycare centers]. But one day, they called me and asked me how many jobs we could create through this program. That was how we could [get the budget and] start implementing the program (Interview with MOGEF official 8, 2008).

This comment shows that MOGEF bureaucrats found it hard to fix their niche within the hierarchical network of state organizations. The efforts to achieve its goal of increasing married women's economic status while at the same time creating a viable ministry with the resources to get some work done are influenced by state goal priorities. While women's policy machinery makes an attempt to achieve its ideological goal of improving women's economic independence, it cannot do it as it pleases. It has to do it within the limits of its policy jurisdiction and so that it does not

conflict with other ministries. In addition, policy programs are constrained by what the current state goals are.

Seizing the available socio-political opportunities, MOGEF's femocrats strategically associated housewives and economic development with social services jobs. The social service sector was seen to provide increasingly important care work, creating the infrastructure necessary to release women from domestic care of children and elderly in order to join the workforce. Therefore, MOGEF femocrats insisted that its job was to get economically inactive women into the economically active labor force. In response to the question of its jurisdictional overlap with other ministries, femocrats emphasized that this task was unique to MOGEF (National Assembly GEFC, 2007).

In order to support its logic, MOGEF pointed out that the M-curve –women's employment suspension due to childbirth and child care- was mitigated (78.8% at the ages of 25-29 and 69.7% ages of 30-34) in the GNP \$20,000 countries while Korea has a sharp decrease in female labor force participation from 66.1% at the age of 22-24 to 47.7% at 25-34 and increase to 59.2% at 35-39 and 65.8% at 40-44. MOGEF asserted that the national economy needed female workers particularly at the age of 25-34 to accomplish GNP per capital \$20,000 (MOGEF, 2005; 2006).

While the creation of social service jobs were criticized for giving rise to more occupations with poor working conditions, MOGEF Minister Jang Ha-jin said MOGEF's main goal was to increase the *number* of jobs since married women's labor force participation was too low (*Womennews*, July 7, 2006). In order to accomplish its

goal of pulling inactive females into the labor force, MOGEF presented the importance of female labor forces particularly in the service area, using the examples from OECD countries. For example, MOGEF insisted that social service jobs are an important occupation for GNP per capita \$20,000 and these jobs provide housewives who do not yet have enough job market skills with a bridge to reenter the labor market (MOGE, 2004:150)

The association of housewives and social service jobs deepened with MOGEF's increasing efforts to implement projects related to care work as well as its efforts to become a coordinating power for female human resource policies. In 2006, MOGEF pursued both implementation and coordination of female human resources throughout related ministries with state-wide policy plan Dynamic Women Korea 2010. This policy plan advocated "leaping toward advanced economy using female human resource" with the goal of achieving 55 % economic activity rate of women by the year of 2010 and adding 600,000 jobs for women (Government of Korea, 2007:10). Among the 600,000 jobs created for women, social service jobs were 441,000, middle-small-enterprise 89,000, public services 43,000, and knowledge-based and technology related jobs were 14,000. For social service jobs, as shown in Table 3-4, MOGEF had the plan of institutionalizing domestic work such as babysitting and domestic assistance, increasing more daycare services by producing daycare teacher jobs, and further, creating "female-fitted-social service jobs" such as elderly attendant, cultural education service, respite service, and a cultural assistance service for families involved in international marriages.

Table 3-4 Creation of Social Service Jobs for Women in Dynamic Women Korea 2010
(KWDI, 2007)

Nurse assistant (Ministry of Health and Welfare)	Relieving family member's responsibilities of caring the sick by creating more nurse assistant jobs
Institutionalization of domestic work service (<i>Ministry of Gender Equality and Family</i>)	Training babysitters, visiting housekeepers, senior attendants
Infant-Child-sitter (<i>Ministry of Gender Equality and Family</i>)	Providing sitter service when parents are not available due to overtime work, business trip, etc. by training housewives in child rearing and sending them to the family
Increasing daycare service and preschool education (<i>Ministry of Gender Equality and Family</i> , Ministry of Education)	Providing social worker service at daycare centers for low-income residents, assistant teachers of middle or advanced age, increasing extra-hour care service, and wage support for special education teachers
Assistant for new-born baby and mother (Ministry of Health and Welfare)	Providing care services for new-born babies and mothers of low-income families
Creating social service jobs specialized for women (<i>Ministry of Gender Equality and Family</i>)	Female senior attendants Cultural education Respite service for families with a handicapped child Services for children from multi-cultural families

The Act of Career Suspended Women's Economic Activity Promotion is another example of MOGEF's attempts to coordinate government wide policies and implement its own programs for getting housewives into the labor market, thus keeping housewives as its target group. In the bill, MOGEF included articles that grant it authority to demand cooperation from other ministries in planning and implementing programs.

The Act targeted women whose economic activities had been suspended for child birth and family care and women who had never been employed and want to work. The Act enabled MOGEF to promote career suspended women to the labor market and to obtain cooperation from related agencies. MOGEF managed to control

policies on married women with children. Also through the Act, MOGEF was able to make 5-year-plan regarding career suspended women, do research on their economic activity, guide them to promising jobs, and implement and support job training.

However, MOGEF's attempts to secure its policy jurisdiction over issues concerning housewives by providing them with low-paying irregular jobs such as care service jobs were not always welcomed (Interview with Womenlink activist 2). The disagreement from a legislator, Choi Soon-young on this Act illustrates some resistance that MOGEF faced in its efforts to increase its turf.

Just like in the case of Female Human Resource Development Center, this law will produce more numbers of women in the irregular jobs. Now that Female Human Resource Development Centers are transferred to the local governments and as a result MOGEF does not have substantial power to intervene (local government policies), it looks like MOGEF is trying to establish another one (a power source) with this Act. It is a problem. [...] The most urgent thing that MOGEF needs to do is to be concerned about wage discrimination against women. I don't understand why MOGEF do not take interest in such problems. [...] In order for this Act to be implemented as intended, we should first think about why women are suspended from the labor market and how much this women are benefited from their economic activity and how we can eradicate the discriminatory practices. And along with these steps, we should make a plan that can lead women to decent jobs, not produce irregular jobs. (National Assembly GEFC, 269-1, 2007:37)

In spite of the disagreement by several legislators for increasing sex segregation in the labor market and producing more female irregular workers, the Act was supported by the legislators on the grounds that 1) even though there are several laws dealing with female workforce, women age 30-39 who are out of the labor market have not been supported by law 2) and thus it is necessary to legislate a law based on the consideration of women's life cycle, and 3) despite of the importance of female labor force due to the aging population and low birth rate trends, the female

labor force participation rate had not increased to the OECD country average, and therefore state action is necessary (National Assembly GEFC 269-1, 2007).

MOGEF's attempt to monopolize the category of housewives, however, was not successful in the end. After MOGEF shrunk to MOGE in 2008 with regime change, the bill was passed with revision of granting both MOGE and Ministry of Labor the authority to control policies supporting housewives reentering labor market. According to an official of MOGE, it was thought within MOGE that the passage of the bill was impossible without Ministry of Labor's approval of MOGE's intervention in female labor force participation.

In my opinion, it was a bill that was proposed by a female legislator and supposed to be repealed in the Gender Equality and Family Committee without even being transferred to the law examination committee with the ending of the regular National Assembly session. It was because the bill ignored the government systems and it was obvious that bureaucrats from Ministry of Labor wouldn't allow the bill passed. The passage of the law was possible because the officials of MOGE persuaded Ministry of Labor bureaucrats by suggesting a "cooperative work." The passage should be seen that Ministry of Labor approved the collaboration on the issue of female workforce participation. Partly it was also possible that the Minister to MOGE has a personal networking with Minister to Ministry of Labor (Correspondence from MOGEF official 1, 2008).

This remark illustrates the institutional constraints that do not allow MOGE(F) to transgress the boundaries of jurisdiction. Even if housewives were a niche found by MOGE femocrats, gaining a monopoly over getting housewives to work was not allowed. In order to have a jurisdiction on such a small segment of the female labor force -housewives-, MOGE(F) officials had to strategically develop a way to negotiate with the Ministry of Labor, a more powerful authority regarding female labor force policies.

D. Deployment of Cultural Norms: Assumptions about Housewives Re-employment, Neo-liberal Individualism, and Positive Recognition of Femininity

In the previous sections, I have argued that the institutional historical legacy of women's issues embedded in the national goal of economic development and the logic of bureaucracy led the femocrats to make policy programs that did not intend to make fundamental changes in the job boundaries between men and women. Does it mean that femocrats take for granted the assumption of certain jobs-such as care service jobs-fitting with women? The answer can be found in their deployment of various understanding of cultural norms, which I will delve into in this section.

Once housewives became their policy category, femocrats made use of common understanding of cultural norms to make feasible policy programs for housewives. These norms provided them with standards of policy programs that could be accepted given their institutional constraints. The norms- traditional assumptions about married women's re-employment, prevalent neo-liberal individualism in the orientation of national labor force policy, and femininity as positive property - shaped the femocrats' perspective of what kind of policy programs were more effective and plausible for housewives and thus led them to make such programs.

First, femocrats made use of the cultural assumption that the consumers of service jobs would prefer women to men. For example, one interviewee defined promising jobs for women as ones that *demand* women more than men due to industrial structural change. She said *even though the demand comes from the*

traditional sexual division of labor, it is more effective for women get in than men do considering cost and benefit of getting housewives to work (Interview with MOGEF official 2, 2007)⁶.

Another interviewee also illustrates drawing on cultural assumptions of supply and demand of the social service workers in the policy making process.

We don't say anymore that women are better at certain work. That should be abolished. However, we can say that care work is still low-paid so women are clustered more than men. [...] And think about consumers who use the service such as patient attendant, visiting tutor. They feel more comfortable with women than men around your home, aren't they? If they become settled as an occupation, men will get in. And many women, who particularly from low-income family, will do the work because they don't need special training (on those jobs). They cannot wait even for several months with subsidy for job training because they are living from hand to mouth. Low-income family that barely makes ends meet tries to get these jobs even if they are part-time. Those jobs that need less training and skills are good for those women. Any women can do the house chores. But if we develop those works as certain occupations, we have to train and retrain the workers. We have to understand creation of those jobs from this perspective (Interview with Former MOGEF official 2, 2007).

While the femocrats do not take gender essentialism for granted, the policy makers deploy cultural assumptions - women's taking care jobs from their experience of domestic work and the cultural association of working within the domestic arena with women -to justify their policy choices. If policy programs do not resonate with those cultural assumptions, femocrats believed that it would not effectively pull women into the labor market.

Femocrats also accessed cultural assumptions about housewives' attitudes of

⁶ Plus, the interviewee said, promising jobs for women include jobs that have been dominated by men but there is a possibility that women could do. MOGEF's job is to make an infrastructure for women to enter those jobs by abolishing the existing practices based on the prejudice. The interviewee said MOGEF does not take for granted the traditional gendered division of labor.

responsibility toward balancing work and family. If a policy was to be plausible, they had to consider the culturally understood needs of married women, such as making care service jobs part-time. To the policy makers, there is certainly a part-time worker pool (Interview with FHRDC staff 1, 2007; FHRDC staff 2, 2007; MOGEF official 8, 2008). Thus, part-time work for women is more acceptable.

I think it is housewives' position that they want to balance the family and work to make money. Then, part-time work is not something that we should avoid. It might be a good idea to bring in part-time system. [...] Even middle class housewives whose husbands are middle standing try to make money to support their kids' education. There are many jobs that they can do as a sideline or jobs that they can use their know-how from domestic work, internet-shopping mall something like that (Interview with former MOGEF official 2, 2007).

However, considering that a fair labor system for part-time workers is not yet established and the discrimination that irregular female workers are facing in Korea, making care service jobs into part-time jobs for housewives doesn't help lessen sex segregation in the labor market. It does address the issue of acceptance by housewives, but leaves other important issues aside.

Considering these various cultural assumptions regarding married women's re-employment, making a policy program to get housewives into male-dominated occupations seems to be infeasible. A leader of a local Female Human Resource Development Center -MOGEF's implementation body- who is also a feminist scholar said,

When MOGEF invited proposals on getting women into male-dominated areas such as welder and lathe worker, we were thinking to do it in cooperation with a technology college, but when we considered whether they can get a job, or even if they could get in, they could survive, we just gave up the idea. [...] For example, welding and lathe need more than 3 months to get trained so I was wondering women could survive with 3 months training. And I was wondering whether women could

survive and be incorporated into the male dominated organizational culture. It depends on the individual but for housewives, I thought the company (of male dominated occupation) has a system to support housewives in their time and child rearing. The infrastructure is not established yet to jump in those male dominated jobs (Interview with FHRDC staff 3, 2007).

Even though MOGE(F) officers do not take gender essentialism for granted and they try to abolish the existing prejudice, if they make policy programs according to cultural assumptions aiming at the plausibility of the programs, their efforts to put women in non-traditional areas will remain token rather than a fundamental change in power relations between men and women in the labor market.

Amongst policy makers from MOGE(F), it is not seen as appropriate for the femocrats to say that certain jobs are appropriate for women and others are not. But cultural assumptions about the demand and supply of housewives entering the workforce seem to be seamlessly added to discussions and they easily made use of them. How is this contradiction possible? The positive recognition of femininity produced this complexity. A bureaucrat in charge of female human resource development insisted that femininity which had been despised should become strength. The positive aspect of femininity and “women’s development as a human being” should be rediscovered and emphasized (Interview with MOGEF official 2, 2007). If femininity gains positive recognition, the disproportionate numbers of women in service jobs would not be a problem to the policy makers. Moreover, this shift allows policy makers to emphasize the number of females in the workforce, their economic independence, and the institutionalization of care work rather than the essential traits of the jobs. In the next section, I discuss how this perspective converges with feminist

activists' view of care work, although it is not as radical.

Besides cultural assumptions about housewives' getting jobs, MOGEF's bureaucrats also made use of neo-liberal individualism, which contributed to policy programs that were far from intending women's subordinated position in the labor market. Particularly, when labor force participation is based on neo-liberal economic reforms such as increasing equal opportunities and expanding flexibility in the labor market, the philosophy of neo-liberal individualism enters the dialogue as a dominant cultural resource.

While cultural norms influenced the creation of feasible programs that do not blur the boundaries between the two sexes in terms of the characteristics of the jobs, policy makers' acceptance of neo-liberal individualism as gender-neutral influenced the generation of policies that accept women's jobs as marginal in the labor market.

MOGE(F) bureaucrats do not link class polarization with women's lower marginalized position in the labor market. Particularly, while neo-liberal policies provide opportunities to upper-class well educated young women through the mechanism of "fair competition," flexibility as a neo-liberal labor principle put women from the lower class with less education into marginalized irregular jobs. Neo liberalism in fact works closely with patriarchy (Cho, 1998; Lee, 2004). According to Lee (2004), women workers in patriarchal societies have a lower status than men within the same class position. Women stay on the lower rung of based on sex role model, and they are regarded as an industrial reserve labor force. Neo-liberal economic reform based on labor flexibility aggravated this inequality. (Lee, 2004:105-

109).

The following interview illustrates that MOGE(F) officers pay little attention to the issue of how the combination of neo-liberal individualism and patriarchy operates in a way that exacerbates lower class women's subordinated position in the labor market.

On the practical level of policy implementation, when we make a program for women re-entering the labor market, we cannot ignore their educational level. There is no way. We should make program for women's re-entrance to the labor market based on their educational level and skills. [...] It is worrisome that those jobs (social service jobs) are irregular based and low-paid. But there is no way that we enforce a company to employ them since the structure of the labor market is like that. What can we do? [...] Labor market can not be homogeneous. We need various kinds of jobs such as a garbage man and so on. Of course social movement activists should try to narrow the gap of wage and working conditions but stratification itself presents in any society. We should not approach this problem ideally (Interview with former MOGEF official 3, 2007).

Similarly, according to another officer from MOGEF, qualification based on education and skill level is the rule and norm of the market and thus polarization is not the problem of gender policies (Interview with MOGEF official 2, 2007). In other words, exacerbation of polarization in the labor market as a result of social service job creation was less a problem of gender policy (Interview with feminist scholar 3; feminist scholar 5). It should be more or less a problem of social policy. However, considering that while neo-liberal individualism is applied to both men and women, more women than men make up the lower sector of the labor market and social service jobs are part of the lower sector. Accepting neo-liberal individualism as a given norm without considering its operation within a patriarchal labor market system did not allow them to make female human resource development policies which challenged

the existing dual market structure.

E. Conclusion

MOGEF was founded by the demands of feminist activists who sought to alter the division of labor to achieve gender equality. Officials of MOGEF also believe sex segregation should be reduced. How then, were counterintuitive policies produced? This chapter made an attempt to account for the important mechanisms through which policies that are obstacles to the abolition of sex segregation in the labor market were produced. In searching for the important mechanisms, this research delved into the institutional dimensions of MOGEF and the actors working within the institutional circumstances.

In looking at the roles of institutional circumstances, actors and their goal setting and use of strategies within particular institutional settings, this chapter showed that the efforts to improve gender equality are neither derived only from global practices, nor only from domestic exigencies. Making the story more complex and detailed, this chapter showed an interaction between the two elements- global and local-integrated in the policy programs. A detailed analysis of the policy making process opens up the theoretical black box within which actors strive to accomplish multiple institutional goals. This analysis contributes to a fuller picture of how one dimension of gender equality - women's economic autonomy - is accomplished at the cost of another - gender division of labor among workforces.

MOGEF bureaucrats pursue multiple institutional goals. They make an attempt

to improve women's economic independence, which is a globally advocated goal. However at the same time it is placed in the web of a broader government-wide goal: national economic prosperity. Along with these international and national concerns, MOGEF bureaucrats also need to focus on an organizational issue: expanding their job area in order to survive as a ministry.

Under these institutional circumstances, MOGEF bureaucrats strategically took advantage of the state-wide goal of solving domestic social economic conditions, fit these opportunities to their goal of surviving as a ministry, and at the same time tried to further their goal of becoming a vanguard organization for gender equality. With the historical inheritance of the association of women's economic participation with national prosperity, the creation of service jobs became MOGE(F)'s opportunity to accomplish its goal of increasing women's economic independence. However, since its jurisdiction was historically developed and limited to the category of housewives in the turf rivalry, and with the femocrats' efforts to solidify housewives as MOGE(F)'s turf, the policy option was confined to increasing married women's economic participation through the creation of social service jobs. Given that policy goal, MOGE(F) femocrats made an attempt to make feasible policy programs by using prevalent cultural assumptions regarding women's labor force participation. This combination of factors contributed to policies that did not challenge the gendered division of labor in the labor market.

In addition to the interaction between global norms and local exigencies, this chapter also showed that the globally advocated gender equality norm is not the only

cultural source that the actors use in policy making. In order for the policy programs to be adopted and effective, the femocrats use various cultural meanings regarding women's equality that are sometimes contradictory with women's economic independence. In other words, the idea of gender equality is not the only norm that has a significant influence on local actor's decision making and prioritization of goals. While gender equality was settled as a mission for MOGEF, it was not in other organizations within the state. Moreover, national economic development was the most prominent and prioritized goal over gender equality state wide. Therefore, MOGEF's policy making strategy was confined within the Women In Development paradigm that achieves equal opportunity to work by adding women to national development processes rather than challenging gendered power structures (GAD paradigm).

This chapter underlines the complexities of the way domestic and global conditions influence policy programs that do not change the division of labor in the labor market although they could provide women with economic independence. The global gender norm and domestic structural changes do not work alone for increasing (or hindering achievement of) gender equality. There are actors who employ both of them. Policy programs are the integration of the global and domestic elements that are employed by the actors. Moreover, even though the actors freely adopt and strategically use global gender norms and domestic structural changes for their goals, their goal prioritizations are limited by the institutional circumstances and diverse meanings of women's equality through which they define problems, set goals, and find

strategies.

IV. “Care” as Resistance to Neo-liberalism: Feminist Activism and Labor Market Sex Segregation

[W]ithout having a solution to realize an alternative society and alternative economy [to neo-liberalism], we cannot solve the problem of women suffering [from poverty]. [...] It is important to establish an alternative society intervening by women themselves from women’s perspective in the process that other social movement organizations make efforts to present a blueprint of an alternative society (A feminist activist and scholar Chung Hyun-Baek at SUA, Korea-Asian Civil Society Talk, 2004)

[L]ooking back, human being cannot live alone without caring each other and the idea that we cannot live without money is only a ‘myth’ that is inculcated in our mind but people don’t see it because of the economic insecurity. [...] Let’s turn our attention to a collective way of life through which the individual can be happy by living and working together (A feminist scholar Cho-Han Haejung, *Womennews*, February, 5. 2010).

A. Introduction

The previous chapter analyzed how MOGEF’s institutional constraints and MOGEF bureaucrats’ understanding of housewives’ work made possible the production of policy programs that would result in more, not less, sex segregation in the labor market. The historical legacy of the institution serving the state-wide goal of economic development led the femocrats to the strategic association of service jobs with female labor force participation and national economic prosperity. The institutional development in the midst of the turf battle with other existing powerful ministries led MOGEF bureaucrats to target housewives, effectively linking the group with the service sector jobs. At the same time, the bureaucrats did not deny the existing culturally laden association of women and caring/nurturing work. While these three mechanisms involve primarily the state side, I found the feminist activists’

strategic engagement with the state policy making processes for accomplishing their goals and their deployment of diverse versions of gender equality as important mechanisms operating in the feminist activists' sides. Feminist activists made an effort to influence the state policy making regarding women's labor force participation in order to accomplish their short-term and long-term goals which are grounded on their definitions of gender equality: improving economic status of women in poverty immediately and achieving care as a new vision of Korean society through de-gendering care eventually.

While the story of the state's acceptance, through MOGEF reformers, of the association of women and caring/nurturing work is itself surprising, the way in which feminist activists did not resist but demanded this work for women is even more startling and potentially important to the future of gender equality in Korea. The progressive feminist activist groups followed pathways that produced policy programs that seem to be far from correcting labor market sex segregation at least in the short run.

How were state policy programs that got housewives to the labor market but limited them to pink collar service jobs produced in the presence of feminist activists who ideologically are against gendered division of labor? Even though feminist activists were aware of the possible outcome of deepening sex segregation in the labor market, the more urgent problem was to resist free market neo-liberalism that deepens societal inequality in general as well as drives more women into poverty. Without reforming society, feminist activists believed that women's equality could not be fully

achieved. Sex segregation in the labor market was an additional hurdle to women's equality.

The Korean feminist activists advocated "care" as an antidote to neo-liberalism. First, they supported "care" as a job to solve the problem of women's poverty, an outcome of neo-liberal labor reforms which were implemented as a result of the 1997 financial crisis. In order to solve the problem of feminization of poverty, they demanded the state increase social service jobs. Moreover, to the Korean feminist activists, sex segregation in the labor market was more of a structural problem. Therefore, revaluing the caring work through institutionalization was more important in the end than to attract men to this job sector.

Second, in an effort to support care as a job, Korean feminist activists demanded its institutionalization. Through this shift in the status of care giving, Korean feminist activists resisted the neo-liberal free market in two ways. On the one hand, by demanding socialization of the service as opposed to market solutions, Korean feminist activists made an attempt to expand the discourse of public responsibility. This came at a time when the prevalent discourse saw marketization as the panacea for social economic problems. On the other hand, the effort to revalue care services through institutionalization is in itself a way to resist the market system because market system devalues caring labor and thus became a solid ground for gendered division of labor.

Third, the Korean feminist activists advocate "care" as an ideology and make an effort to establish it as an alternative way of life and an alternative economy to neo-

liberal ones. They believe that the fundamental reformation of society through a new paradigm opposing neo-liberalism is necessary for women's liberation as well as for solving the feminization of poverty. I argue that these three efforts that Korean feminist activists made to revalue care as a job and an ideology in order to reform the neo-liberal society led them to demand that the state increase service jobs for women.

Feminist scholars have made efforts to reconceptualize reproductive work as a new social economic and political principle by refuting the idea of modern individualism as a fallacy which reproduces male hegemony (Young 1990; Fraser, 1997, Kittay, 1999; Folbre, 2001). These scholars insist on the importance of nurturing activity for enriched human life. They assert that social economic political philosophy based on modern individualism marginalizes the dependent (i.e. women, children, elderly) who are outside the contract relationships in the public sphere by neglecting the human being's ontological necessity to be inter-dependent. Thus, care work becomes exploited (Huh, 2005).

Criticizing the concept of "individual-based equality," Kittay (1999) insists that revising the principle of modern social justice into "connection-based equality." This idea of equality focuses on the existence of human beings in reciprocally caring relationships, where the individual capacity to care should constitute the right to citizenship. This way, she views, care work can be fairly valued and the subject of care is equally treated.

Frazer (2000) points out that neither the "universal breadwinner model" nor the "caregiver parity model" secure gender equality. She suggests "the universal caregiver

model” which would transform the modern paradigm of breadwinning and care giving into one based on women’s experience with care. In this model, women, men, and the state share the responsibility of care giving.

In this chapter, I will show how feminist activists’ perceptions of gender inequality and their strategies that led them to struggle with neo-liberalism caused them to adopt policies that reproduce the essentialist ideologies. Relying on feminist scholarly work, this chapter analyzes the Korean feminist activists’ efforts to transform society by taking advantage of the public support for care work. Their efforts are not limited to guaranteeing women’s individual “rights” to work outside the domestic arena. Their attempts also go beyond getting men involved in the domestic work. In the long term, they try to establish a new principle of life in which reproductive activity is respected as much as productive activity (Shanley, 1983).

B. Contradiction among Global Norms and Contact between Norms and Agency

This chapter concerns a theoretical weakness in neo-institutionalist theory: the idea that the diffusion of world culture produces similarities in policy making cross-nationally. Much research on world culture chooses one norm such as human rights, or gender equality, or free market neo-liberalism and examines it throughout different nations but pay little attention to the context of multiple internationally supported global norms where some international norms does not work consistently. Norms can be contradictory according to different social groups on which the norms have an

influence. While neo-institutionalists also see this point (Meyer et al., 1997), they say that it is more evidence that different nation-states converge on one phenomenon: nation-states pursue globally advocated norms. However, they do not delve into how global norms at odds with each other work their way into policies, nor what mechanisms bring about the paradox of policy program I analyze in this chapter.

For example, in addition to the gender equality norm, Korea has been influenced by free market neo-liberalism, which is a global trend that developed after the 1997 financial crisis. It affects Korean people's everyday lives through labor flexibility and cultural principles such as individualism, hyper competition, and self-sufficiency. These free market neo-liberalism changes impact women's lives and thus influence domestic policy makers' goals and feminist activists' strategies. Particularly when free market neo-liberalism and gender equality norms do not work consistently, the contradiction between the two norms interferes with the ability of state actors and feminist activists accomplish gender equality goals, such as women's economic independence. One way to understand how these two forces complicated the picture for both activists and bureaucrats is to look at the differences in the way in which neo-liberal reform policies affect women depending on their class status.

Paying attention to the complexities which emerged through contradictory norms, we can see the complicated political opportunity structures that feminist activists take into account in their participation in the state policy making processes. The influence of gender equality norms is not isomorphic even within one local site. It also brings the agency of individuals to light, which neo-institutional scholars often

pay little attention to. It allows us to see the social processes through which the actors decide on priorities for the goals and strategies they will use while making sense out of the internal contradictions of the global norms in order to improve the social economic political condition and to change culture.

This chapter focuses on a core concern for the Korean feminist activists-the social inequality including feminization of poverty as a direct result of neo-liberal economic reforms encouraged by the Korean state. They see that neo-liberal reforms have a great impact on inequality of gender and class. Also, they insist that the neo-liberal economic reform produced class polarization and led the Korean society into a cold individualized one that marginalizes the individual left out in the free market competition.

MOGEF is a state organization which tries to accomplish multiple goals at one time. While it pursues gender equality, as a bureaucracy of the state, it must also align itself with neo-liberal reforms in response to the globalized economy. Female labor force participation was one of MOGEF's goals for women's economic independence. At the same time, it was a means to accomplish the broader state goal of solving the social economic risks that sprang from the globalized neo-liberal economy such as unsecured jobs, rising unemployment rates, and social economic polarization. As President Noh Mu Hyun (2002-2007) labeled his administration as "the Left neo-liberal administration," the solutions to solve social economic problems were based on neo-liberal economic principles. Rather than securing lifelong-employment jobs to attain economic growth and distribution of wealth, the regime opted for a free market

neo-liberal economy by providing job training and education opportunities aimed at increasing flexibility of labor market. At the same time it created social service occupations to provide poor jobless people with jobs for subsistence.

While MOGEF pursued women's economic independence, it could not tackle the issues created by free market neo-liberalism and it did not see these issues as something to be corrected in order to solve women's poverty. For example, even though there was a criticism that the social service job program would reproduce class polarization, MOGEF bureaucrats thought that the issue of class inequality is an issue of individual efforts for self-sufficiency; there was no problem with MOGEF's policy per se (Interview with MOGEF official 2, 2007).

However, the principle of self-sufficiency is not always the solution for the socially marginalized. Gender equality norms and neo-liberalism can work consistently for upper class women liberated from care work at home to pursue their self-accomplishment in the winner-take-all market. On the contrary, lower class women are not only devastated by neo-liberal labor marketization but also are not liberated from care work either. Korean feminist activists posit that the influence of gender equality norms is mediated by the operation of neo-liberal policies according to women's social class. Also, more broadly, they believe that women's liberation is not fully achieved without the reformation of neo-liberal society.

Therefore, Korean feminist activists made an attempt to subvert neo-liberal economic principles. MOGEF's strategy to accomplish women's economic independence had its ideological roots in free-market neo-liberal labor policies. Since

feminist activists could not ignore the immediate problem of women in poverty who need any job they can get, even if it had poor conditions, they did not vehemently resist the state policy programs. In order to reconcile the contradiction of needing solutions to address the immediate problem of job creation with the battle for equality, feminist activists tried to redefine care as a valuable commodity. As a long term goal, Korean feminist activists made an attempt to lay out an alternative way of living by confronting neo-liberal ideas. To accomplish these goals, they tried to establish “care” as a new cultural social principle on which Korean society should be based and worked to resist neo-liberal hegemonic forces. They believed this alternative cultural principle could solve the problem of feminization of poverty, improve the value of care, and make it possible to achieve more viable gender equality.

How did Korean feminist activists reach for the solution of care work to solve the feminization of poverty? The answer is found in the history of the progressive feminist activists’ agenda and their strategies. Historically, one of the main goals of the progressive feminist activists (KWAU) has been securing women’s right to work. Therefore increasing public provision of care services, particularly child care services, was a core concern.

Strategically, with this focus on women’s right to work, the progressive feminist activists engaged themselves with the socio-political issues of an increasing low birth rate and an aging population, which result in the problem of care shortage. With care shortage becoming an important socio-political issue, they responded to this “crisis” by criticizing those who blamed women for being unwilling to marry or to

have a child. They demanded “socialization of care,” thus providing public infrastructure to allow women to go into the labor market.

With their historical organizational goals and their strategy of taking advantage of the highlighted social problem, Korean feminist activists linked state job creation programs, particularly in social service jobs, to solving the problem of women’s poverty. In combining their goal of creating employment for females with the creation of care jobs, Korean feminist activists attempted to revalue and re-conceptualize care as a way of reforming the economy and culture.

Another question that might be raised is how it is acceptable for Korean feminist activists to put more emphasis on long-term social reform than on short-term sex segregation in the labor market. Does it seem that they pay more attention to social inequality in general than to women’s equality issues? The answer to this question reveals the interaction between global norms of gender equality and Korean feminist activists’ view of gender equality.

Historically, progressive feminist activists engaged with the democratization movement, so they believe that without reformation of neo-liberal society and democratization of the neo-liberal economy, women’s liberation cannot be fully accomplished. A feminist activist Chung Hyun-baek put it:

Our [the progressive feminist activist] movement’s key strategy has been “coalition [with other social movement] and separation [from other social movement]” for the last 10 years. However women are liberated, it is not completely achieved if we do not establish a society where democracy and human rights is realized. We have to do the project on making a humane and equal society. Therefore, we have been participating in other social movements and at the same time doing our own project on women’s equality (SUA, Korea-Asian Civil Society Talk, 2004)

Korean feminist activists did not deny issues peculiar to women. In order to achieve women's equality in the long term, they tried to establish ideas for an alternative society. They contextualized women's inequality issues within the issue of broader social class polarization and they sought collective action with other progressive social movement groups.

In short, the global agenda of the feminization of poverty resonated with Korean feminist activists' insight into the problem of care shortage locally. Also, their problematization of neo-liberalism's influence on lower class women and the feminization of poverty influenced their perception of gender equality and strategies to achieve it.

In the next section, I will delve into the specific mechanisms that led the progressive feminist activists to demand policy programs which increased sex segregation in the labor market. I focus on the complex picture of their strategies and goals to solve women's problems within the context of broader socio-economic issues facing Korea.

C. Neo-Liberal Economic Reformation and the Feminization of Poverty

Korean scholars insist that the 1997 financial crisis and the subsequent economic restructuring is a critical historical juncture in Korean social, economic, and cultural change (Cho, 1998; Lee, 2002; Lee, 2004; Lee, 2005; Cho-Han 2006; Kim, 2008). The economic crisis resulted in the intervention of international principles of

neo-liberalism in Korean economy, which rooted themselves not only in the economic arena but also in the everyday lives of the people and their minds.

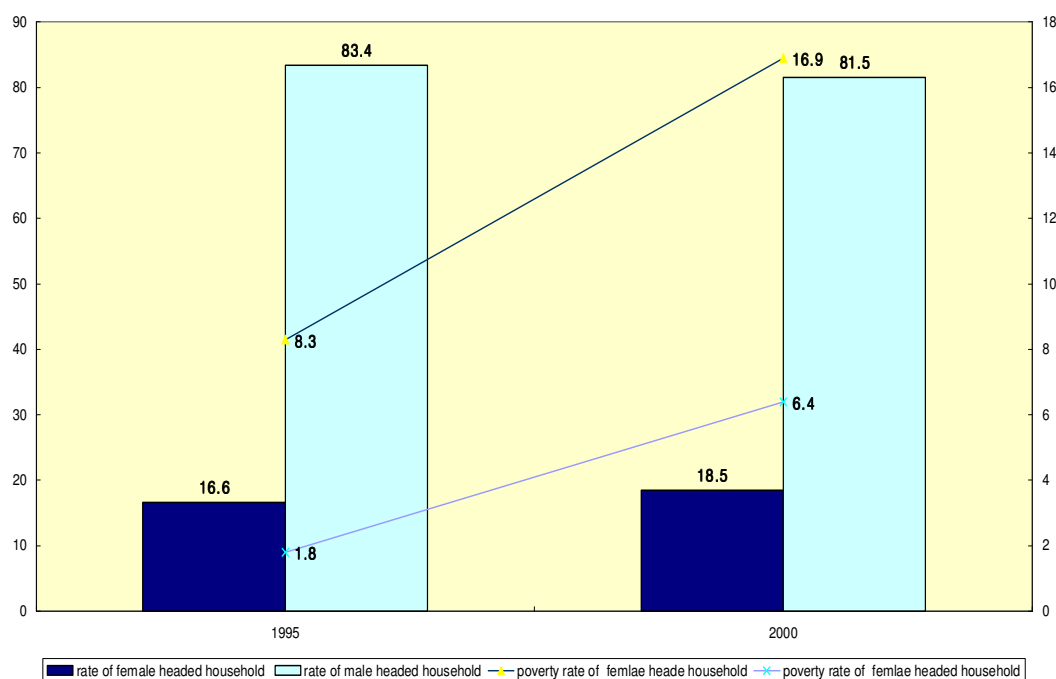
The neo-liberal economic reform resulted in socio-economic polarization in Korea. With the financial crisis, the government implemented the reform designated by IMF, downsizing the labor force and increasing the labor market flexibility. Laws making lay-offs easier were passed and the rate of fully employed workers decreased through outsourcing and subcontracting. Because social safety net infrastructures had not been established, poverty and associated risks with lay-offs increased. Moreover, involuntary unemployment among youths age 15-29 became chronic. These changes in the labor market resulted in an increase in the poverty rate and an increase in the working poor (Lee, 2002). It was expected that 5 % of people in their 20s would be able to find regular work from big enterprises, government, and public enterprise and the rest of them would remain in irregular jobs. The upper 20% earned 4.49 as much as the lower 20% in 1997 and the number increased to 5.56 times in 2000 (KNSO, 2001), which evidences the undermining of the middle class.

From women's perspective, the increase in irregular workers and lower class was more significant in the female labor force. Dismissals and lay-offs during the reformation caused many families to have economic problems and it led to an increase in divorce that forced many women to work outside the home. As a result of neo-liberal economic reforms, female-headed households increased from 16.6% in 1996 to 18.5% in 2000 while male-headed household¹ decreased from 83.4% to 81.5% in the

¹ I use the term "male-headed household" described in the Korean statistics. Until the Family Headship System was abolished in 2005, men were registered as the head of the household. Women usually became registered as the head of the household when they do not have spouse.

same period. As shown in Graph 4-1, the poverty rate also increased for female-headed households, going from 8.3 % to 16.9% while the poverty rate of male-headed household increased from 1.8% to 6.4% in the period of 1996-2000. As shown in the graph, women's poverty rate increased more than male-headed household. Moreover, while female-headed households comprised 18.5% of all households, they accounted for 45.8% of poor households (Suk, 2004: 22-23).

Graph 4-1 The Change in the Proportion of Household and Poverty by Sex
(Suk, 2004:22)



As neo-liberal reform was settling in as an economic principle, irregular, contract based jobs, which paid only 51.2% wages and had the same or more work compared to regular jobs, become more common. This insecurity in the labor market affected more women than men. Irregular workers comprised 55.4% of wage workers in 2003; 70% of the irregular workers were women. Among women workers, wage

laborers comprised 65.5%, including 23.2% regular workers and 42.2% temporary and daily workers. This is much less than the male rate of 25.1% temporary and daily based workers in 2003 (Kang, 2004:56).

Women's status in the labor market as irregular workers aggravated the poverty rate of women. Suk (2004) found that the poverty of female-headed households with regular jobs increased from 7.1% in 1996 to 9.1% in 2000 while ones with irregular jobs went from 13.1% to 22.5% in the same period. The rate of poverty increase was 28.2% for regular workers as opposed to 71.8% for irregular workers. The more insecure the work conditions, the poorer women became.

Table 4-1 The Poverty Rate of Female-headed Household by the Types of Jobs (%)
(Suk, 2004:34)

	Regular jobs	Irregular Jobs	Total
1996(A)	7.1	13.1	7.8
2000(B)	9.1	22.5	12.0
Poverty increase rate (B-A/A)	28.2	71.8	53.8
Poverty Increase (B-A)	2.0	9.4	4.2

Even after the recovery from the economic crisis in Korea, women were slower compared to men in regaining the economic status they had had before the financial crisis (Suk, 2004:28). According to Suk (2004), the poverty rate of female-headed households was 9.3% in 1996, 6.8% in 1997, 13.2% in 1998 (after the financial crisis), 16.9% in 1999, 13.3% in 2000, and 9.3% in 2002. It does not recover to the level of 1997. On the contrary, the poverty rate of male-headed family was 2.5% in 1996, 2.2% in 1997, 5.6% in 1998 (after the financial crisis), 5.9% in 1999, 4.1% in 2000, 3.4% in 2001, and 2.4% in 2002, which is close to the pre-crisis level of 1997 (Suk, 2004: 28).

Women's poverty was not alleviated due to their disproportionate concentration in irregular jobs which offer poor benefits and longer work hours, giving women little chance to liberate themselves from poverty (shown in Table 4-1). Since 2004, the feminization of poverty has become the most important agenda item for progressive feminist activism. The progressive feminist activist organization KWAU pointed out that while there had been institutional changes such as quota systems to attract more educated middle class women to high level public management and academia, policies for women in poverty were sorely lacking, causing more gender inequality (Chung, 2004: 340) - increasing women's marginalization in the labor market and broadening wage gaps. In the next section, I will explore how feminist activists attempted to solve women's poverty issues and how their strategies affected the production of job creation programs which reproduced the ideology of gendered division of labor in the labor market.

D. Care Service Jobs as a Solution to the Feminization of Poverty

While the agenda of solving the feminization of poverty problem was one of the agenda from Beijing Action Platform, focusing on agency makes it possible to figure out the interaction between the global and the local by showing how a certain global agenda of gender equality resonates and is thus adopted by the actors under certain social economic circumstances. Korean progressive feminist activists worked with poor women from the beginning of the organization and noticed the feminization of poverty in the Korean context after the 1997 economic crisis. A feminist activist put

it:

Women have been always poor and when we were delving on to the solution to women's poverty, we came up with the agenda of feminization of poverty. We found a tendency of women's poverty in the (global) data and found it in our society too so we made feminization of poverty as an agenda (Interview with official 1, 2008).

As Korean feminist activists learned more about the feminization of poverty in Korea, they encountered Korean feminist scholars and researchers, who also emphasized the same problem.

Given that women's poverty problems were aggravated with the expansion of neo-liberal economic principles in the labor market, the progressive feminist activists pursued solving the feminization of poverty through government programs creating care service jobs. Feminist activists not only took advantage of the state priorities, but also made an attempt to revalue care work as a fundamental and long-term solution for women's economic autonomy and change the gendered social power structure in the long run through public support and not through market solutions.

While creating care service jobs is more or less a responsive solution to the feminization of poverty driven by neo-liberalism, revaluing care work is a more active resistance against the penetration of neo-liberal ideas in organizing care work by opting for the state to take responsibility as opposed to allowing a free market to operate. Given that neo-liberalism had shattered lower class women's lives and widened economic inequality, stopping the penetration of neo-liberal market principles was a more fundamental way to accomplish women's economic independence and de-gendering the social structure in the long run. Particularly since feminist activists viewed sex segregation in the labor market as a structural problem rather than a

byproduct of inherent gender traits, revaluing care work by ensuring public responsibility for it was more important than addressing sex segregation per-se. I argue that pink collar service jobs were created through a combination of mechanisms: feminist activists' prioritization of solving the feminization of poverty that was aggravated by neo-liberal economic reforms; feminist activists' belief that sex segregation was a structural problem; and feminist activists' strategies to establish care service as a public responsibility as a way to resist neo-liberalism. In the following sections, first, I will analyze care service as solution to women's poverty, then I will examine the revaluation of care work, and finally, I explore feminist activists' strategy to resist neo-liberalism.

1. Prioritization of Women's Poverty over Sex Segregation

The urgency of women's poverty since the 1997 economic crisis led feminist activists to opt for increasing care service jobs and enhancing the quality and work conditions through the institutionalization of care. They could not afford to be hesitant to increase job sources for poor women.

For example, KWAU criticized the government for indifference to women's disproportionate withdrawal from the labor market, and demanded that they enact female-friendly employment projects. KWAU suggested an "After School Program for Low-Income Family Children" and implemented it in association with the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1998. By creating after school teacher jobs, KWAU aimed at supporting low-income families with working mothers and providing high-educated

unemployed women with jobs to participate in the local community. At the same time, KWAU also suggested creating domestic worker jobs to support low-income families. By providing domestic service jobs, KWAU insisted, women in low-income families are relieved from the care work at home and are able to go out to paid labor which would relieve the poor economic conditions of the families. In addition, KWAU said that the project would help middle-old aged women to get care service jobs (Nam, 1998:11).

As a greater number of women entered the labor force, progressive feminist activists became more focused on relieving women's poverty through the creation of care jobs. The increase in the demand for care services became an important job source for women in poverty. Before the state even started to plan programs to provide women social service jobs in 2005, the Korea Women Workers' Association (KWWA), a member organization of KWAU, established the "National Home Manager Association" in 2004 in order to support women who could not enter the labor market and had to work due to poverty.

As the exacerbating influences of neo-liberal policies on women in poverty became evident, Korean feminist activists demanded the state create social service jobs as a way to solve the problem of women's poverty. Feminist activist and scholar Chung Huyn-Baek wrote:

The poverty that resulted from globalization hit women the most. The least developed women's policy throughout last 10 years might be job creation and irregular workers. So far as women's economic rights and job creation, women's policies have regressed and it resulted in irregular workers that comprise 73 % of women workers.[...] In order to guarantee women's economic participation [for solving the feminization of poverty], a large-scale-job creation effort should be promoted primarily in the social

service sector. At the same time, the jobs should be re-evaluated. (Chung, 2004: 340-341).

When the state realized the importance of social service jobs in the context of a declining birth rate, increasing elderly population, and low employment rate, it started creating social service jobs in 2005 to help national economic development. Piggybacking on the state's efforts and seizing the chance given by the social demographic changes, MOGEF also attempted to take leadership in female human resource development and tried to create female-oriented jobs, such as preschool teachers and baby sitters. The Ministry of Health and Welfare also created care service jobs such as elderly care.

Korean feminist activists took advantage of government job creation programs in trying to solve the problem of the feminization of poverty, rather than fighting sex segregation in the labor market. They believed that providing jobs to poor women was more urgent. This focus is well illustrated in one feminist activists' remark on the prioritization of goals between women's poverty and sex segregation:

While care work becomes socialized it is feminized and it is obvious that job quality of feminized work is very poor. Since we knew it, we discussed whether it is ok to let women get into the jobs. However, it is true that there weren't enough jobs for women who want to work and since these women are not highly educated and well-trained, care work is the one that they have been doing, the one that they are accustomed to in their everyday lives. [...] We cannot say that women should not get into these jobs just because sex segregation is a problem. Women [in poverty] need those jobs. [...] Our position is that if sex segregation is a problem, it is more important to take actions to get the recognition of the value of the work in our society. Of course we have a long way to go but women's [socio-economic] position is too insecure to exclude the care service jobs. So we need to engage in creating social service jobs where care service jobs are the biggest portion and thus women are [hired] (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008).

2. Segregation as a Structural Problem

In addition to the urgency of the situation of women in poverty, feminist activists' perspective on sex segregation also led them not to be too concerned about increasing sex segregation per-se as they supported increasing social service jobs. They believed that it is more or less a structural problem than an inherent aspect of gender. One feminist activist said,

We cannot solve the problem of [sex segregation in the labor market] even though we can debate theoretically. In reality, we never say certain jobs should be done by women and another by men. If care service jobs have higher wages and better working conditions, men will come into this sector. If it is lucrative, they will enter into the jobs but it doesn't and despite that women do and men don't. [...] I think the level of wage is more important than the concepts of female job and male job. [...] And it is more important to change the system so that women can enter male dominated occupations such as giving women priority in training and getting a job in male dominated area. If you change the system, women can easily get into those jobs. [...] For example, whether it is army or police, if you give quota and priority to women, I think more women will try it. The young generation is changing. The problem is barriers to entrance (Interview with KWWA activist, 2008).

Therefore, Korean feminist activists are more concerned with revaluing care service jobs than the increase in pink collar service jobs and women's clustering in those jobs. In the post-development economic stage, care work became more in need but at the same time it was under-valued. Feminist activists believe that revaluation of under-valued care work is a problem of gendered power which aggravates both sex segregation and women's poverty. Once caring labor is paid fairly, feminist activists believe, not only will it relieve the feminization of poverty, but also lessen sex segregation in the labor market in the long run (Chung, 2004; interview with KWWA activist, 2007; Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008;). Feminist activists put it:

[Social service] jobs should be revalued. Parallel to job creation, valuing social service jobs which are newly emerging such as school reading coach and school nutritionist as "decent work" for social development should be done rather than

leaving these undervalued in social hierarchy (Chung, 2004: 341).

If it is a problem that care service jobs become feminized, we have to enhance the condition of the work so men would want to enter into those [care service] jobs. That might be a better solution [to lessen sex segregation than blocking women entering care service jobs]. If both sexes want it, it is a good job. However, our society does not value care so much as [would attract men into the care service jobs]. It is our responsibility to enhance the condition of the work, so we demanded revision of laws on employee insurance to make the social service jobs descent jobs and government's responsibility as employers (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008).

Progressive feminists believe sex segregation is a structural problem, so they intervened in the government job creation program by criticizing the state's negligence in providing job security and low wages (Interview with KWWA activist, 2008; KWAU activist 1, 2008). In order to increase the value of social service jobs, Korean feminist activists demanded socialization of care, which I will now explore.

E. Socialization of Care and Resistance to Neo-Liberalism

In order to solve the feminization of poverty problem, Korean feminist activists demanded the creation of social service jobs and a revaluing of care work. How could they achieve the second goal? Korean feminist activists decided to try to institutionalize care work. However, an even more important issue was in what form care work would be organized. Korean feminist activists demanded the "socialization" of care service provision. In this sense, increasing and revaluing care service was not limited to the goal of solving the feminization of poverty. The increase in government efforts to create social service jobs was an important political opportunity for the progressive feminist activists to resist neo-liberalism. "Socialization" of care service as opposed to "marketization" resists neo-liberalism in two ways: first, it emphasizes

the importance of public responsibility instead of associating it with inefficiency as neo-liberalism does. Second, caring labor, non-market work, which was invisible under the capitalist system, is revealed and valued through a public responsibility rather than under-valued through marketization.

I argue that feminist activists' goal to establish care services as a public responsibility as a way to resist neo-liberalism was another mechanism through which pink collar service jobs were produced by the state. To progressive feminist activists, holding efficiency driven market forces in check through the expansion of the discourse of "public responsibility" and revaluing care work through notions of public duty was a fundamental way to achieve more viable women's economic independence as well as lessen sex segregation in the long term.

Demanding socialization of care work has been one of the most important agenda items for KWAU since its foundation (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008). Progressive feminist activists defined socialization of care as an institutionalization of care services that included the provision of care services by the state and the local government without cost, care work as paid work, and re-evaluation of the work done historically by women (Interview with KWAU activist 2, 2007). Although the phrase the "socialization of care" (*tolbom-ŭi sahoehwa*) is a more or less recent expression since the year 2000, as Korea experienced low-birth rate and an increasing old population, one of the goals of KWAU's activism throughout its history has been the socialization of care in order to provide care by the state to guarantee women's right to work, particularly for lower class women. For example, during the 1980s, KWAU

insisted that there should be enough daycare centers in every local district (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008). Since the economic crisis in 1997, the demand for the socialization of care continued although there were critiques about whether those programs alleviate women's poverty.

During the 1980s to 1990s, socialization of care was limited to the provision of care services through public support to achieve women's right to work. The socialization of care in 2000 became more revolutionary in its intent to fight against neo-liberalism. First, Korean feminist activists strategically engaged with state efforts to expand the discourse of public responsibility as an anti-hegemonic discourse countering neo-liberalism. As social economic inequality widened with the influences of neo-liberalism in Korean society, Korean activists believed the women's movement should lead and spread the discourse of public duty in order to solve the problem of inequality, including the feminization of poverty. As a feminist activist and scholar Chung Hyun Baek wrote:

[W]ithout having a solution to realize an alternative society and alternative economy [to neo-liberalism], we cannot solve the problem of women suffering [from poverty]. [...] It is important to establish an alternative society intervening by women themselves from women's perspective in the process that other social movement organizations make efforts to present a blueprint of an alternative society (Chung, 2004: 341).

Through strategic engagement with state policies to increase social service provisions, progressive feminist activists resisted the hegemonic discourse of market-driven economic principles in the socio-cultural economic arena.

By demanding the state provision of social service, they suggested an alternative to the discourse of "private" and "market efficiency" and expanded the

discourse of “public” by correcting notions of an “inefficient and costly bureaucracy.”

As a feminist activist put it:

[Neo-liberalists] do not question the efficiency of the market but we have a different opinion on the efficiency of the unregulated market. There surely exists the role of the public sector but people do not have a good impression on the role of the “public.” [...] They associate the word “public” with a bad image. So we are looking for how to package the word “public” [in order to convey the underlying ideal of the state responsibility.][...] *We are trying to speak for “public” through socialization of care and watch how those state programs contribute to expansion of public responsibility and increases in women’s economic rights and work-family balance.* We have been concentrating on the socialization of child care but will expand our agenda to the socialization of elderly care and the labor rights of the elderly care workers (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008. Emphasis is mine).

The interviewee’s remark shows that Korean feminist activists engage themselves with policy programs that create care jobs in order to recreate the ideology of “public” as a benefit as well as to improve the quality of care work. In order to solve the problem of inequality (e.g. women in poverty, widened class gap) in the midst of a market driven socio-economic culture and to establish a social system in which the socially marginalized who were left out of the market can survive, engaging with social service job creation programs was a strategy to expand the discourse of “public responsibility” as a basis for a reformed society where the power of capitalism is limited.

Expanding the discourse of public responsibility is an important step in revaluing care work, which offers the revolutionary potential of the socialization of care. The attempt to institutionalize care work is in itself a way to resist capitalism because capitalism does not have a system to assess care labor and undervalues it. To the contrary, institutionalization is a way to revalue it by re-examining non-market activity such as intimacy, commitment to the care receiver, and affection (Folbre,

2001).

Since care labor is undervalued in capitalism, it is necessary to provide the services as a public responsibility. According to Folbre (2001), care labor is devalued in capitalism because first, women provide it at a very low cost and many women are clustered in care jobs. Second, the workers' commitment, obligation, and affection to the care receiver make it hard for them to bargain about their working conditions. Third, care receivers are usually dependent so the market is limited- there is little competition because people do not have money to pay for 'better services.' Fourth, since the quality of care work has to do with the providers' intrinsic motivation and their feelings of affection, it is hard to measure the quality of care and thus hard to price it in a way the physical product is priced. Therefore, the goals of a sufficient supply of care service at a fair price and women's economic independence are hardly to be expected from a market system of care provision. Korean feminists believed that public responsibility as opposed to market efficiency would be able to achieve these without going back to patriarchy that supports the function of the market by subordinating women as caregivers (Hartman 1981; Folbre, 2001).

Korean feminist activists' attempts to revalue care work through the role of public responsibility are well illustrated in their criticism against the way government created social service jobs:

MOGEF doesn't even support female workers with the four insurances [i.e. national pension, medical insurance, employment insurance, accident compensation insurance]. They just connect the workers with a family looking for care services, just like a [private] job agency does. They are not conscious of labor issues. [...] Even they say gender equality they don't know what to do to realize it in reality with what principles [regarding labor market]. *MOGEF implements the project from the perspective of*

supplier [of jobs]. They are interested only in their performance [of the implementation]. It looks like it is not important for them to consider what type of jobs the women participating in the projects could have. It is not a priority within MOGEF (Interview with KWWA official, 2008. Emphasis is mine).

The criticism of the government programs includes the language of neo-liberal economics, using words such as performance, and it illustrates Korean feminist activists' expectations of the role of public responsibility played in revaluing and providing care services. Another feminist activist put it:

MOGEF's Infant-child-sitter project is implemented by Healthy Family Support Centers, MOGEF's local implementation organizations, but does the state really need to do this kind of project? Rather than the state implements it by itself, the state should support the civil area such as social enterprise to industrialize care work. By implementing the project through Healthy Family Support Center, I think MOGEF expands its own turf. It is necessary for MOGEF but I think that is myopic when we think about the workers' labor condition. At least, MOGEF's management on those jobs should be different from the way a private worker dispatch company does. The programs they implement should be managed with guaranteeing female workers' employment, retraining, etc. They run the program just because the service is in need. (Interview with KWAAU activist 1, 2008. Emphasis is mine).

The feminist activist emphasizes what the role of the state should be regarding social service jobs. They expect the role of the government with public duty to set the standards for socialization of care services such as job training and continuity in employment going beyond a mere provision of the services. If the state wants to be involved in the provision of the services, it should be managed in a way to guarantee the job to be a decent one. In demanding that the state support the provision of the service, the feminist activists made an attempt to resist the market driven economy.

In this section, I analyzed why correcting sex-segregation in the labor market was not a priority of the Korean feminist activists who actually demanded the creation of the care service jobs. By requesting the socialization of care work, Korean feminist

activists resisted neo-liberal economic ideas which devalue notions of public duty and care work. From Korean feminist activists' perspective, without changing neo-liberal economic principles in the labor market, sex segregation in the labor market will not be solved.

In the next section, I delve into the cultural reformation that Korean progressive feminist activists pursued through the ideal of "care" as an anti-hegemonic principle to neo-liberalism. The effort is a long-term goal that the Korean feminist activists have not been able to realize yet. The next section will address how the Korean feminist activists' long-term vision of the 'good' society reconciled them with the creation of care work and socialization of it.

F. Ideological Re-valuation of Care for Restructuring Neo-liberal Culture

Would it be possible that the feminization of poverty is solved by providing women in poverty with jobs that are low-paid, have less benefits, and poor working conditions compared to other jobs, however they are socialized? How highly can those jobs be valued through institutionalization? Could those jobs liberate women from poverty? Korean feminist activists were aware that it would be almost as impossible as "a camel passing through a pinhole (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008)". And they called it "new-poverty" to indicate the working poor. In order for the public support for the socialization of care service to be possible for the purpose of solving inequality (i.e. women in poverty, widened class gap), Korean feminist activists insisted that a change in hegemony is necessary (Chung, 2004; 2006).

Since they were aware of the limitation of providing jobs within the circumstance of neo-liberal economic and cultural principles, Korean progressive feminist activists attempted to establish “care” as an important anti-hegemonic cultural principle to neo-liberalism in order to reform Korean society by valorizing care work as precious and essential work in order to sustain human society (Cho-Han 2004; Chung 2004; Interview with KWAU activist 2, 2007). They challenge capitalism as operated through the neo-liberal economy. They suggest a vision of reforming cultural values to respect human beings as opposed to money; a warm, dependant, and communal way of life as opposed to intense, cold, individualized competition for survival the fittest, and sustainable development as opposed to resource depleting, growth-driven economic development policies. The progressive feminist activists insist that care should be established as an important cultural principle for those alternative ways of life.

While feminist activists made an attempt in the short-term to alleviate women’s poverty caused by neo-liberal economic policies, at the same time as a long-term goal they tried to establish alternative social cultural principles that would reorganize everyday people’s lives. I argue that to Korean feminist activists, demanding creation and socialization of social service jobs that would aggravate sex segregation in the labor market was an important step to establishing the ideology of care as an anti-hegemonic socio-economic and cultural principle to neo-liberalism. They hoped for cultural change as a long term goal.

1. Cultural Influence of Neo-Liberalism

Korean activists made an attempt to establish an alternative cultural principle against several aspects of neo-liberalism such as excessive individualism, competitiveness, survival of the fittest, and efficiency. Neo-liberalism not only changed the way the labor market operated but also penetrated into people's minds as well, influencing how people live and perceive the world (Harvey, 2008: 3). The individual internalizes the principle of individual responsibility and self-enhancement as common-sense to live by and strives to win the competitive survival of the fittest game (Cho-Han, 2006). While the winner of the game in the market takes all, the role of the state and the public to support the people left out becomes less emphasized and thus the gap between social economic classes widens. The economic recession, insecure labor market, and class polarization made people concentrate on earning money, impersonalized the individual, and took "hope" away from those left out (Lee, 2002; Cho-Han, 2006).

Under these socio-economic cultural circumstances, the progressive feminist activists found that solving the feminization of poverty problem was hard to achieve. Nor is it effective to pursue the issue as solely a women's problem since the social economic influences of neo-liberalism is multi-faceted. From a more revolutionary perspective, the feminist activists tried to reform the structure - *saepan jjagi*- in which equality of socially marginalized people such as women in poverty, poor male workers, the disabled, and immigrant workers is achieved.

In order to do this, progressive feminist activists developed an alternative

cultural framework to neo-liberalism that will eventually not only solve the problem of the feminization of poverty but also change everyday culture (Chung, 2004: 340-348).

This process requires a fundamental reformation of the capitalist economic system.

Feminist activist Choi Sang-lim wrote:

In the middle of deepening social polarization, the poor's feeling of relative deprivation will be continuing. Therefore, we should not only think about the institutional change, but also question the standard [of good life] and consider the alternative discourse, philosophy, and cases. It is because in order to find the alternative economy, it is not enough to analyze the logic of capitalistic economy. In reality, capitalism continues alive but at the same time human beings under capitalism are dying (Choi, 2006: 173).

Korean feminist activists did not just act upon the problem of women's poverty aggravated by neo-liberal economics by providing women in poverty with social service jobs. They knew that raising working conditions within the logic of capitalism and under the operation of a neo-liberal economy would fall far short of solving the problem of the feminization of poverty. Furthermore, it would stick women with social service jobs. Without achieving a society that is operated by alternative principles, just raising wages and working conditions have limitations in helping these women to escape from poverty.

2. Feminist Redefinition of Care and Alternative Cultural Principles to Neo-liberalism

In addition to revaluing care work in order to solve the feminization of poverty discussed in the previous section as a short-term goal, Korean feminists demanded the creation of social service jobs for women and that the state take responsibility for the quality of work in order to emphasize the importance of care in sustaining society and

to gain the legitimacy of care as a cultural principle organizing the society and the economy as a long-term goal.

While feminists are hesitant to associate care with women because of women's subordination due to gendered division of labor, the Korean feminist activists made an attempt to put a feminist reinterpretation on care as a way for women themselves to establish an alternative cultural principle to neo-liberalism. This long-term goal is Korean feminist activists' attempts to de-gender care work and to re-define gender equality.

In a society where "care" is valued, care is a common norm for all society members and all the members take the responsibility regardless of gender to sustain the life of human beings. In that society, "care" is a communal value where reciprocal reliance is the basis for 'respect for the human being,' regardless of gender and class. These values challenge neo-liberal values of self-enhancement and self-responsibility which are emphasized in order to win the money game (Cho-Han, 2006). Therefore, Korean feminist activists strategically tackled neo-liberal cultural norms in order to accomplish a society where not only is women's experience of care respected, but also caring activity itself is de-gendered.

First, in order to establish care as an alternative hegemonic idea to neo-liberalism, the progressive feminist activists used the vocabulary "*tolbom*" - care - and conceptualized care as involving reciprocal reliance and public activity. They redefined care as "consideration of and sharing with others and mutual dependence that is alive in our everyday lives even without being converted into an economic

value” (KWAU, 2008).² As a feminist activist put it:

We were the first one who started using the word “*tolbom*” which has now become a vocabulary used by policy makers. In English it is “care” and we used to use the expression “family support labor” or “reproductive labor” but people did not make it out. So we were looking for a word and found “care.” We brainstormed to find a good translation to indicate “reciprocity” and to avoid indicating favor and private activity and we came up with the word “*tolbom nodong* (care work).” We also were concerned whether we seem to associate the vocabulary with cheap labor or women’s work. However, care work requires a reconceptualization to enhance its value *since regardless of gender, care work is indispensable for human beings* (Interview with KWAU activist 2, 2007. Emphasis is mine).

In an effort to enhance the value of care work, Korean feminist activists chose vocabulary suggesting “reciprocity.” They used the logic that human beings are mutually dependent, which entails the labor of care: care is essential to sustain society and thus care is a public good.

Enhancing the value of care is in itself anti-neoliberal because the capitalist system penalizes care work (e.g. parental leave), resulting in many women leaving the labor market (Folbre, 2004). The feminist re-conceptualization of care is anti-neoliberal on the ideological level as well. First, it refutes the exclusive valuing of individualism that neo-liberalism has as its basis. Neo-liberalism grants the winner’s position to the independent and self-relying individual who survives in the competition. The progressive feminists’ view that human beings are not able to exist without mutual care complicates the neo-liberal view that individualism is the most valued way of being. Feminists point out that it is even impossible to win the capitalist game without care from somebody.

Since care is indispensable for human life, the capacity for care is essential to

² www.women21.or.kr

sustain society, and thus an equal society should consider care as an important “public good” (Huh, 2005; Cho-Han, 2006). Enhancing care as “public good” is another way to resist the results of neo-liberalism which render individuals who do non-market work (i.e. mostly women) invisible and exploited (Folbre, 2004). In a society where “care” is not valued, “the individual who wins the competition in the market system loses their capacity to care regardless of their gender” (Cho-Han, 2006:25).

In contrast, in a society where care is valued, “care” becomes an important principle for social organization. Another revolutionary pursuit that the progressive feminist activists made through the feminist reinterpretation of care was advocating communal living. Striving for a society where care is valued not only would accomplish an equal gender responsibility in caring for dependents. It would establish a communal style of living on which social members’ everyday lives are based. They believed this alternative to be a viable solution for those socially marginalized- including women in poverty- by neo-liberalism. This point is well-illustrated in the following declaration of the KWAU in 2008.

Neo-liberal globalization weakens the value of community and public duty with the weapons of keen competition and effectiveness. Before we knew it, we got used to the words such as aggravation of social polarization, feminization of poverty, (the problem of) female irregular workers, discrimination and violation and these are influencing women’s lives and reflecting the reality of women’s lives. [It is] a world where the hope takes two steps backward when we take one step toward it. *We, women, will become an alternative power to create new community that values humans, care, and coexistence. With women’s willpower and efforts, women will independently make the new communal world. In the new communal world, materialism is overcome, human beings are respected, the rights are secured such as human rights, the rights to welfare, and the rights to labor of minority such as the social weak, the disabled, and the immigrants. In the new communal society, the communal life based on care and share is alive through social security, and the creation of decent jobs, socialization of care labor. In the new communal society,*

diversity is respected and everybody coexists peacefully (KWAU, 2008. Emphasis is mine).³

The declaration shows that feminist activists pursue a communal life that valorizes humans, care, and coexistence through the socialization of care. Socialization of care is not limited to the monetary reevaluation of women's activity. It establishes a new institutional basis with a new philosophy and new view of human beings which would create a humane life. The state goal does not go beyond reducing the shortage of "care service." However, feminist activists take this state goal of solving the problem of low birth rate and an increase in the elderly population as their opportunity to change the concept of care (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008). The re-conceptualization of care through the socialization of care is an important step in constructing an alternative society because the activity of caring has an ideological basis of reciprocity and interdependence. They combined this perspective with efforts to make care into a public activity, thus hoping to ensure its value. Their ideas were antithetical to neo-liberal individualism that produces the ideology of the "productive worker" as an independent breadwinner versus a care giver as dependent, and thus socially excluded. They make an attempt to establish care as an important principle for society by pursuing a reinterpretation of the concept, engaging with policy programs, and demanding state responsibility in regulating care work.

More specifically, by establishing "care" as an important social cultural principle, Korean progressive feminist activists not only revealed the hidden aspect of the capitalist system's reliance on women's unpaid care labor based on a patriarchal

³ www.women21.or.kr

system, but also raised a consciousness that every human being needs “care” and thus it is necessary to bring a sense of caring for communal life. A feminist scholar, Cho-Han Hae Jung suggests a communal way of life based on the ideology of care that is antithetic to neo-liberal culture. As she put:

We should not be swept away by the massive [survival of the fittest] game. We have to get away from the obsession that we should accomplish a certain goal [to win the survival game] and the goal is the only thing we pursue. Looking back, human beings cannot live alone without caring for each other and the idea that we cannot live without money is only a ‘myth’ that is inculcated in our mind but people don’t see it because of the economic insecurity. *Since the individual gets used to the system of the survival of the fittest and are competitive and impersonal, they do not know how to work together and enjoy cooperating to accomplish. Let’s turn our attention to a collective way of life through which the individual can be happy by living and working together.* This way of life can be an alternative for the “\$1000 generation” (88 man-won sede)⁴ [to find meaning in their life] (*Womennews*. February 5, 2010. Emphasis is mine).

She criticizes neo-liberal cultural principles such as self-determination, self-responsibility and “the winner takes it all” which resulted in money-worshipping, class polarization, and the impoverished mind of the individual. In order to recover the meaning of life and intimacy among individuals which are negated by the neo-liberal way of life, feminist scholars suggest a communal way of life based on the ideology of care.

The progressive feminist activists believed that the pursuit of communal life based on the ideology of care leads to the empowerment of women who have lost meaning and hope in their lives with neo-liberal cultural norm such as excessive individualism, competitiveness, survival of the fittest, and market efficiency. As a way

⁴ “\$1000 generation” (88 man-won sede) is a term used in Korea to indicate the young generation who does not have a regular job and work as irregular workers and earn about 88 man-won (about \$1,000) a month.

to build this anti-hegemonic culture, progressive feminist activists made an attempt to raise the consciousness of the socially marginalized. This point is evidenced in a feminist labor activist's answer to the question of why they established the Association of Home Management Workers:

The workers organize their own system to supply care work and don't have to pay commission and they can get trained. *However, the more important issue is that we establish a structure to empower the workers through which they find "we" with whom "I" change the society.* Many people are living a hard life. *Our society instills the hegemonic idea that a successful life means going to a prestigious college, making a lot of money, and living in an expensive house, which makes the rest live a loser's life, but that is not true. However, because the value is so hegemonic that no matter how hard we try, it is really hard to convince them that it is not true.* We need a chance for those living a hard life to find out and establish a new value that they are living a decent and valuable life. Our activism is a way to empower them [so these people can find their own dignity]. How much could they earn from that [care service] work? Could they send their kids to a college with the money [they earn from the care service work]? [...] *Rather than entering into the hegemonic stratum of the society {by making money}, it is our goal to help them secure their lives and combine their social resources to help each other through our communal association, which would not only enhance their quality of life but also change their cultural value.* Just like workers change their lives through a labor union, these women workers need a communal organization through which they can change their own lives (Interview with KWWA activist, 2008. Emphasis is mine).

The Association is not only for revaluing care, but also changing the values of the care workers. The feminist activist's remark illustrates how solving the feminization of poverty in the short term is related to the long-term goal of changing the social cultural hegemonic beliefs. Empowering the socially marginalized is a way to resist neo-liberal cultural principles as opposed to enabling them to join the hegemonic culture. Their vision for social change has not been realized yet but the feminist activists make an effort to correct inequality in Korean society through their ongoing redefinitions of gender equality.

G. Conclusion

In this chapter I analyzed how Korean feminist activists attempted to accomplish women's economic independence while dealing with neo-liberalism and how the effort to make sense out of the competing global norms lead to sometimes counter-intuitive policy outcomes. MOGEF's effort to increase women's economic independence resulted in policy programs which reproduces the cultural association of women with service jobs. The ministry's choices were circumscribed by the institutional environment which shaped its focus on housewives. MOGEF took advantage of state wide neo-liberal labor policies to gain influence over certain sectors and to promote its policies.

In contrast, Korean feminist activists' attempts were based on *resistance* to the outcomes of neo-liberal labor policies pursuing labor market flexibility and to the neo-liberal socio-economic cultural norms. They made an ongoing effort to define and redefine concepts of gender equality. More importantly, they used one set of definition (i.e. women's economic autonomy) to achieve a short-term goal (i.e. solving feminization of poverty) and use another set of definition (i.e. de-gendering care) for a long-term goal (i.e. care as an alternative cultural norm). This co-existence of differing gender equality norms and Korean feminist activists' strategic use of those norms in their participation in the policy making processes were important mechanisms through which care service programs were possibly created.

Rather than tackling women's disproportionate concentration in this job sector, Korean feminist activists demanded that the state create care service jobs in order to

solve social problems such as the feminization of poverty, class polarization, and marginalization of lower class people in Korean society. Moreover, feminist activists tried to reform the values of neo-liberal society (i.e. competitiveness, survival of the fittest, efficiency) by creating a counter-hegemonic model for society based on care and focused on “communal living” (*kongdongch’e*) where people have the ability to care for one another and where the voices of those on the margins of society are respected. This radical cultural activism had the unintended consequences of permitting very traditional sex segregation even in the policies that attempted to reform gender inequality in employment. This reconciliation of the long-term goal with short-term strategies is an important mechanism through which the creation of service jobs was possible without vehement resistance from feminist activists.

V. The Paradox of MOGEF's Institutional Opportunities: Family and Gender Equality in Korean Legislative Debate

Before [we had authorities over family policies], the answer to the women's problems was clear cut- [no] discrimination and women's rights. So there was no division [among women]. It was just anti or pro [to women's rights]. *But once we became MOGEF, everybody [who is a member of the family] wants his/her voices to be heard. So diverse factors start influencing on MOGEF and that's why MOGEF looks dubious. The minister is not a fighter. As a bureaucrat, I believe her action is right. One could be revolutionary to carry through her conviction. Revolution by the minority could suppress the majority but we are doing democracy.* Even if she has her own conviction, she cannot stick to it without persuasion and mutual consent. Persuasion and consent means to yield one's conviction. How can one persuade the other without budging an inch? It is not persuasion, it is command [if you don't yield] (Interview with MOGEF official 2, 2007).

A. Introduction

With MOGE bureaucrats' efforts to expand their own turf and the presidential support for MOGE to be a ministry to take a charge of family policies, MOGE became the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) by taking over family policies from the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW). The historical moment that MOGE became MOGEF by having the authority over the family policies was a political opportunity for it to pursue its own vision of abolishing patriarchy through diffusing the ideology of equality into families, a globally advocated norm. However, even with this political opportunity, the realization of this vision was not automatic.

The quote above illustrates that the transformation into MOGEF made the institutional context more complex with multi-dimensional goals and the participation of more diverse civil society organizations in the competition for influences on family policies through democratic politics. Making a family policy in a democratized social

political labyrinth is a process within which diverse actors with various sources of power and ideological positions struggle to achieve their own ideological goals regarding the family. In the case at hand, the complex process involves social, political, and ideological conflicts among MOGEF, feminist activists, and conservative civil society organizations.

This chapter will analyze the case of MOGEF and feminist activists' failure to revise the Framework Act on Healthy Family (hereafter, HF Act), which was their effort to realize equality within and among families. It considers this failure to revise the HF Act with reference to three factors- 1) institutional constraints of MOGEF as a state agency of a democratic polity and logic of bureaucracy within which MOGEF bureaucrats operated, 2) lack of power on the part of MOGEF/progressive feminist activists compared to the conservative civil society organizations, and 3) MOGEF and feminist activists' loss to conservative groups in the framing contest over the definitions of the family and gender equality.

First, MOGEF operates within three intertwined institutional dimensions- as a vanguard organization striving for increasing gender equality in Korean society; as a state institution expected to coordinate different opinions in a democratic social political system in its relationships with civil society organizations; and as a bureaucracy struggling for its own organizational survival. The expansion of MOGE into MOGEF- a ministry with more power and jurisdiction over family policies paradoxically constrained MOGE(F) in pursuing its mandate to be a vanguard organization for gender equality. In order to survive as a ministry with authority over

family policies, MOGE needed to put aside its ideological goal of gender equality in the transformation processes, which caused it to miss a strategic and timely response to revise the HF Act. After MOGE became MOGEF, it was expected to play a role of ideologically impartial mediator of diverse voices regarding families including progressive feminist activists (KWAU) and pro-family groups consisting of the conservative women's movement (KNCW) and professionals of home economics. Under the institutional dimension as a state agency, MOGEF embraced pro-family groups as implementation organizations, while at the same time allying itself ideologically with feminist activists. While the alliance with the former group granted more power to pro-family groups and dragged MOGEF's response to the HF Act, the latter group alliance lost MOGEF support from the social political conservatives.

Second, MOGEF and feminist activists had less power than the pro-family groups. I analyze the sources of power in expertise, networks, and skillful leadership to take discursive advantages. The experience of pro-family groups as "early risers" regarding family issues, having a broad coalition and a network with social political conservatives, and skillful leadership to make the coalition allowed their voices to be heard in the legislation process. With this power, they effectively blocked opponent's voices, including MOGEF's.

Third, the cultural resonance of the pro-family groups' frame of 'family maintenance' and the power sources they enjoyed led them to discursive advantages in the framing contest with MOGEF/progressive feminist activists' discourse of 'equal family.' The progressive feminist activists were surprised that their frame of "equal

family” did not culturally resonate with social political conservatives. Professional expertise in equality issues led MOGEF to the same frame as the progressive feminists’. From the social political conservatives’ perspective, MOGEF’s siding with the progressive feminist groups made MOGEF look radical enough to overthrow the family. The pro-family groups were able to win approval and cultural legitimacy from powerful social political conservatives, which made their victory in the framing contest possible.

Previous research in social movement literature regarding framing analyzes the actors’ use of cultural stocks of meaning according to their intended audiences. Also, it sheds light on the use of strategic alliances with culturally hegemonic third parties which can eventually stymie the opponents’ chance to propose their counter hegemonic cultural paradigm (Williams, 1976; Gramsci, 1991). Despite the insights, the previous research pays little attention to how institutional conditions affect actors’ chances of embracing of certain frames.

This chapter fills the theoretical gap of the previous research by paying attention to the relationship between institution and movement demands, what scholars termed ‘institutional selectivity’ (Offe, 1975; Wisler and Giugni, 1996:104). The concept of institutional selectivity provides insight into the puzzle of how endeavoring to use political opportunities could result in disadvantages for the movement. Also, this chapter will fill the gap in existing literature by making a connection between the organizational history of MOGEF and its subsequent

institutional dilemma that made the support of the gender equality frame less effective and less acceptable.

To make the story more complete, my case shows a more complex picture of institutional selectivity by analyzing *the process* of selectivity. My analysis will take a closer look at the multiple dimensions of the institution, the complex power relationships among different state agencies (i.e. MOGEF and the National Assembly, MOGEF and the Ministry of Health and Welfare) and their associated civil society organizations (i.e. MOGEF and feminists vs the Ministry of Health and Welfare and home economics scholars). The labyrinth of the institutional dimensions changed with the transformation into MOGEF. Various power relationships and conflicting ideologies operated in MOGEF (Orren and Skowronek, 2002). Paying attention to these complex institutional contexts provides a more nuanced account of the fit between institutional arrangements and social movement demands.

The chapter is divided into 5 sections. First is the brief history of the HF revision processes and each group's framing of the HF Act. Secondly, I will examine MOGEF's institutional dimensions - vanguard organization of gender equality, surviving ministry, and a part of the state agency. I will analyze how logic of bureaucracy and its relationships with civil society as a democratic polity and how these elements reinforced the disadvantages that MOGEF officials and feminists had in the framing war. Third will be the analysis of the power dynamics that secured the pro-family groups' victory in the legislative battle. Then I will move to the contribution of the pro-family group's usage of available cultural norms of family. The

pro-family group used those norms that are embedded in their power sources and conflicted with the feminist ideology of abolishing the modern nuclear family to win the framing contest. It effectively blocked the HF Act revision. The last section will be on the practical implication of the failure of the HF revision and the theoretical contribution of the analysis.

B. Legislation of the HF Act and the Revision Efforts

The HF Act was the first framework Act in Korean history that dealt with family issues and oriented the direction of family policies (Yoon, 2004b:266). Also, the legislation of the HF Act and the efforts to revise it exemplify from what perspectives Korean social and political actors problematize the issues of the family in relation to the role of the state. Social conditions such as the rapid growth of the divorce rate, the plummeting fertility rate, and an increase in the elderly population prompted the “family crisis” to come to light. The notion of a “family crisis” and the state’s priority to solve the ‘problem’ was an opportunity for both MOHW/pro-family social groups and MOGE(F)/feminists and social welfare groups to position themselves as “trouble-shooters.” However, the perspectives of how to solve the family problems were different and this paradigm conflict resulted in the socio-political division between the two groups. The efforts to revise the act and the opposition to the revision illustrate this conflict between the creation of equal families and prevention of family disruption.

1. 2003, Legislation of the HF Act: Family in Crisis and Preventing Family Disruption

During 2003, feminists' paradigm of creating equal families did not appear very strong in legislation processes. Rather, home economics scholars and the Ministry of Health and Welfare insisted on the importance of preventing family disruption in an era of family in crisis. Social welfare scholars made a counter action to impede the legislation of the HF Act and made a law agenda called the Framework Act on Family Support (hereafter FFS Act). However, they had the same vision about families in crisis, therefore the 'equal families' frame was hardly discussed in the legislative process.

The discourse of preventing family disruption became dominant in the social conditions that Korea had been experiencing. Korea watched rapid changes in family relationships, such as the lowest birth rate in the world (1.17 in 2002), the second highest divorce rate among OECD countries (30%) with a drastic increase in the number of divorce cases (171.4% from 1992 to 2002) (Yoon, 2004b:270), family suicides due to poverty, and a decrease in care for family members with the increase in women's labor force participation. The dominant discourse regarding these problems surrounding the family was to cite symptoms of "family crisis" rather than "families in changes" which led home economics scholars, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and social welfare scholars to support agendas to 'prevent family disruption.'

Home economics scholars were deeply involved in the legislation process of the HF Act from the beginning based on their efforts since 1995 to effectively link the

family crisis with the national crisis. As a home economics scholar put it in the National Assembly public forum:

We started to make this law agenda from the national crisis such as low-birth rate crisis, 2nd world highest divorce rate behind the USA, and abandoning to provide for the family. Therefore, we cannot solve the problem by only supporting the family. We should strengthen the family capacity and the state should do something from the macro level.[...] I, as a family scholar, am really concerned that the family problem is so serious as to shake the basis of the nation (National Assembly HWC 243-9, 2003: 32-33) .

The Ministry of Health and Welfare(MOHW) had a similar perspective about the ‘family crisis’ and tried to be the problem-solver by taking authority over family policies. When a legislator in the National Assembly meeting asked about the need to legislate a law for the family, then-Minster to MOHW put the family crisis and national crisis in the following way:

There are over 10,000 abandoned kids in our society. Half of them are abandoned after divorces and the rest of them by unmarried mothers. [...] Couples of co-habitation without marriage set apart when they do not want to live together any longer and desert kids. So these deserted children are beyond the MOHW’s control. If the social phenomena, such as the increase in family breakdowns and tendency not to mind co-habitation or unmarried moms, continue, the basis of our society will wobble as well as more children abandoned. So MOHW sees it is desirable to make a law to promote the healthiness of the family (National Assembly HWC, 242-1, 2003:62 -63).

In 2003, in an effort to solve ‘the problem of the family crisis’ (Yoon, 2004a; Lee, 2005; Kim, H., 2005), two groups presented law agendas: home economics scholars and MOHW. The former’s agenda was passed in December 2003.¹

The HF Act pursued strengthening the family by granting people with the duty and right to have a ‘healthy family’ and by charging the state with the responsibility to support people’s ‘healthy family’ life through solving family problems (The HF Act,

¹ Since the two law agendas were similar to each other and particularly the main actors in making home economics scholars’ version of the HF Act were also involved in the MOHW version of the HF Act making processes (Kim, H., 2005), whichever passed was fine for both home economics scholars and MOHW.

article 1). The family must be sustained and developed in order for it to function well and meet individual needs and well as support social integration (The HF Act, article 2). While individuals have the right to a ‘healthy family’ life, they also have the duty to make the family healthy through marriage and child birth (The HF Act, article 8). The state should provide education and consultation to prevent family disruption (The HF Act, article 26, 31, 35).

At the same time as pro-family groups and MOHW were pursuing the HF Act, social welfare scholars made a different law agenda, FFS Act in 2003. While social welfare scholars had a perspective similar to pro-family groups on the changes in families in that they also diagnosed Korean family as being in crisis (Kim, H., 2005), they opposed the HF Act for several reasons. They were concerned about issues such as the HF Act’s reinforcement of the stigma against unconventional families as “unhealthy”; the HF Act’s emphasis on individual moral responsibility to strengthen the family over state responsibility for family welfare; and home economics professionals’ inferior expertise on family welfare issues (Yoon, 2004a; Han, 2004; National Assembly HWC 243-9, 2003).

While the debate over the first law agenda on family issues was made surrounding the expertise issue, the feminist perspective on family policies- particularly the notion of ‘equal families’-hardly made itself apparent in the debate until November 2003 when feminist activists announced public statements opposing the two law agendas- the HF Act by the pro-family groups and the FFS Act by the

Social Welfare professionals.² Feminist activists criticized the two law agendas for their blindness to changes in women's relations to their families as their labor force participation increased (KWAU, 2003). Feminist activists' perspective on the crisis was that it was "the crisis of male-centered familism" and the solution to the problem involved structural cultural change toward more gender equal families and societies. Both of the laws proposed were far from this feminist perspective. Despite the opposition from both social welfare scholar groups and feminist groups, the HF Act was passed in December 2003.

2. 2004-2005, Feminist Involvement in the Alternative Legislation

As the tension between feminist ideology and strengthening the family became more prevalent by the active involvement of the feminists in the law revision processes, the conflict between the progressive activists and the pro-family groups became more serious. While pro-family groups had a relatively long history of establishing the concept of the 'healthy family' since the 1990s (which became the basis of the HF Act), the feminists' involvement in the controversy was relatively late in November 2003. The discourse of creating equal families became more salient with the feminists' making a bill entitled 'Framework Act on Family Support' (hereafter the FS Act) through a joint effort with social welfare scholars.

² The main point of the argument between the HF Act advocates and the FS Act advocates was based on their own turf interest - whether family welfare services should be provided through the individual in need (the FS Act), where social welfare scholars have expertise or through the whole family itself (the HF Act), where home economics scholars have expertise. Even in the National Assembly meetings, the legislators criticized the two camps for battling over their territory of family wealth (National Assembly HWC 243-9, 2003).

‘Equal families’ denotes both equality among members within families and equality among diverse types of families. Criticizing the HF Act for lacking specific measures to improve women’s position within families, feminist activists emphasized equality within families (Womenlink, 2004). From the feminists’ perspective, family problems arose from gender inequality within families such as women’s double burden of productive and reproductive work with an increase in their economic participation. Therefore, pro-family groups’ emphasis on individual responsibility and morality to sustain the ‘healthy family’ would result in reinforcing women’s domestic responsibility. The family crisis produced by the male primacy in the family needed solutions that guaranteed women’s rights to work and men’s rights to care as opposed to individual duty for maintaining the family (KWAU, 2003).

By problematizing the concept of the ‘healthy family,’ the exclusive definition of the family, and the concept of ‘family disruption,’ feminist activists made an attempt to deconstruct the ideal type of the Family. The concept of the ‘healthy family’ as connoting the conventional and normal family was problematic. Thus, the idea of preventing family crisis and promoting the healthy family meant to them to preserve the Family. Particularly, the HF Act defined the family as a “basic social unit formed by marriage, blood relationships and adoption” and emphasized the individual’s responsibilities of marriage and child birth. The feminists insisted that this exclusiveness results in discrimination against unconventional families constituted in other ways with different life styles and sexualities than patrilineal relationships (Interview with feminist scholar 4, 2007).

The equal families frame made possible the coalition of diverse actors. First, MOGE and the feminists allied each other ideologically. While MOGE was not able to be vocal in the process of the HF Act passage due to its institutional dilemma which I will analyze in MOGEF's three organizational dimensions section, it supported the feminists' discourse building efforts. The feminist activists also actively involved in MOGE's efforts to expand its authority over family policies through the discourse building supports.

Second, feminist activists made a joint effort to revise the HF Act with social welfare scholars who proposed the FFS Act in 2003. They collaborated on making a new law agenda against the HF Act. They organized a group in 2004 called "Joint Committee for the Legislation of the Framework Act on Family Support" (*kajok chiwŏn kibonpŏp chejŏng-ŭl wihan kongdong taech'aek wiwŏnhoe*, Joint Committee of Feminist Activists and Social Welfare Scholars, hereafter, JCFS) and made FS Act based on the 2003 FFS Act and presented in the National Assembly in 2005. Gender equality and democratic relationships within the family became the goal of the 2005 FS Act.

3. 2005-2006, Battle over the Revision of the HF Act

The period between 2005 and 2007 produced the most intense conflict between MOGEF/JCFS and pro-family groups throughout the history of the legislation. Particularly, as the then-minister to MOHW became the president of the conservative women's groups association Korean National Council of Women (KNCW), the pro-

family groups effectively attacked MOGEF/JCFS as “disrupting the family.” To the disappointment of MOGEF and JCFS who won approval from the Gender Equality and Family Committee (GEFC) in the National Assembly where the discourse of creating equal families was dominant, their law agenda did not pass in the Legislation and Judiciary Committee (LJC). It is very unusual for legislation to reach the LJC and not pass.

While JCFS, organized by feminists and social welfare scholars, had already worked on the new family law since 2004 and made the FS Act in 2005, MOGEF bureaucrats started the revision of the HF Act once they had transferred family policy responsibilities from MOHW in 2005. From 2005 to 2006, 6 law agendas were presented by the legislators in the Gender Equality and Family Committee (GEFC) of the National Assembly including MOGEF’s overall amendment to the HF Act in 2006 and JCFS’s agenda in 2005. The law agendas are listed in the Table 5-1.

MOGEF and JCFS had a political opportunity to have the FP Act passed since the Gender Equality and Family Committee (GEFC) had more supporters of the FP Act from feminist perspectives. After the examination of the law agenda, the Gender Equality and Family Committee (GEFC) in the National Assembly passed the revised version of the 6 agendas, called Framework Act on the Family Policy (hereafter FP Act), which had most of the demands from MOGEF and JCFS. The Committee agreed to change the name of the HF Act to the FP Act. This change meant taking the word ‘healthy’ out of the law, which was the vocabulary that represented the pro-family groups’ ideological goal. The Committee also agreed on the FP Act making it clear

that the vision of the FP Act is to respect the diversity of families and to support the family's welfare, equal and democratic relationships and work/family balance, and the state responsibility for supporting work/family balance over the individual and family responsibilities to strengthen the family.

Table 5-1 Bills Presented at the GEFC, National Assembly
(Reproduced from Cha, 2006:43)

Name	Healthy Family Act (the HF Act, original agenda)	Family Support Act (the FS Act, new agenda)*	Healthy Family Act (partial amendment of the HF Act)	Family Policy Act (overall amendment of the HF Act)**	Equal Family Act (new agenda)
Provisions					
Goal	Realization of the healthy family	- Establishing and developing gender equal and democratic family community - Improving family members' quality of life	- Pursuing the people's happy life - Improving family welfare	- Establishing and Developing equal and democratic family community - Improving family members' quality of life	- Establishing and maintaining gender equal and democratic family community
Definition	- family - home - healthy family	- family	- home - healthy family	- family - home	- family - equal family
Family disruption prevention	O	X	X	O ³	X
Family day	- Month of the family - Day of the family	X	- Month of the family - Day of the Family	Month of the family	Weeks of equal Family
Family ritual	O	X	X	O	X

* The FS Act made by the JCFS and presented through a legislator

** The FP Act made by a legislator in cooperation with the MOGEF

*** Two more agenda with a minor amendment of the HF Act (i.e. international families, twice a month family days) are missing in the table.

The goal of the Act changed from the realization of the *healthy home* to the *democratic and equal family community* for the happiness of the family members.

³ MOGEF bureaucrats used the word "family disruption" and insisted it should be prevented. However, the context in which MOGEF bureaucrats viewed family disruption was one caused by poverty, lack of

Unregistered marriage, fostering, and one person-households were added to the conventional constitution of families by marriage, blood, and adoption. Families were newly defined by the efforts to deconstruct the cultural ideal type of the conventional family, which had been laden with moral judgment (Cha, 2006:46).

From this perspective, Gender Equality and Family Committee (GEFC) decided to eradicate the articles on preventing divorce, family disruption, the importance of marriage and childbirth, and the individual and the state's responsibilities to sustain family ritual⁴ (e.g. ancestral ceremony) from the existing agenda. These items did not exist in the new alternative FP Act. Particularly, feminist activists and GEFC considered family ritual such as the ancestral ceremony to be a symbol of patriarchy which reproduced women's subordinated position in the patrilineal family institutions.⁵

While the FP Act represented a compromise on the part of the JCFS by including the same definition of home as HF Act, pro-family groups criticized the FP Act for breaking down the family. From the conceptualization of the home as the symbol of communal life and as the basis of social solidarity, pro-family groups effectively juxtaposed their position as "preventing family [the home] disruption" and

care, or undemocratic family relationships as opposed to a voluntary choice such as divorce (National Assembly GEFC 259-2, 2006: 4)

⁴ During the dictatorship of the President Park Jung-hee, the Korean state made the Simplified Family Ritual Standard in 1969 and it was changed to the Healthy Family Ritual Standard in 1999. The Simplified Family Ritual Standard was made during the modernization process on the grounds that wasteful spending on the ritual for the sake of formality hampers national economic development. The Standards direct the protocol of the family rituals such as marriage, ancestor ceremonies, and funerals.

⁵ For example, in the lived experience of family, women prepare food for ancestral worship but they are not entitled to participate in the ceremony because women, particularly daughter-in-laws are not the patrilineal descendents of the family. Neither is a daughter qualified to be the principle mourner in her family member's funeral. Only the spouse or the first son is eligible to perform the ritual.

the MOGEF-JCFS position as “destroying the family [the home].” They charged MOGEF, feminists, and the Gender Equality and Family Committee (GEFC) in the National Assembly who passed the FP with “liquidating” the home.⁶

The word “home” was crucial for the pro-family groups and they would never give up the word in the title of the HF Act.⁷ The word “home” symbolized the “communal” life of the family as opposed to the FP Act’s emphasis on the family members’ rights. The then-representative to KNCW, who had also served as minister to the MOHW and had helped write the HF Act, wrote in a newspaper editorial criticizing the concept of the ‘family community’ in the FP Act:

The FP Act promotes the breakdown of the home because it is thoroughly based on the individualism rather than the preciousness of the home. The ‘community’ is vague in ‘family community’ and there’s only the individual member (*The Hankyureh*, December 25, 2006).

Pro-family groups insisted that the home was a more comprehensive concept than the family and the relationship of the home to the family was as a nation to the people (National Assembly LJC, 265-4, 2007:24).⁸ Therefore, to pro-family groups, emphasizing the family members’ rights over the home means an overly individual perspective that disrupts the home. The pro-family groups worried that emphasizing individual rights shattered the home rather than preserving the harmonious relationship among different generations as well as between men and women.

⁶http://www.kncw.or.kr/htm/board_view.asp?no=22&dbname=iwd_info&page=3&key=&st=off&sw=off&sc=off

⁷ In Korean, the Framework Act on Healthy Family is translated into the Framework Act on Healthy Home (Kŏn’gang Kajŏng kibonpŏp).

⁸ To the contrary, feminists, social welfare scholars, and MOGEF defined the family as relationships and the home as a physical place, therefore seeing the family as a broader concept than the home.

Resisting to the effort to revise the HF Act into the FP Act, the pro-family groups demanded the revival of articles on the goal of the law, family values, prevention of family disruption, family education, and family ritual in order to strengthen the family. Second, pro-family groups requested the removal of unregistered marriages from the definition of family since it tends to lead to more divorces than registered marriages. Third, pro-family groups demanded the word 'home' in the title of the law (KNCW, 2006; National Assembly LJC 265-4, 2007).

Despite the controversy described above, the FP Act passed through the National Assembly's GEFC and was sent to the Legislation and Judiciary Committee (LJC) for the next round of discussion in September 2006. Once the FP Act ascended to the LJC, the pro-family groups made best use of the new opportunities that were available to them such as conservative political and social actors.

At the LJC meeting, acceding to the demands from KNCW and Korean Elderly Association- pro-family groups' new ally-, MOGEF bureaucrats compromised the FP Act. Several powerful legislators of LJC strongly advocated for these changes as well. Unregistered marriage was eradicated from the definition of the family and inserted as an exceptional case in the Act. Articles regarding state's responsibility for preventing family disruption, the state's and the individual's responsibility for honoring family rituals, and education for family stability were revived.

However, the pro-family groups were not satisfied with the above compromises. Instead, they asked for the revival of the title of the law to keep the word 'healthy' and 'home'; they wanted to eliminate unregistered marriages from the

exceptional article; and they sought a revival of the goal of the law - maintaining the home. The chairman of the LJC who strongly supported pro-family groups demanded a public forum on the FP Act and prevented the LJC from passing the FP Act in the last plenary session of 2006. The FP Act was still pending until June 2007 when the chairman of the LJC decided to re-examine it. Eventually it was discarded with MOGEF's shrinkage into MOGE in 2008.

It is unusual for a law agenda to fail after it had passed a standing committee (i.e. GEFC) and got as far as the LJC. It is believed that the standing committee in charge of the law agenda is better informed and knowledgeable about its own issues (Interview with KWAU activist 2, 2007). Even several LJC committee legislators were critical after the failure, stating that the job of the LJC is to examine the jurisprudence in terms of the organization of the law, and words and phrases. It is expected that the LJC will usually pass the agenda if there are no problems with the jurisprudence (National Assembly LJC 265-4, 2007:22; 30).

The revision of the HF Act into the FP Act was not just a struggle over who should control the resources for the family policies. More importantly, it was a process to build a dominant discourse about the vision for family policies. The failure of MOGEF and feminists in revising the HF Act shows how hard it is to achieve change in concepts of family values and ideology. Why was it so hard? Answers lie in MOGEF's institutional constraints, power differences between the pro-family groups and MOGEF/JCFS, and MOGEF and feminists' loss in the framing contest that are analyzed in the following sections.

C. MOGE(F)'s Three Organizational Dimensions: Vanguard of Gender Equality, Surviving Bureaucracy, and Coordinating State Agency

MOGEF seemed to be powerful through its organizational expansion from MOGE to having authority over family policies. However, counterintuitively MOGEF was not able to have the HF Act revision passed. The paradox lies in MOGE(F)'s institutional constraints. The officials of MOGE(F) act within the boundaries of MOGE(F)'s institutional dimensions as a vanguard organization to infuse gender egalitarianism, as a bureaucracy trying to survive with resources and authority, and as a state agency to coordinate different voices in the family policy programs.

I argue that the three organizational dimensions reinforced MOGE(F)'s disadvantageous position in the HF Act revision struggle. The complex relationships amongst MOGE(F)'s multiple goals hampered its opportunity to harness discursive power to bolster the equality frame, constrained MOGE(F)'s effective and strong coalition with feminists to support the equality frame, and put MOGE(F) under adverse circumstances for pushing the equality frame.

1. Vanguard of Gender Equality versus Surviving Bureaucracy

When the authority over daycare services was on its way to being passed from MOHW to MOGE and the expansion of the organization into MOGEF was under discussion, MOGE put aside its ideological goal and focused on its survival as a ministry. I argue that the logic of bureaucracy put limits on building the discourse that

‘equal families’ should-and can-be best achieved by MOGEF rather than by other ministries.

Gender equality ideology was in tension not only ideologically between women’s rights and family but also territorially between MOGE and MOHW. It was important for MOGE to have this authority both ideologically and institutionally. However, I argue that by weighing the ideological goal against the institutional goal in order to expand its territory and making the decision to achieve the institutional first, MOGE lost its chance to strengthen its discourse on how to solve the tension between women’s rights and family stability. Missing this discourse opportunity enfeebled the ideological support base for the ‘equal families’ frame.

While MOGE spent less effort to build the discourse, the pro-family groups became powerful enough to cut in during the revision processes. Postponing the discourse building resulted in more time and power for pro-family groups to use to strengthen opposition in the HF revision processes.

As the discourse of “family crisis” became prevalent as a state policy priority, the turf battle over family policies between MOHW and MOGE started. When President Noh Mu Hyun promised to increase daycare services to promote the birth rate in 2003, the authority over daycare services was planned to be transferred from MOHW and MOGE. However, it is likely that the transfer of daycare services brought about the opposition from MOHW bureaucrats, who led the effort to write a law to maintain the authority over family policies (Kim, H., 2005; Interview with HFSC staff 1, 2007). This consequence is well-evidenced in the then-minister’s speech at a public

forum in 2003 about passing the authority over the daycare service policies on to the MOGE.

On the part of me, individually, and the MOHW, we should not transfer the daycare service policy responsibilities (from MOHW to MOGE). However, it is desirable to transfer them on the part of the children and the development of policy programs. [F]rom the beginning, I insisted we should establish a ministry of home and gender equality to which we transfer the authorities over childcare services but at this point we should to MOGE.... But I realized that it is wrong to transfer the family policies to other ministry so I will make HF Act and keep the family tasks at MOHW (Ablenews, 2003).⁹

The quote illustrates how great a blow it was to MOHW to pass the daycare service responsibilities over to MOGE. While then-minister to MOHW made a decision to transfer the authority over daycare policies on the grounds of policy effectiveness, the minister was regarded as “incompetent” as opposed to then-minister to MOGE being regarded as “successful” (Interview with HFSC staff 1, 2007). Under these political conditions, influencing the HF Act law to support MOHW authority was crucial to keep and expand its own territory over family policies.

As for MOGE, its ideology and identity were still bound together before the turf battle between the two ministries intensified. The then-minister to MOGE declared that MOGE would plan a gender equal family policy, made a family law and would establish a family policy organization within MOGE (MOGE, 2003). The then-minister to MOGE had a clear vision of the law which was different from the HF Act. While the HF Act had the goal to maintain and promote the “healthy family,” MOGE was opposed to the concept of the “healthy family” (Interview with former MOGEF official 3, 2007) and made an attempt to make a law agenda called “Framework Act

⁹ <http://www.ablenews.co.kr/AbleMovie/AbleMovieNews/MovieIndex.aspx?tbl=signlanguage&Seq=673&PageNo=&Search=All&SearchString=%EB%85%B8%EB%AC%B4%ED%98%84>

on Equal Families” for gender egalitarian families. The then-minister to MOGE put it in the following way in a television program in 2003:

The (Korean) family is patriarchic. [...]The family members cannot be happy in the patriarchy. So we should build democratic and equal family relationships, whether it is between couple or between parents and children. And the other thing [we should consider in the family policy] is women’s domestic work. We are attempting to legalize in the Framework Act on Equal Family the couple’s sharing the domestic work and institutionalizing it if not shared by the couples (Minister to MOGE, KBS, May 4, 2003).

The then-minister mapped out the family policies surrounding the vision of equal family relationships through the equal sharing and socialization of domestic work, which was converged with that the vision of feminist activists. The gender politics of ideology were still obvious when MOGE did not have the family policies under its own authority.

However, MOGE had to make a strategic choice between institutional expansion (with the authority over daycare) and family and ideological goals. MOGE’s ideological goals came in second behind the battle over the authority. MOGE did not even present the law agenda -Framework Act on Equal Family- to the National Assembly when it was in the midst of making several policy programs involving equal couple relationships during 2003. The criticism from a legislator of Gender Equality Committee (GEC) of the National Assembly evidences the tension between MOGE and MOHW over the authority of family policies and MOGE’s weak position in the conflict:

It is really important to link family policies and women policies but based on MOGE’s report on “MOGE Organizational Transformation” I don’t see any vision of family policies except transfer of daycare service policies from MOHW to MOGE and legislation of “Framework Act on Equal Family.” MOGE has planned “Framework Act on Equal Family” for legislation during the last first half year but MOGE is not even able to make official mention of the legislation to avoid conflict

with MOHW over the transfer of the daycare service authority. To the contrary, MOHW has already proposed the HF Act and held a public hearing on it (National Assembly GEC, 2003:20).

The legislator's criticism illustrates MOGE's dilemma between being in the vanguard of gender equality and expanding its organizational territory and its weak position that cannot push the former for the latter.

MOHW's strong position to advocate keeping family policies under its own authority and MOGE's political maneuvering in order to expand its authority is also well illustrated in the minutes from Gender Equality Policy Coordination Meeting among ministers in September 2003.

Minister to MOHW: Family policies are MOHW's area so MOGE is not authorized to make a family policy related law. Gender equality should be included in MOHW's HF Act.

Minister to MOGE: *Family policy is a new policy area and actually MOGE has stopped to make Framework Act on Equal Family for couple and family relationships in Korea but it is necessary to establish a gender equal family relationship in cooperation with each other without conflict between MOHW and MOGE.*

Minister to MOHW: We should make it clear that the law making on gender equal family policy is under the authority of MOHW.

The Prime Minister: MOHW should be the primary ministry for family policy but it should cooperate with MOGE for gender equality (within the family) issues.

Minister to MOHW: MOHW will make a law and we will include MOGE's opinion (National Assembly GEC, 2004:746. Emphasis is mine).

While then-minister to MOGE was pushing MOGE's vision on family policies very strongly, shown in her remarks in May 2003, her position in the meeting in September 2003 had changed and she had become less vocal. Then-minister to MOGE insisted that family policy was a new policy area in order to allude to MOGE's efforts to seek authority over family policies should not intrude into MOHW's territory. At the same time, she emphasized cooperation without conflict with MOHW. However, then-

minister to MOHW asserted MOHW's authority over family policies and stated this in front of the Prime minister and other ministers.

The MOGE minister didn't raise her voice in the meeting to build a discourse about the liberation of women from domestic work and the institutionalization of it. Instead, she emphasized cooperation without conflict between the ministries as an important issue. Ironically, at that time, MOGE was pushing the abolishment of the Family headship system (*hojuje*), which is the strongest symbolic system of patriarchy in Korea. It could have been possible to build a strong discourse of equal and democratic family relationships, but MOGE didn't try. MOGE was not able to achieve these ideological and administrative goals simultaneously. MOGE bureaucrats decided to try to win the territory over authority and resources first in order to hopefully address ideological goals later, with a stronger institutional position. However, while MOGE put aside discourse building on gender equal family relationships and women's liberation from domesticity, pro-family groups were expanding their capacities and became powerful enough to put their opinion into the process of transferring family policies to MOGE in order to maintain their ideological and territorial goals. For example, "Civil Organization for Strengthening Family" (*kajugŭl kanghage hanŭn simin ũi moim*) was selected by MOHW as the designated organization to implement family policies through the Healthy Family Support Center. The organization consisted of home economics scholars who were the main power behind the HF Act legislation. They were one of the key interest groups that strongly opposed the transmission of the authority and later the revision of the HF Act. I will

discuss the power of the pro-family groups and its influence on their successful blocking of HF revision Act in the later section.

2. Coordinating State Agency versus Surviving Bureaucracy

As a state agency coordinating diverse groups in its relationships with civil society, MOGE could not ignore powerful pro-family groups at the beginning stage of the transformation into MOGEF. At the same time, in order to expand its territory into family policy programs more efficiently, MOGEF needed the infrastructure that the pro-family groups had already established. I argue that MOGE(F)'s civil society relationship as a state agency and the bureaucratic exigencies for material resources for family policies led to an institutional alliance with the pro-family groups at the expense of an effective coalition with feminists. This choice thus led to slowing the legislative processes and being late in the construction of an alternative frame.

Once the authority over daycare services were transferred to MOGE, MOGE started to support feminists' efforts to build a discourse of family policies from women's perspectives by supporting a feminists' symposium on revising the HF Act and mapping out a family policy orientation (Kim, H., 2005). Despite the ideological support MOGE provided to feminists, it was concerned about potential opposition from home economics scholars. Therefore, MOGE bureaucrats announced in the legislative meeting over family policy transfer that it would make family policies under the HF Act and include home economics scholars in the family policy making processes (National Assembly GAHAC, 2005, 252-2: 34;54).

Moreover, from time of the transfer of family policy making responsibilities in 2005 to the end of 2006, MOGEF did contradictory actions at the same time – revising the HF Act against pro-family group ideas and advancing pro-family groups by proliferating Healthy family Support Centers to establish its family policy territory.¹⁰

MOGEF established 50 Healthy Family Support Centers since 2006.¹¹ Also, MOGEF announced that it will establish 234 local Healthy Family Support Centers by 2010. Since pro-family groups became an important policy partner of MOGEF, both as a state agency and as a ministry, MOGEF was not able to exclude them in the establishment of the Healthy Family Support Centers and the majority of them were run by home economics scholars. Because pro-family groups had already been setting up the infrastructure to implement family policies, MOGEF could easily expand its family policy arena through Healthy Family Support Centers.

Playing the state agency role by accepting pro-family groups as a policy partner made it possible for MOGEF to develop its territory. However, it did not allow MOGEF to drive forward revising the HF Act. It not only granted pro-family groups power, but also put MOGEF into a weak alliance with feminists.

Since MOGE promised to make family policies under HF Act and MOGEF asked support from home economics scholars (KHMA, 2005), MOGEF in 2005 was not in the position to cooperate with feminists over the revision of HF Act. Despite the existence of a law agenda -FS Act (Framework Act on Family Support) - made by the

¹⁰ This conflicting action produced MOGEF's uneasy administrative and ideological relationships with pro-family groups which I will explore in the next Chapter.

¹¹ In addition, 200,000 people visited the Healthy Family Support Centers as of 2006 November. Also MOGEF trained 800 healthy family workers.

JCFS (coalition of feminists and social service professionals) coalition in 2005, MOGEF spent time to make its own agenda to revise the HF Act. A feminist activist put MOGEF's action as follows:

MOGEF and we didn't hit it off very well together for the strategic legislation.[...] MOGEF was not tactful in revising the HF Act....We created the atmosphere to push the revision outside MOGEF, *but I think inside MOGEF they had to study home-economics scholars' position and persuade them, which wasted too much time* (Interview with KWAU activist 2, 2007. Emphasis is mine).

Since MOGEF was a state organization operating within a democracy where different civil society organizations try to influence policy, it was expected to be "not too radical." At the same time it needed the existing infrastructure of family policy implementation (controlled by pro-family groups). Therefore, MOGEF officials could not help embracing the conservative pro-family groups.

3. Coordinating State Agency versus Vanguard of Gender Equality As a state agency of democratic polity

The institutional dimension of MOGEF as a state agency of democratic polity led MOGEF to contradicting actions in its relationships with civil society. While MOGEF had to ally with the pro-family groups through its uneasy acceptance of them as family policy implementation agencies, it did not compromise its ideological stance for the law itself. In other words, the MOGEF bureaucrats attempted to accomplish its both goals: as a state agency conflict mediator through the institutional alliance with pro-family groups and as a vanguard organization through the ideological alliance with JCFS. Since MOGEF did not ignore the pro-family groups, it was not able to push the revision through despite the ideological support from the feminists. Moreover,

MOGEF's strong ideological position produced criticism from pro-family groups and conservative legislators for leaning toward JCFS. I argue that the slow-downs in making law agenda and opposition from legislators eventually blocked the passage of the FP Act.

Unlike successful legislation such as laws on the prohibition of prostitution and the protection of women in prostitution, where MOGE and feminist activists had a strong coalition, MOGEF was not able to be in such a cooperative relationship with feminist activists on the issue of the family. One of the MOGEF officers put it in the following way when asked whether it is fair for MOGEF to be criticized for dragging out in the HF revision processes:

The minister personally is more liberal than the FP Act. She is a sociologist. However, a policy cannot be stood out so [she is trying to be] in the middle of the road and ended up with the FP Act that is suited to the middle ground and she really wants to get it through. However, the problem is power dynamics. The hardest hurdles are the Korean National Council of Women (KNCW) headed by the then-minister to the MOHW, the Korean Elderly Association and other pro-family groups and those are powerful groups that we cannot ignore. It is how family problems are different from women's problem. Before [we had authorities over family policies], the answer to the women's problem was clear cult- [no] discrimination and women's rights. So there was no division [among women]. It was just anti or pro [to women's rights]. *But once we became the MOGEF, everybody [who is a member of the family] wants his/her voices to be heard whether he/she is the youth, an educator, and an elderly. Particularly, the perspective of the elderly is really different [from women's rights perspective]. So diverse factors start influencing on the MOGEF and that's why the MOGEF looks dubious. The minister is not a fighter. As a bureaucrat, I believe her action is right. One could be revolutionary to carry through her conviction. Revolution by the minority could suppress the majority but we are doing democracy.* Even if she has a different conviction, she cannot stick to it without persuasion and mutual consent. Persuasion and consent means yield in one's conviction. Without yielding to the opponent, how can one persuade it? It is not persuasion, it is command [if one don't yield]. That [the democratic process] is how we got to the FP Act now, which became less progressive than what some feminist scholars demanded in the beginning (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2007).

The interview illustrates the situation that MOGEF could not avoid institutionally in a democratic political regime as a state agency - diverse constituencies surrounding

family policies, and the time-consuming process of persuasion, negotiation, and compromise. However ideologically progressive the MOGEF femocrats were, not only could they not push through their ideology as they pleased, but also had to deal with different voices that slowed down the revision processes (Interview with MOGEF official 9, 2007).

Here is another illustration of MOGEF's institutional position in which MOGEF could not totally ally with one civil organization, even though MOGEF femocrats shared the ideological position with the feminists.

The progressive feminist activists and scholars support the FP Act through public statements, holding symposiums on this issue and attending at the public forum in the National Assembly. [...] [However], MOGEF cannot make a coalition with a particular women's organization. But instead, we collect diverse opinions and accept valid and necessary ones [to realize the MOGEF's vision] and coordinate different voices from feminist activists, feminist scholars, social welfare scholars, and home economics scholars, Korean Elderly Association, and other women's organizations. MOGEF's role is to have the law agenda passed in the National Assembly without too much conflict (Interview with MOGEF official 6, 2007).

MOGEF was in an awkward circumstance in its relationships with civil society organizations due to its organizational dimension of a coordinating state agency. MOGEF was in the position of having ideological support from feminists but not being able to be too close to them and not being able to push away the pro-family groups as a state agency, particularly in the situation where the HF Act had already been settled and the pro-family groups had built a strong discourse of making the healthy family.

While compromising on several articles such as unregistered marriages and family rituals by accepting the demands from the pro-family groups, MOGEF femocrat leaders did not give up their role as a vanguard of gender equality and made

an effort to carve this ideology in the law. MOGEF femocrat leaders did not compromise the goal and visions of the laws¹² which had commonalities with the FP Act laid out by the feminist and social welfare scholar coalition. While MOGEF was institutionally aligned with pro-family groups by having home economics scholars run the implementation centers,¹³ it shared its ideological underpinnings with feminists emphasizing individual rights to happiness, equal and democratic family relationships, and the institutionalization of domestic work for women's liberation.¹⁴

MOGEF's taking the side of feminists ideologically by pushing the equality frame is well illustrated in the strong criticism from the pro-family groups and powerful conservative legislators despite MOGEF's efforts to be in the middle of the two positions by compromising in several articles in the FP Act. MOGEF femocrats' firm stance that they wouldn't give up their ideological goal caused not only an ideological tug-of-war with pro-family groups, but also brought antipathy upon MOGEF. MOGEF was criticized by pro-family groups and the conservative

¹² Due to the strong opposition from the pro-family groups, MOGEF compromised on the article on the definition of the family and kept the article on the observance of family rituals which were criticized by feminist activists and feminist legislators in the Gender Equality and Family commission in the National Assembly. I will elaborate this part in the next section. The reasons that MOGEF accepted pro-family groups' demands were that MOGEF bureaucrats thought they could change patriarchal aspects of family rituals through gender-equal family ritual campaigns. Also, MOGEF bureaucrats thought by having unregistered couples as an exceptional case, at least MOGEF could keep them in the targeted group of the family policy beneficiaries.

¹³ I will elaborate this uneasy relationship of institution and ideology between the MOGEF and the Healthy Family Support Centers in the next chapter where I discuss the implementation of family policy programs. Healthy Family Support Centers are entrusted as a civil organization to implement the MOGEF's family policy programs and most of them were run by the home economics scholars. Once family policy authorities were transferred, MOGEF was trying to establish its territory over family policies by increasing the number of the Centers.

¹⁴ The difference was that the MOGEF draft kept the definition of the home and used the word "family disruption." Keeping the word "home"(*kajŏng*) was crucial to pro-family groups and the name of the HF Act in Korean wording is the Framework Act on Healthy Home (*kŏn'gang kajŏng*). In the revision

legislators as behaving inappropriately for a state agency. In other words, MOGEF itself became a target of the attack from the pro-family groups and conservative legislators for its ideological one-sidedness. Eventually, the opposition from the powerful conservative legislators hindered MOGEF's efforts to have the HF Act revision passed.

The point is well exemplified in KNCW's (the Korean National Council of Women, a conservative women's organizations group) statement to demand the dismissal of the chief of the family bureau of MOGEF. KNCW criticized the officer for her skewed position.

The chief of the family bureau is responsible for implementing the HF Act but she is involved in the ideological dispute and trying to rescind the HF Act. [...] Under the condition that the public opinion has not been discussed on the FP Act, it is not understandable that the officer in charge denies the HF Act so the officer is unqualified for the chief of the family policy bureau. KNCW demands MOGEF's policy and administrative support based on the HF Act and in order to promote healthy family in the preparation for the low-birth rate and aging society, MOGEF minister should apologize for the situation and discharge the chief of the bureau (KNCW, 2006).

While MOGEF officials said they were bureaucrats who should not take one side, the criticism shows that MOGEF itself was mainly on the side with the feminist activists in the ideological battle. For this reason, pro-family groups criticized MOGEF for being "biased" and being like an "NGO" (KFLS, 2006). The refusal to compromise the goal and vision of the family policies illustrates MOGEF's stubbornness to push the equal families frame and the tension that MOGEF experienced between furthering its ideological goals and ensuring its institutional expansion.

processes, pro-family groups never would give up the two words, "healthy" (*kŏn'gang*) and "home" (*kajŏng*).

Not only the pro-family groups, but also the influential conservative legislators were not happy with the position of MOGEF. Being an object of their displeasure did not help MOGEF to proceed with the FP Act smoothly, regardless of what MOGEF bureaucrats tried to do to establish a new paradigm of the family and family policies. As a conservative legislator from the Legislation and Judiciary Committee (LJC) criticized the chief of the family policy bureau of MOGEF:

I was wondering whether you are from an NGO but you should break from the NGO's perspective. You are a public official who serves the people. The benefit of the nation and the people should come first. It should be the perspective of your work. Civil organizations and the academia who oppose your position are also part of the people so you should listen to their opinions. You, a representative of the government, should not take one side in such a case as the pros and cons conflict are acute. Of course the MOGEF has its own stance and mandate but you should accept the people's opinion. .. I am disappointed by your attitude as a public officer (National Assembly LJC 265-4, 2007:39).

Despite the institutional expectation for MOGEF to be impartial and MOGEF officials' awareness of it, MOGEF maintained the equality frame, which reinforced MOGEF's disadvantageous position in the legislative processes. However hard MOGEF tried to embrace different voices as a coordinating state agency, when MOGEF femocrats did not give up their organizational identity – a vanguard organization of gender egalitarianism by pushing the equality frame, their efforts to infuse the gender egalitarian ideology through the revision of the HF Act only produced hostility from the conservative legislators who had the final say to pass the FP Act.

As MOGE became MOGEF in charge of family policies, MOGEF became to have a more diverse and broad spectrum of policy beneficiaries and thus the coordinating state agency role became as important as the vanguard role. This

organizational transformation weakened MOGEF's ties with progressive feminist activist organizations. However, at the same time, MOGEF did not give up on its vanguard role, instead keeping an ideological tie with the feminists and using the 'equal families' frame, from which I argue arose the political conservatives' antagonistic position against MOGEF.

To sum up the interactions among three MOGE(F) organizational dimensions influencing on the failure of the MOGEF's efforts to pass its FP Act, my argument is that MOGE(F)'s organizational position did not work favorably for the MOGE(F) bureaucrats to revise the HF Act. While survival of the ministry required obtaining authority and resources, and the added pressure to maintain the role of state agency forced it to include various voices, the discourse of gender egalitarianism took a back seat. At the same time pro-family groups' material and discourse power grew. However, when the ideological battle was not easily won, MOGEF's efforts to infuse gender egalitarianism within the concept of family were criticized. As a state agency, it had to find a middle ground. The dilemma among the three dimensions of the organization that MOGE(F) had to deal with put MOGE(F) in a difficult position where it could neither build its own discourse power nor coordinate diverse voices effectively, which eventually led to the failure of the passage of the FP Act.

D. Power Differences between Pro-family Groups and MOGEF/JCFS

MOGEF had a disadvantageous position in the legislative battle not only because it had constraining institutional circumstances, but also because it had

relatively weaker power compared to pro-family groups. The power of pro-family groups surpassing MOGEF/JCFS' power was another factor that led to the blockage of the HF Act revision. I will analyze expertise, network, coalition and the leadership as important power sources. The pro-family groups had expertise on the issue of family stability, social and political networking with the politically powerful, a broad and strong coalition with other civil society organizations, and strategic leaders' social political influence. These power sources won pro-family groups the legislative victory. Under institutional constraints that demanded MOGEF embrace diverse voices in policy making processes, the power of pro-family groups, acting as civil society members, to have their voices heard increased because of their broad coalition and legitimacy granted by the conservative legislators. These factors were strong enough to drive MOGEF into the corner.

1. Expertise in Equality versus Expertise in Family

MOGE bureaucrats had more expertise in issues of inequality which were also salient in their perspectives of policy programs regarding families. MOGE started with the leaders from the progressive feminist organizations with the mission of abolishing discrimination against women. MOGE(F) bureaucrats acknowledged that family issues were more than gender equality issues. However, when MOGE bureaucrats were trying to start family policies during the transition, they had little concrete policy that could embrace both equality and universal welfare policies. This dilemma is illustrated by the answer of then-vice minister to MOGE to a legislator's inquiry about

MOGE's competencies to manage family policies and the lack of any road map for family policies:

We constituted an advisory committee to make a master plan for family policies and made an action plan team to collect diverse opinions. However, the scholars (in the advisory committee) suggest the example of family policies from foreign countries and provide general knowledge. But we are in need of some particulars (e.g. specific policy programs) and we haven't found any solution yet. We are going to work on the particulars and we are trying to present a blueprint for the family policies within three months before starting with MOGEF (National Assembly GEC 252-1, 2005:14).

MOGEF's status as a newcomer to policy making for families is contrasted to home economics scholars' almost 10 years of effort and accumulated knowledge on family policies. Setting aside that feminist politics was not their main goal, MOGE did not have substantial policy ideas to realize the vision of equality through family policies at the time of starting MOGEF.

A lack of knowledge and expertise contributed to the failure in the HF Act revision process. Since MOGEF bureaucrats were not ready with a concrete law agenda alternative to the HF Act, they spent a lot of time preparing for it. As a feminist activist put it:

We were already done with the law agenda in 2005 before MOGE became MOGEF. We suggested pushing our agenda but MOGEF said they wanted to propose their own *after a year of research* so the law agenda was slowed down in the National Assembly. [...] So after the dragging out now we have the FP Act but eventually this gave the oppositional groups time to grow themselves powerful. *At that time, MOGEF just started with family policies and comparing our sense, their response to the HF Act was rather too late* (Interview with KWAU activist 2, 2007. Emphasis is mine).

In the previous section, I've analyzed how MOGEF's organizational dilemma between the feminists and the pro-family groups slowed the legislation processes by not having a strategic alliance with the JCFS. In addition to the institutional constraints, MOGEF as a rookie in family policy was not effective enough to respond to the HF Act in good

time and it eventually led the pro-family groups to a more advantageous position. Moreover, they came up with a law agenda similar to the one by JCFS (Joint Committee of Feminist Activists and Social Welfare Scholar) and ended up with the same frame of ‘equal families’ which lost MOGEF the framing contest. I will delve into this part in the next section.

In contrast, pro-family groups had been building a cultural basis for maintaining the ‘healthy family’ and made an attempt to establish family welfare as their own vocational interest area. These efforts became the basis of the legislation for the HF Act and the growth of the personnel resources for Healthy Family Support Centers. Particularly, home economics scholars had been interested in solving the problem of the family crisis since 1995. Through their practical participation and specialized knowledge in social work for family welfare, they created the concept of “home welfare” (*kajöng pokchi*) in 1995. In addition, the 1997 financial crisis--a historical juncture that highlighted family problems such as poverty, divorce, and abandonment of the family--promoted home economics scholars’ efforts to get family issues into the state policy arena in order to restore the family (National Assembly HWC 243-9, 2003: 33).

In an effort to establish a home welfare system, home economics scholars established the credential program for social workers specialized in family welfare entitled “home welfare worker” (*kajöng pokchisa*). Trainees started working in this area in 1998. In 2001, these scholars proposed a law called “Framework Act on Home

Welfare” which did not pass the National Assembly. These accumulated experiences and knowledge became the basis of the HF Act in 2003 (Cho and Park, 2004).

2. Power of Network, Coalition and Leadership

The social capital of the home economics scholars facilitated a political network with powerful conservative LJC legislators. This influence was important in blocking the passage of the FP Act even after it had gone far enough in the legislative process that it normally would have passed. Even if there were supporters of the FP Act in the LJC, LJC became the hurdle that MOGEF/JCFS was not able to overcome. This problem is shown below in the remark of a feminist who was deeply involved in the HF Act revision processes:

The wife of the chairman of the LJC Committee- actually we scoured the individual network of the pro-family groups drawing a chart of their social network, we did everything -had a close relationship with a senior home economics scholar and the scholar's husband went the same university with the chairman. So we found that's why it was impossible (for us to have the FP Act passed). One day we found a person who is close to the wife of the chairman of the LJC Committee and we were discussing whether we should lobby the person or not. Such things [...] we took every lobby measure we could do (to pass the FP Act) (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008).

The quote illustrates how fierce the competition was between the pro-family groups and the MOGEF/JCFS surrounding the revision of the HF Act. The battle required mustering all available resources, such as individual social capital, and strategies of political networking with influential groups, which MOGEF and JCFS did not have.

Besides the existence of allies within the political arena, pro-family groups had allies in the civil society arena as well. The coalition took various forms, with actors from different facets of society ranging from the general public to the social elites.

Later, even one-time foes of the women's movement such as Confucianists and the elderly joined in the coalition under the frame of "preventing family disruption." With these various groups advocating for preserving the family, the revision of HF Act was not an easy task for MOGEF and JCFS.

Home economics scholars allied with important social figures such as lawyers, doctors, and Christian leaders, as well as scholars. These social elites and about 400 people constituted the association called "Civil Organization for Strengthening the Family" (*kajugŭl kŭnkanghage hanŭn simin ũi moim*). In December 2004, the organization became the family policy implementation organization after the HF Act became legislated (Kim, H., 2005:88).

The civil society organizations with which home economics scholars allied had been working on solving the problem of the family crisis since the 1990s. For example, "Korean Healthy Family Activism Organization" (*hankuk kŭnkang kajug silch'ŏn undong ponbu*) founded by a professor of a medical school in 1995 one year after the UN proclamation of the *International Year of the Family* (1994) had been supporting a family culture movement in order to establish the concept of the healthy family and spread values such as love and respect within the family (Kim, H., 2005:87).

Christian groups are another example that home economics scholars made an association with. A Christian family ministry group called 'Hi-Family' started family-related NGO activism beyond its religious affiliation in 2003¹⁵ (Kim, H., 2005:89). The representative of the group diagnosed the Korean family as in "the terminal stage

of a cancer” due to the increase in divorce, decrease in marriage and child birth, and family members’ emotional unsettledness. He insisted that the disease uncured produces social disaster and thus the HF Act could cure the disease to prevent the disaster.¹⁶ Also, Korean Association of Christian Organizations was one of the groups who lobbied the conservative legislators in opposing the revision of the HF Act (National Assembly LJC 265-4, 2007).

The alliance of home economics scholars with other pro-family civil society organizations became stronger and more powerful as the HF Act passed the National Assembly in 2003. Participants in the allied groups discussed above jointly headed a new association called Civil Solidarity for Healthy Family (*kŭnkang kajug simin yŏndae*). The collective action group included another 36 civil society organizations related to family issues. The group was built based on their similar ideologies and interests. The members set the goal as “realization of healthy family and protection of family values.”¹⁷ At the same time, they aimed to be involved in the HF Act’s implementation process, in which they believed the synergy effect of the cooperation based on each group’s experience and know-how would contribute to the efficacious implementation of the HF Act and thus be to each group’s benefit (Kim, H., 2005:89).

The coalition gave the conservative legislators a reason to delay passing the FP Act by starting the legislation process over again in holding a public forum. The chairman of the LJC’s put it this way:

¹⁵ Originally the organization was founded in 1992 for evangelical work targeting the family and restoring family relationships through consultations (Kim, H., 2005: 89)

¹⁶ <http://www.hani.co.kr/section001065000/2004/11/001065000200411151552042.html>

¹⁷ <http://www.koreafamilynet.net>

Today we are holding a public forum [to reexamine the HF Act revision]. The public forum is being held not on my own authority but by the demand on careful consideration [of passing the FP Act] by the Korean Association of Christianity, Confucianists- Söngkyungwan- and Korean National Council of Women, and Korean Elderly Association. When there are oppositions from various civil society organizations, we need time for thorough examination (National Assembly LJC 265-4, 2007:34).

While the pro-family groups had a social political network with the chairman, which granted them stronger power, the demands from its allying organizations, including third parties, made the conservative legislator look like following the rules of democratic process in his decision to hold the public forum (which would hinder the passage of the HF Act revision).

Contrasting to the strong and broad coalition of the pro-family group, the coalition of MOGEF and JCFS was limited and less effective. MOGEF and JCFS had an ideological coalition with similar visions of solutions to the family problems. However, MOGEF's institutional dilemmas as a democratic state agency in which it is supposed to coordinate different voices, hindered its bid for revision of the HF Act.

In addition to the coalition of diverse civil society organizations, a strategic leadership from KNCW was also an important power source. As KNCW (conservative women's movement association) became the strongest and most effective ally of home economics scholars since 2004, the power of the pro-family group got even stronger. In 2004, the then-minister¹⁸ to the Ministry of Health and Welfare retired from MOHW and became the president of KNCW, a national women's organization association with 3000 members. Power came not only from the large number of advocates to "prevent family disruption," but more importantly it came from the

KNCW leader who had political influence. She was able to grasp the political opportunity in the LJC committee to reverse the legislation process and start over.

The pro-family groups' leadership was strong enough to dampen the effectiveness of MOGEF and JCFS' efforts. A feminist activist remarked on the leader's strategic discursive skills in achieving her goal:

We are trying to destroy the stronghold of the KNCW but it is too strong to do it. Actually, I was really impressed by her political influences. I've been meeting with all the legislators and bureaucrats who are involved in this legislation and I found that they were completely *taken in by her (the president of the KNCW leader) words. She knew what the opponents' [our] weakness and made best use of it* (to accomplish her goal) (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008. Emphasis is mine).

The leader was able to discern that the "cause" of family maintenance would persuade the legislators and would also effectively label efforts to revise the HF Act as an act of family disruption.

While MOGEF and feminists thought they were close to the passage of the FP Act once the law agenda was moved to the LJC, the KNCW leader turned this potential crisis into her opportunity by making a strategic alliance with a third party—the Korean Elderly Association. The Korean Elderly Association was once the foe of the women's movement in which KNCW and feminists allied in order to eradicate the Korean Family Headship System (*hojuje*).¹⁹ The alliance with the Korean Elderly Association illustrates the leader's effective mobilization of any available resource to

¹⁸ The leader of the KNCW supported Civil Solidarity for Healthy Family (*kŭnkang kajug simin yŏndae*) during her term in office.

¹⁹ Korean Family Headship System (*Hojuje*) had maintained the patriarchal family relationships by legalizing women's subordinated position to their husbands and sometimes even her sons and daughters. Eradication of the Family Headship System was one of the main agenda items of the Korean women's movement.

accomplish the goal, which led to the successful blockage of passing the MOGEF/JCFS's FP Act.

Networking with conservative social actors reinforced the power of the pro-family group that was already strong through its network with political actors. The leader of the KNCW was clear-sighted in winning the support from the conservative political actors through the Korean Elderly Association. The Korean Elderly Association was an influential political constituency for the conservative legislators and thus they could not ignore the KNCW and Korean Elderly Association's demand (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008). The thinking of the chairman of the LJC demonstrates these political considerations:

I, as a chairman of this Committee, can't really tell which side is right. So, since the opinions are sharply divided, why don't we hold a public forum and listen to the Korean Elderly Association's opinion and the opposing opinion and compromise to pass it? [...] We've got a statement from the Korean Elderly Association [demanding the reexamination of the FP Act]. The Korean Elderly Association is a national organization. Then how can we completely ignore the request for the reexamination that a national organization makes? (National Assembly LJC 262-26, 2006:11)

Not only the Korean Elderly Association, but also the pro-family group demanded the re-examination of the FP Act. However, the quote illustrates that the Korean Elderly Association, with whom conservative legislators shared a common view of the maintenance of the family, played a role in pushing the conservative legislator to block the legislation process using his authority as a chairman. In sum, the leader of the KNCW effectively blocked the passage of the FP Act by influencing the conservative legislators through conservative social actors.

Not only did MOGEF and JCFS not have political influence on conservative legislators, but they were also not good at projecting the course of the legislation.

They never imagined that these political conservatives could be able to slow the passage of the FP Act. One interviewee said that she thought it would not take so long to pass the FP Act (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008).

In sum, the conservative actors of civil society were powerful with expertise, network, coalition and leadership. They were strong enough to surpass the power of the social change groups including the state organization MOGEF and another civil society organization JCFS. These power sources contributed to the victory of the pro-family groups' effectiveness in the legislative battle by reinforcing MOGEF's institutional dilemma and causing them to lose the support of conservative legislators. In the next section, I will delve into how these power sources partly influenced the framing contest as well.

E. Frame Contests, Cultural Resonance, and Power Sources

I've analyzed how MOGEF's institutional constraints and the differential amount of power sources between the progressives and the pro-family groups influenced the contour of the legislative process for the HF Act. In addition to those factors, I will analyze the framing contest between the progressive's 'equal families' and the pro-family groups' 'family maintenance.' First, I argue that MOGEF's expertise on equality led them to the equality frame which did not resonate with the social political conservatives. Second, I will analyze how pro-family groups strategically presented family maintenance to resonate with different groups of people. Then I will move to the discussion of pro-family groups' deployment of power in

winning the framing contests. I argue that by having an ally in social political conservatives, pro-family groups also had discursive power through which they were able to easily resonate the “family maintenance” frame with the concept of the healthiness of the family.

1. MOGEF’s Expertise on Equality and ‘Equal Families’ Frame

I’ve shown how MOGEF’s siding with the ‘equality frame’ did not win support from conservative legislators who believed MOGEF should fulfill its institutional duty of impartiality. I also analyzed how MOGEF’s lack of expertise in family policy issues led to the delay in the strategic response to the HF Act legislation. In addition to MOGEF’s institutional constraints and their strategic error, in this section, I argue that MOGEF’s expertise on equality led MOGEF to ‘equal families,’ which put MOGEF in discursively disadvantageous position in the legislation battle. Basically, the ‘equal families’ frame lacked cultural resonance. In addition, they did not have effective cultural resources to attack the healthy family concept because pursuing healthiness is commonsensical in people’s minds.

The jobs of the MOGE(F) femocrats had been to ‘change’ rather than maintain the system. Therefore, the language of MOGE(F) used words such as ‘equal’ and ‘democratic.’ As discussed previously, family policies from MOGE(F)’s perspective were based more on individual rights which challenged the unequal duties and responsibilities seen as necessary for family stability by pro-family groups. However, choosing the frame of ‘equal families’ neither convinced opponents of the legitimacy

of the HF Act revision nor won the approval from conservative legislators because it was too radical.

Pro-family groups regarded focusing on gender equality within the family as disrupting collective values that eventually hampers social solidarity. As one home economist put it:

The MOGEF confuses the people by ascending the FP Act to the LJC. *The FP Act is excessively feministic, unrealistic and unbalanced because it ignores the tradition of our society and the value of the home.* In contrast, the HF Act is oriented to the value of the home, gender equality, and the mutual understanding among generations. ...*The FP Act lays excessive emphasis on “a woman, the individual” and neglects the value and the meaning of the home.* In the era that does not care the disruption of the family and the home and the society are increasingly individualized, selfishness surges, and the diversity is not respected, *not only women’s rights, but also the values of the home* that pursues giving, caring, living together, sharing, consideration, cooperation, communication are pressing. The present day that needs ‘life being together’ and ‘social solidarity, the home value of “togetherness” is invaluable (KFLS, 2006. Emphasis is mine).²⁰

Advocating gender equality within the family became anti-family and anti-social, aggravating individualism and breaking down the family as the ultimate haven from the competitive market driven society. Pro-family groups attacked individualism as an evil ideology to harmonious family relationships.

On top of that, conservative legislators from LJC agreed with the pro-family group’s attack on individualism. Further, they even thought that the tension between equality and harmony can not be resolved. As a conservative legislator from LJC put it:

The Article 2 of the FP Act says ‘the family relationships should be equal and democratic.’ It is commonsense. [...] However, if we consider the word ‘equal’ and ‘democratic’ from a legal perspective [...] you (the chief of Bureau of Family Policies, MOGEF) might answer that your family is equal and democratic if you are asked [...] However, it’s not so in reality. For example, a minor’s exercise of property rights or other rights is constrained even though the Constitution guarantees the people’s

²⁰http://www.minsim.or.kr/bbs/board.php?bo_table=with_free&wr_id=7505&sfl=&stx=&sst=wr_hit&od=desc&sop=and&page=624

equality and the democratic processes. If we say the relationship between a father and his son is equal, it is hypocrisy. [...] The family is one of the most unequal units (National Assembly LJC 265-4, 2007: 33).

Not only equality within the family, but also equality between different types of families and the respect of diverse lifestyles based on individual choices were not accepted easily because it was seen as being “progressive.” It is well illustrated in another LJC conservative legislator’s disagreement on unregistered marriages as a type of family:

Admitting by a law unregistered marriage and one-person -households (as a type of family) has a progressive aspect but at this (social) stage I think it is desirable to prevent family break down beforehand and to support the difficulties once a family is disrupted... The Law is very important but at the same time laden with value conflict. However, I don’t think it is desirable to make a legislation that creates a new value and lead it without a sufficient social agreement (National Assembly LJC 265-4, 2007:27. Emphasis is mine).

To the legislator, constituting an institution of marriage and sustaining it is more consistent with current cultural values than allowing deviant family lives through individual choices.

The equality frame that was created by MOGEF and feminists has been the root for most of the policies throughout the history of MOGEF. MOGEF bureaucrats and feminists’ expertise was built on the issue of equality as well. When the equality frame was about women’s rights and abolishing discrimination, it worked. However, once the policy issue became the family, the equality frame no longer had the support from conservative legislators and even from women themselves in pro-family groups. However, feminist activists in particular did not realize that using the equality frame for family issues could be seen as “rocking the boat.” As one of the feminist activists puts it:

Abolishing “family headship system” was [all about overturning patriarchy based on the patrilineage and the blood relationship]. Now that the “family headship system” is abolished, we thought [people’s perspective of the family] has changed but it hasn’t. [Reflecting the failure of the revision of the HF Act], we realized that we were far ahead of the time. To the common people, even to women, who constitute the society as well as us, they think they are happy as it is. Unregistered marriage is suspicious, if you have to choose it is better to marry, if you are an unmarried woman (*bihon*²¹) you are not an adult yet, things like these are so taken-for-granted to them. To us, activists, those should be ‘problematized,’ while to them those life styles do not constitute the family, those are just households, things like that. It was really hard to break the deep-rooted perspective of the family. At that time, we believed that we could change, we could convince them we were right but it turned out not to be (Interview with Womenlink activist 1, 2009).

The interview illustrates that change in the law - abolishment of the family headship system- does not always lead to cultural transformation. However, the feminist activists were not strategic enough to match their frame to the social political conservatives, among which the norm of the family is dominant. To the contrary, the pro-family groups skillfully fashioned their “family maintenance” frame to resonate with their target audience, which I will explore in the next section.

2. Cultural Resonance to the Commonsense Idea of Health

The pro-family group competed with MOGEF/JCFS successfully in defending and resonating the concept of the healthy family with both professional and lay people. To the contrary, MOGEF and JCFS were not able to find the cultural resources that could support their debunking of the concept of the “healthy family.” MOGEF/ JCFS attacked the HF Act for its association with the dichotomy *between* the Family with two heterosexual parents and children as conventional *and* the rest of families as

²¹ As a cultural movement, Korean progressive feminist activists have created the new vocabulary *bihon* (not-married) in stead of the common word *mihon* (not-married-yet) connoting that the person will someday get married. The progressive feminist activists criticize the vocabulary *mihon* that it takes marriage for granted as being normal and non-marrying as abnormal.

unconventional such as single parent families and one person-households. The MOGEF femocrats' and the JCFS's view of a family policy law is that it should be sensitive to power relations between different types of families as well as power relations within the family.

However, the efforts to define different types of family as "families" through the struggle over the definition of the family did not impact the HF Act which also has articles on support for diverse types of the families. Paradoxically, the efforts to include different types of families in the definition of the family resulted in categorizations through naming and emphasis of "unconventional." A feminist activist put it this way:

For example, families by adoption [even if it is already legally defined as a type of family] would expose themselves when they adopt [a kid] publicly. And homosexual couple wouldn't come out. Neither the unregistered couples come out saying "we are unregistered but we are couple anyway." So it was hard to find an example [to frame our argument] and mobilize these people. In fact, I think it is because the easiness that is granted by the commonness [normality]. It might be true that deviation from the commonness, being stood out and getting attention might be a burden. When we held "Equal Families Festival" we interviewed an unregistered couple and referred to them (as a type of the family) but when the press pursued the couple, they wouldn't do the interview (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008).

The feminists' efforts to challenge the concept of the patrilineal family as the normal family by mobilizing non-patrilineal families was not successful due to the deep-rooted notion of being 'normal'.

In contrast, the way the pro-family groups conveyed their message of family maintenance through the healthy family was very clear but at the same time they took advantage of the contradictory meanings of the healthy family concept in order to resonate it to wider spectrum of audience including social progressive. Since the concept could be interpreted as being integrative enough to contain gender equality

within the family, it sounds like it is more fair-minded than the frame of ‘equal families,’ which emphasized women’s rights in family issues and was thus too radical. In turn, pro-family groups claimed that sticking to ‘equal families’ became an ‘excessive feminist’ idea on the part of MOGEF and feminist activists.

Actors from pro-family groups were well versed in using the contradictory meanings of the healthy family flexibly according to different audiences in order to defend their maintenance of the family. First, the pro-family group’s defense of the healthy family allowed every family to be titled as ‘healthy’ while the MOGEF and JCFS’ attack on the dichotomy between ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ paradoxically produced the concept of ‘unhealthy’ families! Particularly, the defense was targeting the professional on the family issues. Instead of the image of the family as a haven, the then- leader of KNCW made a remark that not only recognizes the diversity of families but also titles all families “healthy.”

Health is a status on the continuum. [...] For example, we cannot differentiate whether you are healthy or unhealthy. We talk about health by your status of health. So the state or the individual enhances the status of his/her health. [...] Even a person only breathing in the emergency room is healthy. We have to enhance his/her health from that point for his survival (National Assembly LJC 2007, 265-4:27).

Second, pro-family groups were also keen to appeal to the public sentiment as well as the professional. To appeal to public sentiments, actors used the popular discourse of Family values. The following remark, by the same person as above, contrasts sharply with the previous one. This illustrates how then-KNCW President, who had also served MOHW as a Minister, was flexible in her presentation of the meaning of healthy families:

The home should be cozy and snugly place. How it isn't a place for a rest where peaceful and dependable mothers and fathers, warmhearted wife and husband, and adorable sons and daughters are (*Womantimes*, September 4, 2006).

She evoked the nostalgia of the Family to resonate with the cultural images of the family of two heterosexual parents and children that is haven from the competitive public world. Public-private dualism still was sustained within the discourse of the “happy healthy family” which romanticized the family even though broader social systems enter into family dynamics.

MOGEF and JCFS continued arguing that the cultural image of the “healthy” family as “normal” and “conventional” reproduces patriarchal heterosexual family relationships and discriminates against unconventional families. However, they were not able to effectively persuade people that the unconventional is equal to the conventional because the popular image of the Family was stamped clearly in people's minds.

The difficulty of looking for a counter concept to challenge the dominant image of the family is well evidenced in the discrepancy between the assumption of a MOGEF bureaucrat and everyday people's values of the healthy family. In the National Assembly meeting a MOGEF femocrat said the following:

Since the concept of home [*kajǒng*] has the strong meaning of enclosure, it entails the maintenance of health within the enclosure. That's why home economics focuses on management and economics within the boundary of the home. It could be offensive to different types of families who get education or consultation from Healthy Family Centers because healthy family centers [run by home economics people] would emphasize the health within the enclosure of the family (National Assembly LJC 262-4, 2006:22).

However, the everyday people's minds were far from the MOGEF bureaucrat's presumption. As one feminist activist admitted:

People particularly from middle class haven't had this kind of public service [provided by Healthy Family Centers] before so they really like it. Since people like it, the state supports more. And it seems that they like the word "healthy" so the Healthy Family Support Center is expanding in the local area. Since "health" is a goal to pursue [for people as well] it appeals to people and the dichotomy between healthy and unhealthy that we are concerned with does not matter to them. [...] Korean [people's concept of the] family is too narrow-minded. [...] When we had a discussion on how to get our message across that the family based on the blood relationship is not the only form of the family, we were skeptical about that...Our agenda might be a little too progressive (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008).

The remark also illustrates that the cultural presumption of the healthy family as the conventional family was so strong that the feminists were not able to find a counter hegemony for a fundamental change in the notion of the ideal family. The more entrenched the ideal type of family, the more resonant it is. Despite that, bureaucrats were keen to emphasize conservative properties of the Korean family but were less keen to see if people would want to change it. It seems that the bureaucrats did not understand the cultural constraints that enabled the healthy family concept to be so persistent a vision in people's minds.

The cultural resonance of the concept of health is also supported in the case of low income families. As a staff member who was a home economics scholar from a Healthy Family Support Center put it:

I had heard enough of it [the word "healthy" reminds people of unconventional families as unhealthy] so I thought about whether it [the word "healthy"] really is wrong. But I realized after I got involved in the program implementation that the term gives a nice impression [of the Healthy Family Support Center] on the community so the residents visit the Center without negative feeling. We have a social welfare facility right next to our Center building and they have similar programs as we do. The community is low income and the residents feel they look poor when they go to the welfare facility and I think the welfare facility [not the Healthy Family Support Center] makes these people feel daunted. To the contrary, people feel our Center is like a public health center where they visit without concern [over being stigmatized as "needy"] (Interview with HFSC staff 1, 2007).

Both the feminist's and the implementation staff's point illustrate that MOGEF and JCFS were not able to find an alternative image of the family powerful enough to

oppose the concept of the “healthy family.” They tried to challenge the dominant family ideology and evince that the unconventional is not deviant. At this very same time, 50% of Korean families were deemed “variant,” having single-parent heads of household, being a re-married family, and single-person households. However, despite social statistics that would suggest support for alternative images of the family the image of the “healthy family” stuck in people’s mind as “good” and “normal.”

3. Morality for Family Protection

Both pro-family groups and MOGEF had to handle the legislative process in a manifold institutional field that consisted of allies, opponents, authorities, and the third parties (Curtis and Zurcher, 1973; Klandemans, 1992; Carroll and Ratner, 1996; Evans, 1997; Polletta and Ho, 2006). Within this organizational environment, pro-family groups not only had a network with the authorities (i.e. conservative legislators), but also had a well versed strategic leadership to ally with third parties of the politicians’ constituencies (i.e. Korean Elderly Association) to exert influence on the authorities.

On top of that, pro-family groups were able to create a discursive power with the strategic use—of diverse cultural norms such as morality and national tradition and identity, which were taken-for-granted within their network and amongst allies and conflicted with the feminist ideology of abolishing the modern nuclear family. This discursive power enabled the healthy family frame to resonate with conservative sentiments, which enabled them to block efforts to revise the HF Act.

Morality became a tool with which pro-family groups condemned MOGEF and JCFS for trying to revise the HF Act by claiming that their extreme emphasis on individual freedom would produce the decline of family. By evoking morality in the name of family maintenance, pro-family groups (particularly the KNCW) were able to mobilize a diverse set of NGOs and religious groups. Moreover, the strategy was effective because of the issue of preserving morality in society were well accepted by the conservative legislators of the Legislation and Judiciary Committee (LJC) in the National Assembly.

Morality to maintain family was an important basis of the HF Act from the beginning of its legislation process. When explaining MOHW's motivation to legislate the HF Act, the then-Minister stated:

When I was the Minister to the MOHW, the sorriest phenomenon that I found was the abandoned kids. If you go to welfare facilities, there are a lot of abandoned kids waiting for their parents *but the bad men and women never come to find their kids back*. And if the home breakdowns, the elderly get out to the street. *This kind of society is not desirable* and I thought we have to build a society where children and parents are happy (Interview with HFSC staff 3, 2009. Emphasis is mine).

Maintaining the family is a matter of a moral responsibility for the children and the elderly, and further for society as a whole. Abandoning the responsibility would result in social problems.

In contrast, when the FP Act, a revised law agenda of the HF Act, was discussed in Gender Equality and Family Committee (GEFC), morality was less salient than changing power relationships within and among families. The morality discourse became stronger once the FP Act was moved on to the Legislation and Judiciary Committee (LJC). Pro-family groups' attempts to match the conservative

sentiments of the LJC with morality in maintaining the family had a significant impact on shaping the contour of the debate over passing FP Act in the National Assembly. The debate over the first law regarding family policy in Korea was focused the moral acceptability of certain types of families rather than gender role flexibilities and change in power relations.

Particularly, pro-family groups used the morality discourse for family maintenance within legal matrimony. It is well illustrated in the huge controversy between the pro-family groups and MOGEF/JCFS whether the unregistered marriage²² should be legally defined as a type of family. The argument lasted throughout the battle over the revision of the HF Act. From the perspective of the pro-family groups, unregistered marriage promotes “immoral community” standards (National Assembly LJC 265-4, 2007:4) that accelerate the problem of family decline such as less childbirth, more divorce, neglecting responsibility to family members, double marriage and inappropriate sexual relationships (KNCW, 2006). Grounded in morality discourse, pro-family groups effectively criticized the FP Act with the frame of “a law that promotes family disruption” (National Assembly LJC 265-4, 2007: 19) by promoting inappropriate behaviors.

²² Korean civil law allows a couple to have a right regarding the conjugal relationship in a legal marriage. However, Korean judicial precedent admits unregistered marriage (*de facto* marriage) as a conjugal relationship under the condition that the couple’s intention is to get married and register their marriage. Matrimonial life must exist in reality so that moral legitimacy is ensured and the law can protect the rights of the couple related to their conjugal relationships. Therefore, bigamy or having a mistress is not included in the unregistered marriage by jurisprudence. However, pro-family groups were worried that legalizing unregistered marriage as a category of family in the law would promote reckless cohabitation without intention for a marital relationship, which would lead to the breakdown of the family.

The cultural concept of morality granted pro-family groups discursive advantage because it was harmonious with the cultural perspective of the legislators in LJC the National Assembly, whom pro-family groups actively lobbied. Even after MOGEF and JCFS compromised on making unregistered families exceptional cases as quasi-families, the conservative legislators of LJC kept asserting that this ‘immoral behavior’ cannot be legalized:

[Doesn't the healthy family] mean the morally accepted family? I have a doubt whether the state should accept unregistered marriage legally (National Assembly LJC 262-23, 2006. Emphasis is mine).

The conservative perspective of the morality of the family is well-coordinated with the pro-family groups’ ideology of healthy family. Therefore, the conservative legislators did not approve the FP Act because it denied the concept of the healthy family.

Morally inappropriate behavior did not deserve to be entitled “normal” even if it could be legally protected. A conservative legislator put it:

A child out of wedlock should be protected [...] but protection is different from generalization. There always exist special cases [...] There always exist phenomena deviated from moral law. [...] Even though the world is changing, it is not changing toward promoting the unregistered marriage. [...] Law is not made for a special case to be general (National Assembly LJC 265-4, 2007:24. Emphasis is mine).

The subject as a result of “immoral behavior” was stigmatized as a special case needy of protection but did not deserve to be categorized as normal. MOGEF and JCFS’ efforts for changing power relationships among families through entitling unconventional families to be a type of family failed.

The opposition to legalizing unregistered marriage was based strongly in the idea of guarding the family as certain forms. The idea was a hurdle that MOGEF and JCFS were not able to overcome, which contributed to the failure of passing the FP

Act. Under the morality discourse related to the responsibility for maintaining legal family relationships, un-marriage or late marriage, childlessness or late childbearing was immoral behavior for sustaining the family.

For that matter, not just the FP Act, but also MOGEF bureaucrats and JCFS feminists were morally blamed. For example, interviewees from pro-family groups condemned feminist activists as “anti-family who don’t think it is necessary to upkeep the family,” “women who have never been married,” “women who have never had a child” and “women who try to destroy the family.” MOGEF was described as “defending those radical feminists” (Interviews with HFSC staff 1, 2007; HFSC staff 2, 2007; HFSC staff 3, 2009). People from pro-family groups actively used those expressions in order to lobby conservative camps (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008).

The more serious problem was that MOGEF and JCFS were not able to find an efficacious alternative cultural resource against the morality issue. This problem is well illustrated in a feminist activist’s frustration:

When we work on women’s rights issues [e.g. making laws on prostitution prevention, sexual violence, affirmative action], even though we faced back-lash after we’ve accomplished those, I think it was possible because those issues were morally justifiable. After we are done with those issues, we looked for issues that are clearly defined as moral but we couldn’t. *In the case of the HF Act, the law is right because it is moral to protect the conventional type of the family.* [...] The legislators of the LJC are legal experts and they know that several laws acknowledge the unregistered marriage but they said [legalizing the unregistered marriage] is against the public sentiment. It was frustrating that the issue had got beyond the level of the logical persuasion (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008. Emphasis is mine).

By having an audience (i.e. the conservative legislators) for which morality was an unexamined commonsense idea and evoking it with the fear of family disruption, pro-family groups were able to use the ‘family maintenance’ frame and denounce the

opponents' frame as immoral. The discursive advantage was powerful enough to dampen the voice of the social change group. Particularly, when activists argued that family policies should support women's liberation from the family by taking up women's domestic work responsibilities, they were met with deaf ears.

4. Korean Identity and Tradition

The family has been regarded as so absolute and sacred that the question "what is the family?" itself has been blasphemy. Maintaining the traditional family is valued and family change is regarded as social abnormality and thus acknowledging family change has been treated as anti-social and anti-family. The traditional familism still dominates much of our everyday life so acknowledging family change is regarded as giving up Korean identity and faces a strong resistance (Lee, 2005:74).

The quote above by a feminist scholar illustrates how deeply the idea of the Korean family is rooted in cultural identity. Disruption of the family means giving up national identity. Pro-family groups cleverly matched maintaining the healthy family with protecting Korean identity and tradition, which resulted in the resonance of the frame.

To the contrary, MOGEF and JCFS were not able to debunk the pro-family groups' claims that the FP Act would disrupt Korean tradition. Moreover, MOGEF and JCFS faced opposition on the grounds that the efforts to revise the HF Act were the ones rebelling against the Korean-ness.

The strategic decision to ally with social conservatives was not limited to the attempt to influence politically powerful elites. It granted pro-family groups with an enormous discursive advantage. The leadership knew with which group the pro-family

groups should ally- a group with cultural power from which they can obtain cultural approval by resonating their healthy family frame to the group's ideas.

When the revision of the HF Act was discussed within the GEFC in the National Assembly, the discourse of deconstructing patriarchy was tangled with discourse of tradition such as family ritual. (National Assembly GEFC 259-1, 2006; National Assembly GEFC 259-2, 2006). However, once the Korean Elderly Association was involved in the legislative battle on the side of pro-family groups' leadership, the discourse of deconstructing patriarchy stopped and the discourse of tradition revived. The Korean Elderly Association is a culturally hegemonic group that symbolizes moral values such as filialness, respect for seniors, and respect for tradition. The discursive power that the pro-family groups were able to obtain by having Korean Elderly Association as an ally is well illustrated in its criticism against the FP Act (revised HF Act):

The FP Act changes the home that 5000 years of history and tradition cultivated for a family community. It makes our society neglecting the differentiation between senior and junior and getting rid of our native tradition through the legalization of the unregistered marriage and makes our society ignore the ancestors by abolishing family ritual (National Assembly LJC 262-23, 2006:52. Emphasis is mine).

The Korean Elderly Association interpreted the efforts to infuse gender egalitarian ideology within families as weakening the ideology of patrilineal marriage and patriarchal family ritual and as rebelling against Korean tradition. Even if the institution of the family has changed throughout history and the functions of the family have been diverse, admitting this change went against dearly held tradition. The discursive power of the Korean Elderly Association's phrasing that tradition maintains the healthy home and the healthy home sustains tradition was effective

enough to block further discussion on equality issues regarding family policies. As one feminist activist put it:

Once Korean Elderly Association joined in the debate, the issue became beyond the logical debate. We accepted what they did not want such as unregistered marriage and family rituals. Despite that, Korean Elderly Association said they opposed revising HF Act because it was detrimental to Korean cultural heritage, traditional fine-custom and threatened that the legislators revising HF Act will have to pay for what they did in the next election. Since Korean Elderly Association is powerful, KNCW lobbied them and Korean Elderly Association announced that kind of statement. Even if we accepted all that they demanded, they still opposed it. They are never persuaded logically (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008).

Pro-family groups' allying with the Korean Elderly Association led the debate to focus on 'cultural' issues rather than on issues of discrimination, diversity, equality, and the well-being of the individual. On the discourse level, that logical debate was not possible with the conservative groups (Interview with KWAU activist 2, 2007; KWAU activist 1; 2008), and so MOGEF and JCFS were not able to further their discussion over equality within and among families.

The Korean Elderly Association's cultural framework of the family and national tradition and identity converged with the political conservative's vision of family maintenance as sustaining the tradition. This two-way reinforcement demonstrates the brilliance of joining with the Korean Elderly Association. The point is well evidenced by an LJC conservative legislator:

I believe that relative relationships, the family, and the home are historical products through which a nation has been going through. They could change as times change, but well...it is not desirable to change the terms [home or family] and to upset the concepts in order to accomplish certain goals (National Assembly LJC, 2007:24).

The legislator's perspective on the family as Korean identity shows the cultural framework of Korean-ness. The value of family has changed throughout history.

However, in political conservatives' minds, changing family means disrupting the tradition.

Not limited to achieving discursive power through their alliance, the pro-family groups matched their family maintenance frame and concept of healthy family with the conservative cultural framework; thus their frame resonated with a wide audience. For example, pro-family groups claimed that family rituals based on cultural heritage glue family members together and thus contribute to the maintenance of the healthy family. Therefore, attempts to get rid of the article on family rituals would lead to family disruption.

Calling on maintenance of tradition proved to be such a powerful cultural cause in defending the HF Act, that even the legislators who supported the FP Act (revision of the HF Act) made use of traditional concepts such as filial duty as an effort to pass the FP Act. Under these conditions in which the discussion surrounding the family policies did not go beyond whether the FP Act would do damage to the Korean identity, the efforts to draw a new picture of Korean families did not gain any appreciation. When the issue became cultural, the question of the equal democratic family became an evil that hampered Korean tradition. Eventually, further discussion on how to construct new paradigm for families was simply not possible within the cultural frame of tradition and morality.

F. Conclusion

In this chapter, I selected MOGEF and feminist activists' failure in revising the HF Act as a case to illustrate that even with the political opportunity to realize the vision of equality within and among families, a norm that is globally advocated, the road to achieve it involves complex struggles in the democratic social political configuration. I argued that three factors are relevant in explaining the failure of HF Act: MOGEF's institutional constraints as a coordinating state agency in its relationships with civil society and logic of bureaucracy for survival; its lack of power resources compared to pro-family groups; MOGEF/feminists' loss in the framing contest with pro-family groups due to lack of cultural resonance of their definition of equality and strategic discursive power to gain its legitimacy.

The historical change of MOGE into MOGEF put MOGEF in a more complicated institutional position where different groups of women and other civil society organizations made an attempt to influence MOGEF's policies. While MOGEF itself had have been granted authority over family policies and while feminist activists had a political opportunity to infuse gender egalitarianism in MOGEF's family policies, MOGEF and feminist activists were not the only actors trying to take advantage of the opportunity. In democratic politics, conservative social political actors also vied for opportunities in competition for the institutional resources and ideological hegemony in the family policy making processes.

More importantly, and ironically, the opportunity put MOGEF in a disadvantageous position in the legislative process particularly when MOGEF did not give up its ideological goal. Despite the institutional constraints, MOGEF pushed the

same frame in ideological alliance with the feminist activists and failed. In addition to the institutional dimensions, the lack of cultural resources and power sources reinforced the unfavorable conditions against MOGEF/feminists in the legislative battle. The democratic politics allowed not just the feminists but also the conservative social actors to deploy their power of expertise, network, coalition, and leadership and grab the discursive power.

The irony of the political opportunities analyzed in the case at hand contributes to the social movement literature, particularly political opportunity structure and frame analysis. This chapter analyzed that the institution and the polity themselves are not static. It also showed that the political opportunity structures given to certain actors are not simple. Analyzing the institutional change throughout its history provides clues to the puzzle by showing the processes through which dilemmas due to the diverse aspects of institution operate as obstacles to change even with the existence of a sympathetic leader. When the opponents are powerful and effective enough to take advantage of constraints and turn them into their own opportunities, the opponents win. Therefore, the compatibility of a frame with certain institutional context should be considered in the analysis of the effectiveness of a frame.

The case illustrates that broadly accepted gender egalitarian ideology does not penetrate every aspect of our lives. I showed the process through which the notion of gender equal families became less crucial than preserving the institution of the family and family values. As seen in the flexible use of healthy family concept, the pro-family groups did not give a flat refusal to the concept of women's equality to work

and men's equal domestic responsibility to achieve gender equal society. They even did not totally ignore family diversities. However, they did not agree with progressive feminists that equality does not eliminate the institution of family. Gender equality norms were interpreted as a "threat" when it entered discussions framed using moral questions. By analyzing the struggle over redefinition of family, this chapter illustrated the ongoing local debate about how much equality society needs to-and can-achieve and the ideological battle over seeking an answer to the question.

VI. What Are We Going to Do with Men?

Institutional Norms, Dissociation of Gender Equality from Family Issues, and Dilution of Gender Equality Norms

[F]amily policies should be made from gender perspectives. These days [the paradigm of women's policy] goes beyond women's rights and interests. It is gender. What are we gonna do with men? We need gender perspective [to include men] (Interview with former MOGEF official 3, 2007).

[E]ducation [for men] should be done extensively so that men can participate in taking care of their kids without feeling ashamed of it. I really believe men's consciousness should change (Minister to MOGE. KBS *Inside the Issues (IryoJindan)*, May 4, 2003).

The first priority of women's policy is to solve the problem of patriarchy (Jang Ha Jin, Minister to MOGEF. Interview with *the Hankyureh*, May 8, 2005).¹

A. Introduction

Two leaders of the Ministry, a feminist activist and a feminist scholar, had a clear vision of family policies, which was to diminish gendered division of labor within the family through overthrowing patriarchy. They strongly felt that family policies should be based on a gender perspective- changing men's value and behavior was necessary to achieve women's social economic advancement. In transforming MOGE into MOGEF, that the femocratic leader in MOGE(F) and feminist activists backing MOGE hoped to achieve two broad-ranging goals. First, ideologically, they aimed at infusing feminist ideas into family policies in an attempt to change the patriarchal social economic structure. Particularly Korean feminist activists viewed the problem of "family disruption" as a result of patriarchy that maintains unequal

¹ <http://news.nate.com/view/20050508n03720>

relationships within the family, such as women's disproportionate share of domestic work. Since the inequality within the family has a discriminatory effect on the side of women in the labor market (Hochschild, 1989; Ferree, 1991; Garcia-Ramon and Monk, 1996; Gornick et al., 1998; Buding and England, 2001; Williams, 2001), addressing family problems from a feminist perspective was the goal of feminist activists in the transformation from MOGE to MOGEF. Second, having the jurisdiction over family policies was necessary because the realization of the feminist ideology required substantial material resources such as budget, personnel, and the jurisdiction. Through the expansion into MOGEF, the Ministry came to have the authority over policy making, policy implementation and policy coordination among different ministries regarding family issues.

Instead of reaching these large goals, however, institutional expansion into MOGEF resulted in programs that encouraged many minor modifications in the way men and women live their lives, but in the end failed to meet feminist goals .to change gendered power relationships. On the surface, the two desired goals of MOGEF taking over family policy should be mutually strengthening- femocrats pursue gender equality ideology with the weapons of family policy jurisdiction. However, the goal of gender equality challenged traditional, entrenched unequal power relations and was strongly resisted, becoming significantly diluted in the family policy programs. Particularly, the programs through which MOGEF attempted to engage men with the family were inadequate for achieving the necessary fundamental social restructuration to overcome patriarchy.

This chapter attempts to delve into the mechanisms through which the translation of the vision of gender equality into policy programs resulted in the dilution of the transformative character of the original intention of MOGE(F) leaders and feminist activists. I argue that the institutional change from MOGE to MOGEF created new constraints on family policy making processes, ironically because of the direct jurisdiction over family policies. Formerly, as MOGE, it was an organization with the explicit mission of addressing women's inequality. But as MOGEF, it now had the very different focus of jurisdiction over family policies and was therefore met with concerns that "feminist ideas" were a threat to the family. Thus feminist ideas were less acceptable in the arena of pursuing family policies. This chapter is about the cultural contests over the concept of gender equality and resistance against MOGEF efforts to change fundamental structures of gender relations and dynamics within the family and about the subsequent compromises in policies that resulted in the dilution of gender equality norms.

While the institutional change from MOGE to MOGEF provided the Ministry with power, at the same time, it involved normative constraints within which the femocrats had to decide policies acceptable to the social cultural norms (Campbell, 1998; 2002). The institutional change influenced the dilution of gender equality ideology in policy programs. Outside the Ministry, the deep-rooted cultural assumption about the conflicting relationship between feminist ideology and family policies was aroused. As MOGE, without jurisdiction over family policies, pursuing women's rights was taken-for-granted. However, as MOGEF, with direct jurisdiction

over family policies, femocrats came into an institutional context where pursuing women's rights was contested. In its relationships with civil society as a democratic polity, MOGEF did not ignore the cultural assumption of conflict, which led the femocrats to the strategic dissociation of feminist ideas from family issues.

Within the organization, while a stronger notion of equality had deep roots in the history of MOGE, the dissociation became taken-for-granted in MOGEF due to the cultural contests among diverse versions of gender equality ranging from abolishing patriarchy to maintaining the family and strategic compromise. The internal cultural complexity led to policy programs that supported the status quo. The surprising turn of MOGEF moving so far away from MOGE goals was possible through the institutionalization of a diluted gender equality concept and a traditional family ideology deeply rooted in the bureaucrats.

The concept of gender equality originally was used to reveal the unequal power relationship between men and women. However, it had been used by the Korean femocrats to emphasize the harmonious relationship possible between men and women by *benefitting* men rather than *changing* men. The translation of the radical concept into a modest one became institutionalized in MOGE(F) over time. With the existence of this new definition of gender equality, the femocrats strategically created a frame of family policies for both men and women. Within this institutional cultural context, the dissociation of feminist ideas from family policy issues was not problematic. Moreover, because the bureaucrats did not move away from the entrenched ideology of family, they took the dissociation of feminist ideas from family

issues for granted. MOGEF emphasized a harmonious relationship between men and women in their family policy visions while conceding to the idea that women's right issue should not be the priority of family policies. Ironically, the original political intent of pursuing change in gendered power relations was lost when men were included in the policy as a target group. Instead of changing societal relations, men were limited to being a "beneficiary group." This institutional normative change within the Ministry led to the status-quo policy programs

The combination of the institutional exigencies as a democratic polity in its relationships to the civil society organizations and as a surviving ministry in need of resources, and the femocrats' choice of policy programs based on their cultural resonance among different versions of gender equality within the family led MOGEF femocrats to allow status-quo-policy programs to be run. As a state agency that must be seen to maintain ideological neutrality, and as the new ministry, which needed resources, MOGEF had to include conservative organizations as partners. As a result, conservative civil society organizations became the arms-and-legs, the do-ers, of the work. More importantly, MOGEF allowed these organizations to run the conservative policy programs because femocrats were constrained by policy programs that resonated culturally with Korean men's conservativeness toward gender equality issues.

By analyzing the mechanisms that led to the dilution of gender equality ideology in family policy programs, particularly regarding men, this chapter contributes to the existing literature on the diffusion of global norms regarding the

increase in gender equality by paying attention to the interaction between the global and the local and the contests among diverse versions of gender equality. The diffusion model proposed in the literature pays little attention to the struggles and conflicts that occur in the diffusion process of a transnational norm (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Mittelman, 2000; Campbell, 2002). I address this lack by analyzing the cultural resistance against family policies that feminist activists framed using a global discourse of “gender perspective” with the goal of changing the indigenous patriarchal social economic structure. When the revolutionary idea of gender equality (which involved changing men) met cultural resistance and was filtered through complex institutional ideological structures ranging from progressive to conservative, the resulting policy was different from the original idea. The radical idea of changing men was translated into bland policies that emphasized “benefiting men (and women).” By analyzing the cultural resistance and institutional filters, this chapter will show the mechanisms through which a globally advocated norm was translated into support for status-quo policy programs and contestation over the meanings of gender equality.

To provide the context for the analysis of the specific mechanisms, I begin by discussing MOGEF leaders’ progressive vision of family policies. This is followed by a second section on the presentation of the policy programs which had shifted focus and concentrated less on changing power relationships within families. The third section is an analysis of the social political conservatives’ cultural resistance based on the assumption of the contradictory relationship between feminist ideology and family stability that constituted normative conditions outside MOGEF. I analyze femocrats’

strategic dissociation of feminist ideas from family policies in order to support expansion of the organization, which constrains the bureaucrats to moderate policy programs. The fourth section addresses normative conditions regarding family policies within the Ministry. The concept of gender equality as harmonious relationships between men and women and the antithetical relationship between feminism and family stability were taken-for-granted assumptions of the family policy bureaucrats. These normative conditions resulted in the notion of men as beneficiaries of family policies, which led to supporting status-quo policy programs. The fifth section discusses the femocrats' strategic choice of using the cultural resonance of the programs over using feminist politics because of the complex terrain of conflicting ideologies about families embedded within the institutional constraints of MOGEF. This emphasis on cultural resonance made the production of the status-quo policy programs possible. I conclude with the implications of understanding the constraints on gender policy actors' available strategies in the policy making processes, resulting in policy output that is limited in accomplishing feminist goals.

B. The Progressive Vision of Family Policies: Abolishing the Gendered Division of Labor within the Family

The Korean feminist activists supported MOGE's expansion into MOGEF in an attempt to change gendered division of labor within the family through family policies. Even if some feminist activists were worried about the dilution of feminist issues with the transformation into MOGEF (Interview with CEDAW Committeewoman, 2008), they still believed that family problems are women's

problems and thus a Ministry with a feminist vision should be in charge of family policies in order to change the problem of patriarchy.

Family issues are not the main concern of the Beijing Platform. It might be because they made the agenda based on women's independence rather than women's relations with the family. However, it is necessary to pay attention to discriminatory laws regarding the family and public support for care labor that is currently dependent upon women, particularly in several Asian countries where Confucian patriarchy has a huge influence on women's lives. Therefore, women's policy should include family policies such as equal family that enable women to balance between work and family as an independent whole personality. Particularly Korean family institutions still keep gender discriminating elements and define women's primary role as played within the family that reproduces discrimination in the labor market and keeps women's social status low (Nam-Yoon, 2004: 235).

This perspective led feminist activists to make an attempt to abolish the Framework Act of Healthy Family (the HF Act) for its conservative views on maintaining the modern nuclear family and paying little attention to women's roles for family maintenance, as discussed in the previous chapter. As a way to build a counter discourse against the healthy family discourse, feminist activists actively made use of the global strategy of gender mainstreaming in public policies and they framed their vision as "family policies from a gender sensitive perspective."

Gender mainstreaming - a policy making strategy from a gender perspective in all aspects of policy making processes - has been advocated by feminist activists and femocrats since the World Women Conference in Beijing in 1995 declared it as the main strategy to accomplish gender equality. A "gender sensitive perspective" became common policy language among feminists and femocrats. To feminist activists, problems in the family are at the core of women's issues and require change in gendered power relationships. The global idea of a "gender sensitive perspective" was a way to solve the indigenous, local family problems which they believed were rooted in the problem of patriarchy.

The ideology that Korean femocrats pursued through their family policy jurisdiction was consistent with the feminist politics of family. They approached family issues from the problem of the gendered division of labor within the family that results in women's disproportionate share of domestic work and the discriminatory effects on the side of women in the labor market and unequal power relationships between men and women within families (Hochschild, 1989; Ferree, 1991; Garcia-Ramon and Monk, 1996; Gornick et al., 1998; Buding and England, 2001; Williams, 2001). They believed that the liberation of women from the burden of care and the elimination of deeply-rooted cultural bias and unequal practices were important policy issues.

The engagement of feminist ideas with family issues was an important ideological basis for the efforts of the femocrats to expand the Ministry's turf into the area of family policies. In other words, there were two important aspects to their organizational vision: the ideology they endeavored to realize and the expansion of their policy jurisdiction. This vision can be traced back from the starting point of the Ministry. Two then-Ministers to MOGE explained their original focus:

The urgent task that MOGE has to undertake is reformation of daycare systems. Child care responsibilities should not be squarely on women's shoulders. We have to devise a solution that enables the society to ease the responsibilities (*Newsmaker*, December 27, 2001: 53).

The then-Minister, who was the first Minister to MOGE, viewed the family issues from the gendered division of labor perspective and saw it as a crucial obstacle of women's economic participation in the labor market.

The second Minister talked about her vision for family policies and her making

use of the gender mainstreaming strategy when MOGE bureaucrats made an attempt to initiate them under its own jurisdiction.

At that time, I was trying to establish a family support center, not the “healthy” family support center,² which holds many different kinds of programs such as marriage preparation education, child rearing education for couples, children’s libraries, toy-rental, consultation, and so on. And by integrating all these kinds of services the center can be a place where various families can think about what to do to raise children together. Healthy family centers may be doing these programs. But it is important what we educate, what consultation we provide, who the educators and consultants are. For example, if we do the marriage preparation education or education on the youth, what do we educate them? Whether we educate them from *gender equality perspective* or not depends on who the educators are. That’s why I insisted that MOGE(F) should take the responsibilities (of family policies). In other words, *family policies should be done from gender perspectives. These days [the paradigm of women’s policy] goes beyond women’s rights and interests. It is gender. What are we gonna do with men? We need gender perspective [to include men].* ...Toys and books can be prepared from gender perspectives. If we say gender equality but still give a girl a doll and a boy [a car, which is not a program from gender perspective]. I guess the current healthy family centers might not do their programs from gender perspectives (Interview with former MOGEF officer 3, 2007. Emphasis is mine).

By refusing to use the word “healthy” and envisioning family policies from a “gender perspective,” the femocrat drew the line between family policies which would sustain the stability of the family and ones that were designed to address the family as a unit where socialization based on gender equal culture starts. To the femocrat, family is a social organization where the efforts to change the overall social structure and culture can be started by including men as a target to be changed. She presents her conviction in the words of using a “gender perspective,” which became common vocabulary among Korean women’s policy makers.

The Minister’s understanding of policy from a gender sensitive perspective,

² For the debate over the concept of “healthy family,” see Chapter V.

requiring changing men was more clearly represented in her remark at a television debate program in 2003:

First, I think men's consciousness cannot help changing. The birth rate is 1.17 with the increase of nuclear family so their children became so precious to men. I think the problem for young men is that they do not know how to take care of their kids while these kids are precious to them. So I think we need to educate these young men on caring for the kids, such as giving their baby a bath from the time of its birth and these kinds of education should be done extensively *so that men participate in taking care of their kids without feeling ashamed for it. I really believe men's consciousness should change* (Minister to MOGE, May 4, 2003. KBS *Inside the Issues (IryoJindan)*. Emphasis is mine).

Again, to the femocrat, the progressive vision of family policy is represented in the femocrat's remark: changing the gendered division of labor through reforming men's values and practice.

In the process of the transformation from MOGE to MOGEF, the femocrats and the feminist activists framed the engagement of feminist ideas with family policies as the concept of "the institutionalization of care" and it became an important family policy agenda to lessen the gendered division of labor within the family. Moreover, to the femocrats and feminist activists, the concept makes sense because it both makes women's economic independence possible and does not neglect care responsibilities, thus solving the tension between women's rights and family stability that conservatives often regard as contradicting to each other.

In an interview with a newspaper, the leader of the MOGEF answered the question of solving the trade-off between family policies and gender equality policies as follows:

It is often said the 21st century is women's era but it doesn't mean women are more important nor women are placed above men but it means *women are the key power group of social change*. That's what sociologist Anthony Giddens analyzed. When 60-

80% of women participate in the labor market, the relationship within the family changes. *The traditional gender division of labor - men as breadwinners and women as housekeepers- disappears and the family relationship changes.* The disruption of family and family crisis happens. Labor and welfare that have been done within the family will be transferred to the society. The problem that occurs in the transition period should be solved by family policies. *The families, workplaces, schools, and the local community will change. If the social community relationship changes, the change in the social system can happen* (*The Hankyureh*, May 8, 2005. Emphasis is mine).

Institutionalization of care is a key mechanism that enhances women's economic rights and at the same time helps the family to adjust to the changing status of women without sustaining the sexual division of labor. Moreover, the interview represents the leader's progressive vision of family policies that change the overall male centered social structure, cultural values and practices.

The femocratic leadership to change the social system that the Minister thought should be accompanied by changes in family relationships was embodied in the policies and programs with the aim of involving men in the family and the community. For example, MOGEF pushed the Ministry of Labor to introduce parental leave for childbirth and the "Papa Quota" that enforces male workers to take a paid parental leave for one month to involve men in child rearing (Interview with MOGEF official 6, 2007). Also it made programs such as Parent's Night that enable fathers as well as working mothers to participate in meetings at their children's school after their working hours (Interview with MOGEF official 8, 2008).

The engagement of feminist ideas with family policies with the goal of lessening the sexual division of labor could be found in lower rank officials too. A lower rank official reflected on whether feminist perspective is necessary in making policy programs:

The feminist perspective is necessary. If we approach the family policy from

conservative perspectives, the policy will reproduce the gender division of labor. When we make a work family balance policy, we have to think about whether the balance is for women, men, or both and it depends on how we infuse feminist ideas. Now the policy is more toward work family balance for women because women are in poorer condition in this issue. But the policy should be work family balance for both men and women in the long run (Interview with MOGEF official 6, 2007).

The official's remark cites the concept of women's rights as an important basis for family policies. The official recognized that women are still discriminated against in the workplace with an unequal share of childcare and domestic work. At the same time, the official was conscious of a core concept in gender issues: including men in the policy arena in order to support change in the division of labor.

Another lower rank official's remark on the Parents' Night program illustrated that MOGEF made an effort to change the concept of "gender" as culturally laden through policies that support social system reformation.

Parents' Night program at schools was the Minister's idea. It should be done by the Ministry of Education but they didn't seem to have a will to do the program. That's why the person and his/her vision on the policy planner position are important. Parents' Night program came up also from the vision pursuing gender equality within the family just like the attempts to introduce the policy of paternal leave for childbirth and child rearing. When you have a PTA meeting at 2:00 pm, *it means you don't consider working moms and dads. By having the Parents Nights program, we tried to involve dads in child rearing (as well as working moms).* We selected a high school to implement the program and 6-10% of fathers participated in it. When I saw fathers here and there, I felt it was quite a good turnout. Also young fathers these days often like to participate in (this kind of program). I believed that however small effort it is it will have a far-reaching effect once a program is incubated successfully (Interview with MOGEF official 8, 2008. Emphasis is mine).

The answer converged with the Minister's vision of family policies that broadened the opportunities for women to work by ameliorating their care work, but also reformed male-centered work schedules and a culture that hinders men's work and family balance.

In this section, I elaborated the progressive vision of family policies that was sustained from MOGE to MOGEF. The Korean feminist activists actively imported the strategy of gender mainstreaming in an effort to infuse gender perspectives into family policies and made an attempt to achieve change in gendered power relationships within the family by supporting the expansion of MOGE into MOGEF. MOGEF leaders also had the progressive vision of changing the patriarchal social structure. However, the vision was not always maintained in the policy program. The next section presents the status-quo programs that MOGEF made and implemented during 2005-2007.

C. Unpacking the Status-Quo Policy Programs

In this section, I will unpack several conflicting policy programs in which different perspectives regarding men's family roles appear. I will analyze policy programs- education programs for fathering and couple relationships- that were implemented by Healthy Family Support Centers under the supervision of MOGEF. Healthy Family Support Centers were mostly run by professionals from home economics.

1. Fathering Education

The programs for fathers implemented by the Healthy Family Support Centers were "fathering education for men's participation in domestic care labor" (later called Education for Care Labor Participation) and "creating workplaces where fathers are

happy” (later called Education for Workplaces for Happy Fathers). I argue that the program makers made an attempt to construct a new cultural image of fathers and husbands by involving men in the programs. However, they could not go beyond the idea of males as “breadwinners” who seek a haven and their lost position within the family, albeit through a different ideal type than the conventional image of the fathers such as disciplinarian and authoritarian. The policy programs and their accompanying discourse simultaneously reproduced and undermined gender hierarchy.

Fathering education could contribute to lessen gender dominance within the family by teaching fathers to be involved in raising the children and doing housework. The education for Care Labor Participation deals with fairness within couples in sharing the domestic labor (with a clear feminist perspective). For example, it prompts a father to be the “subject” - active and responsible in care labor, not just a “helper” of his wife. It taught men to equally share all aspects of domestic labor regarding child rearing, not just playing with children. To be a responsible husband/father for care labor, the program demanded that fathers change themselves and get accustomed to a changed society in which more numbers of mothers work in the labor market (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006a: 34-36). And the program directly blamed “*patriarchal* ways of thinking” - a wife as a caregiver and a husband as a breadwinner- as an obstacle to being a good father (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006a:43). A man can be a good father by changing himself from breadwinner to care giver; from holding the supplementary role to holding the main role in care labor; from an authoritarian and strict father to an affectionate father; from a commander to a communicator; and from

a symbolic person to an intimate person (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006a: 46). This program had potential to construct a new cultural image of fathers that went beyond taking over some fun parts of childcare without risking social stigma for being less masculine.

However, these progressive ideas were not consistent with the education for men. The Workplaces for Happy Fathers program was not adequate to change the masculine identity. It was limited to helping recover fathers/husbands' absent position within families in the past and providing men with opportunity for self-reflection and self-fulfillment in their life course. Even though increasing intimacy within families has some positive consequences, it is important to point out that pursuing self-fulfillment is not the same as equally sharing all aspects of domestic work and far short of changing gender domination within the family,. Moreover, repositioning men as "happiness architects" seems to be a way to heal insecure notions of masculinity by reconstructing men as successful both in family life and work life.

Without any place for feminist politics in the program, the orientation of the Workplace for Happy Fathers program was for fathers to balance work and family and to establish the functions, roles, and leadership of the fathers who had lost their position within the family. The program makers expected this program would enhance fathers' satisfaction in both work life and family life (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006b: 11). The goal of gender equality within the family was supposed to be achieved by work/family balance, but this was co-opted by the goal successful work life through the improvement of productivity.

In order to achieve this goal, the program offered fathers a self-therapeutic opportunity to examine their lives as well as to improve their emotional and relational skills. Balance between work and family became a tool to achieve a meaningful life. For example, the program suggested that a father reflect on his life and death, when to retire, when to make the children independent, the key values in one's life, building intimacy with his wife, leading a self-directed life, and ordering the priorities of work to balance work and family etc. (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006b:19-23).

Balance between work and family does not challenge the idea of maintaining happiness within traditional family structures in which a father plays the "happiness architect" (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006b:47). In order to build the happy family, a father should learn to build an intimate relationship with his wife and restore his relationships with his children. From this perspective, feminist ideology entailed in work/family balance is diluted. It is well illustrated in the passage in the program manual insisting the necessity to build intimacy between a couple as follows.

Work/family balance needs basis both from workplaces and the family. If there is any problem in any of the area, it is hard to balance between work and family. From this perspective, couple relationships within the family influences on the work/life balance. We often see many couples who do not know very much even though we think they know better because they are couple. Therefore, we need a program for couples to know about each other and understand their needs. We put our focus on improving communication skills to strengthen couple relationships (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006b: 33. Emphasis is mine).

Again, without any frame of feminist politics for achieving gender equality in the issue of work/family balance, it ends up with the goal of improving work productivity through improved heterosexual couple relationships. This policy turn was markedly different from feminist goals and perspectives.

Even though the program's cultural stereotypes of fathers and husbands were constructed differently from traditional patriarchal family relationships, the program still did not reach to try to lessen male dominance within the family. The program never provided the fathers a consciousness of the unequal sharing of housework and child care. Instead, it touched the problem of work/family balance by maintaining the father as the "leader" of the family, with a new task of designing the happiness of the family. This did not challenge patriarchal systems but instead reinforced the ideology of the Family. Labeling the role of father as "happiness architect" or "happiness leader" (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006b:47), the program tried to restore the fathers' leadership that had been lost between work and family. Bringing the fathers back to families was not adequate for a fundamental change in the gendered division of labor within the family. Romanticizing the role of the fathers could not be a panacea to achieve a gender equal family without paying attention to the value of the care work, romanticizing it, and without de-gendering it.

2. Couple Relationship Education

As in the case of fathering education, couple relationship education depoliticizes unequal power relationships within the couples generated from men's and women's social economic resource differences, patriarchal kin relationships, and cultural expectations etc. While a couple education program made under MOGE (which will be explored in the next section) had the clear goal of changing patriarchal cultural practices, the couple relationship education implemented by the Healthy Family Support Center under MOGEF shifted the goal. They focused on "preventing

conflict between couples and solving family problems and enhancing the family's adaptiveness (to social economic trauma)" (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006c: 1). Data from participant observation in a to-be-married couple relationship education course by a local Healthy Family Support Center points out how feminist ideas can be interpreted as hostile and destructive in everyday life, which does not help build happy relationships. In explaining ineffective communication skills, the instructor gave a scenario as follows:

Scenario: A husband comes back home and throws a tantrum at his wife for the messy house.

Response 1: He doesn't seem to be in a good mood. He might have had something bad happen at work.

Response 2: The idea! So is cleaning up the house all my responsibility? *You are a sexist!* Should I put up with this?

Response 1 is self-soothing and Response 2 is distress maintaining. (Chung, 2006: 12. Emphasis is mine)

The scenario might be a cultural stereotypical scene that we often see in our everyday lives. However, this kind of scenario does not provide any clue to look at family life as power laden. That "the personal is political" does not seem to have any place when a remark challenging the division of labor is referred as "distress maintaining" which hampers the happy couple relationship. The instructor in this session did not even talk about the equal sharing of housework or the problems accompanied by the gender division of labor in explaining how to respond to the husbands' tantrum.

While the couple relationship education programs never deny equal companionship and the program designed by MOGEF and HHFC even has a session on the equal relationships between couples such as reflection of one's sex stereotype,

gender-sensitiveness, and mutual respect for each other (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006c: 31-37), those issues are not consistent throughout the program. The concept of gender equality is not rejected but it is used in a way that supports the status-quo within families by only providing the communication skills and personality tests.

For instance, the examples of couples who squabble provided in the communication skill part of the program workbook represent gender stereotypes.

A husband asks for an errand but his wife was busy doing other errands so she forgot. When the husband realized she didn't do his errands, he got angry and blamed her for insincerity (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006c:74).

A wife felt her life was meaningless and had a grudge on her husband who does not take care of his family and was always busy with his work. When she asked him to spend more time with her even if his promotion gets delayed, the husband blamed her for not appreciating his work for his own family and didn't pay attention to what she said (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006c:74).

A husband wants to take a rest after work but the wife wants to go shopping and eat out with him particularly on the weekend but the husband wants her to understand how tired he is from the hardship of work life (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006c:74).

Rather than challenging the cultural stereotypes of couples, the illustrations remind participants that the husband is the breadwinner responsible for the family and the wife stays home and does errands during the daytime and waits for the weekend for a quality time with her husband.

The pro-family group focuses on the individual level in order to solve issues of the couple. They believe that communication skills and knowledge of differences between men and women (i.e. *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*) can prevent couple conflict and family disruption. Treating gender problems at the individual level leads to gender neutral language. For example, the program manual suggests implementing education on domestic violence as follows.

[We suggest deal with] anger management, stress management, and preventing domestic violence. As found in the previous research, the aggressiveness between a couple and violence is one of the major factors that reduce satisfaction within the couple relationship. [Help the couple] build a safe family life by educating about anger management and stress management and cycle of domestic violence. It is effective to have the couple write down their resolution and principles for their marriage (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006c: 7).

Moreover, sometimes the program suggests a stopgap measure rather than overhauling the patriarchal unequal relationship between men and women in order to continue a marriage. In the social cultural context where a bride has to prepare the necessary articles for marriage (*honsu*) and how much she brings is often referred to by the husband's family, it is a more gender equal solution to suggest keeping it minimal or leaving the issue to the couple rather than the family. However, the program suggests a different way:

It is effective for a to-be-married-couple to invite each family and plan a time to talk about the expectation and hope and get blessing. If there is any conflict and problem between each parent or between parent and spouse regarding the *honsu* or others, it is advisable to control it as a *way not to expose the problem excessively and seek for a family consult* (MOGEF and HHFC, 2006c: 7. Emphasis is mine).

The implementation of these couple relationship education programs illustrates a process through which the concept of women's rights and gender issues are diluted. The solution to inequality- if it had ever appeared in the program- was made through gender neutral solutions such as anger management and family consultation on the local implementation level. Solutions to fundamental structural and gender issues were presented as non-threatening, and non-gendered, thereby negating the feminist framework and furthering the support of the existing patriarchal system.

In the next section, I delve into mechanisms that produced policy programs that fall short of changing gendered power relationships within the family and were

not adequate to raise men's consciousness of household labor and the men's obligations.

D. Ideology of Equality and Institutional Norm

In this section, I discuss the change in normative conditions of the Ministry and the previous legitimacy of the actors' use of the ideology of gender equality in making family policy programs. I focus on the ideological position of the pre-MOGEF organization and MOGEF. Before the institutional transition of MOGE into MOGEF, it was institutionally legitimate for bureaucrats to pursue feminist ideology for improving women's social economic status in the process of making family policy programs. However, with the institutional change from MOGE to MOGEF, the ministry acquired a policy jurisdiction over family issues that contained cultural controversies. There was suddenly no agreement over such issues as women's rights based on the individualism, and pursuing feminist ideas in family policy making processes because they were seen to conflict with the over-arching goal of family stability. These ideas became normatively contested and were less welcomed by the social political conservatives. When family policies based on feminist ideas for advancing women's status was not taken-for-granted, the possibilities of making revolutionary family policy programs under MOGEF was constrained by the normative ideas.

1. Ministry of Political Affairs 2 (MPA 2) (1988-1997): Equality for Women's Status as an Institutional Norm

During MPA 2, one of the predecessors of MOGEF, redressing discrimination against women and advancing women's status were closely associated with the bureaucrats' efforts to establish their organizational legitimacy and their policy niche. In this period, even though bureaucrats had a hard time pushing other ministries to implement policies for advancing women's rights, it was viewed as culturally legitimate to pursue such policies. The social antagonism against MPA 2 was less prevalent than after MOGEF was established.

First, since the consciousness of women's rights issues was so low within state agencies that other ministries were not interested in what MPA 2 bureaucrats tried to do, which allowed MPA 2 bureaucrats to find their own niche in pursuing equality (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007; former MOGEF officer 2, 2007). Second, even when the MPA 2 bureaucrats struggled to change discriminating systems and were labeled "crazy feminist folks" (Interview with former MOGEF official 2, 2007), they were able to push through changes. There was a tendency to tolerate those efforts due to the remarkably low women's social economic and political status compared to men's (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007; former MOGEF official 2, 2007). Third, the title of MPA 2 did not refer to women or equality, therefore, it did not advertise the goal of the organization –pursuing women's social, political, and economic advancement. The MPA 2 bureaucrats faced less social antagonism in the Ministry and were able to quietly pursue their agenda.

Under these social political circumstances, the MPA 2 bureaucrats made several policy programs regarding improving women's status in relation with family affairs such as the Evaluation of Housewives' Domestic Work Value in 1993 and the

Award to Equal Couples in 1994. MPA 2 bureaucrats made Evaluation of Housewives' Domestic Work Value program in an attempt to address the discrimination faced by women in the division of marital property upon divorce (due to the devaluation of their post-marriage contribution through domestic work), or in property inheritance, or in reparations such as traffic accidents. By establishing a standard to evaluate housewives' domestic work, MPA 2 bureaucrats made an effort to ensure equality among family members. The Award to Equal Couples was also started with the motive of changing male-centered life patterns in families (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007; former MOGEF official 2, 2007).

Those policy programs infusing the idea of “equality” within families were produced by the logic of bureaucracy in a parallel process where the bureaucrats attempted to gain organizational legitimacy and to distinguish the organization from other ministries through their policies. For example, the MPA 2 bureaucrats used the word (women's) “equality” as opposed to “protection” (*poho*) (of women) which had been used by the Ministry of Health and Society. The word protection was from the perspective of women being in need and being lesser citizens than men (Interview with former MOGEF official 2, 2007). In other words, the language of “equality” was the basis of organizational legitimacy as well as the niche of the MPA 2 that distinguished the Ministry from other organizations. The following illustrates this point:

When we were making the First Gender Policy Basic Plan³ (in 1996), we tried to *get away from patriarchy on family issues* so that the plan does not look like supporting

³ It is a comprehensive plan spanning from 1997 to 2002 based on a collection of women related policies from diverse ministries. MPA 2 was in charge of coordinating the different policy programs regarding women's issues from different ministries as well as making its own.

the conventional patriarchal system by inserting our programs such as the Award to Equal Couple. *Ministry of Health and Society (predecessor of Ministry of Health and Welfare) always approached family problems from the perspective of maintaining and strengthening the family while we went beyond that and approached from equality perspective* (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007. Emphasis is mine).

“Equality” made an important ideological distinction of MPA 2 from other ministries such as the Ministry of Health and Society.

Another interviewee clearly showed that the MPA 2 bureaucrats sought the language of “equality” not only for the ideological reason pursuing women’s rights but also to establish the legitimate niche of the organization.

Award to Equal Couple and Evaluation of Housewives’ Domestic Work Value were programs made from the perspective that we should do family policy programs from different perspective than the ones by Ministry of Health and Society (predecessor of Ministry of Health and Welfare) who think “*punyŏ*⁴ *chŏngch’aek*. *They are all related with the perspective that we should change male centered practices in family lives.* The Constitution entitles *namnyŏ p’yŏngdŭng* (equality between men and women) in the marriage and family lives. We tried to exemplify a model of *equal* and democratic family through the Award.... At that time, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (predecessor of Ministry of Health and Welfare) did policies on families. Ministry of Health and Social Affairs insisted viewing women’s policy from *punyŏ* welfare administration. *Ministry of Health and Social Affairs was run by the Law of Government Organization while MPA 2 was run by an executive order which is trumped by the Law so responsibilities on women by the Law belong to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. Therefore, whenever there were conflicts over the responsibilities regarding policies on women, they always won. So we needed to do programs on women from women’s perspective which was different from that of Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. That was how we came up with Award to Equal Couple and Evaluation of Housewives’ Domestic Work Value. [...] We were looking for a word that entails women’s perspective without using the language of Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and we used “equality” since they never used the word. That’s how we started to use the expression of “equal couple,” “equality within families” on our own* (Interview with former MOGEF official 2, 2007. Emphasis is mine).

⁴ *Punyŏ* means wife and women that entails women as a group of weak and lesser and thus in need of protection compared to male citizens. Women as a policy target group of Ministry of Health and Social Affairs was labeled as *punyŏ* since 1945. One of the efforts of the MPA 2 later period was to change the word *punyŏ* in the policy program into *yŏsŏng* that entails the meaning of the citizen equal to *namsŏng* (men). For a detailed discussion of changing policy language, see chapter II.

The two quotes illustrate how the MPA 2 bureaucrats used the word of women's "equality" strategically and how the use of this language became an institutional norm of MPA 2.

However, abolishing discrimination and improving women's status were not always welcomed due to the patriarchal values of government officials in other ministries and the unfamiliarity of the officials about the issue of correcting inequality for women. Several interviewees pointed out this problem.

When a bureau within the MPA 2 tried to implement Award to Equal Couples, even bureaucrats within the MPA 2 ridiculed the idea for not being appropriate for women's policies. When we report the idea to the Ministry of Budget, they laughed saying how could the state possibly award equal couple (quoted in Won, 2006:144).

The quote illustrates bureaucrats' low consciousness of gender inequality issues within the family which reproduce women's subordinated position, not only within the family, but also in the public arena.

Given the ideological goals of MPA 2, some might criticize the two policies as not going far enough. The Evaluation of Housewives' Domestic Work Value program was limited in changing sexual division of labor by focusing on the male-breadwinner model. The Award to Equal Couples program reinforced the ideology of the heterosexual nuclear family. Moreover, because these programs focused solely on women, they might be seen as less radical than gender equality policies targeting change in the male-centered hierarchy. Despite the limitations, at least the programs had the clear the intention of improving women's status; the equality initiative targeted change in gendered hierarchy; and using words such as patriarchy, equality, and discrimination distinguished the organization from other ministries. More importantly,

women's rights as both a policy niche and an organizational ideology faced less confrontation (even if they were exposed to ridicule).

However, its ability to further its ideology was limited due to small budget, staff, and limited power within the government hierarchy. While the ideal that MPA 2 was trying to reach was grand, the policy programs that were the vehicles in accomplishing the ideal were too trivial (Interview with former MOGEF official 1, 2007; former MOGEF official 2, 2007). Frustration by the MPA 2 bureaucrats and also by the feminist activists led to the establishment of PCWA in 1998 and later MOGE in 2000. Women's rights issues became more visible with this transformation and the increase, since the 1993 civilian regime started, of progressive feminist activist participation in policy making processes.

2. MOGE (2003-2005):

Family Policy Programs and Political Meaning of Gender Equality

MOGE started to make an attempt to expand the organization into MOGEF during the term of the second Minister in 2002. As a way of starting family policies, MOGE started the "Equal Family Education Program" and tried to legislate the "Equal Family Basic Act," as well as lobbying other ministries to have family policy jurisdiction shifted over to MOGE. Since the organization did not have the jurisdiction over making family policies yet, there was ironically more normative freedom and space for changing power structures within the family, as illustrated in the names of the programs and law using the language of "equality."

The Equal Family Education Program, a couple relationship education

program implemented from 2004 to 2005, was example of the ideological freedom that MOGE had. Following MOGE's ideological goal of infusing the idea of gender equality within families, the couple relationship program was named "Equal Family Practice Education-Partnership Together" (*P'yŏngdŭng kajok silch'ŏn gyoyuk, Hamggehanŭn Partnership*). Feminist scholars and feminist activists joined in program development and they made an effort to infuse gender equality ideas into the program. For example, even though the program focused on traditional issues such as providing communication skills between the couple, the examples used should be from a gender equality perspective (MOGE, 2004a: 4). The program included learning gender/sex differences, family culture differences to get away from husband-family centered marriages, equal responsibility for domestic labor, communication skills based on mutual agreement and discussion, and enhancing women's self esteem in order to lead an independent life, etc. (MOGE, 2004a: 5-9).

Just like MPA 2 bureaucrats, when they did not have the official jurisdiction on family issues, MOGE's bureaucrats differentiated their couple relationship programs from other social welfare approach programs. While other social welfare approach programs aimed at preventing "family destruction" such as divorces as a way to reduce the cost of social welfare, MOGE's bureaucrats pursued mutual equal responsibilities and benefits in the family in order to solve gender unequal practices such as a wife's disproportionate duties to her husband's family comparing to her side family, women's disproportionate responsibilities in care work, and boy preferences for family lineage. They tried to redress the problems through couple relationship education programs, encouraging people to learn techniques to practice gender

equality values (MOGE, 2004a: 4). The goals of the programs contrasted with the romantic family notion that the home science scholars constructed later under MOGEF.

The program ended with MOGE's transformation into MOGEF in June 2005. With the institutional change, the bold idea of dismantling patriarchy through a gender sensitive perspective was hard to translate into a family policy program. In the next section, I analyze this difficulty by focusing on the operation of cultural resistance based on the assumption of the contradictory relationship between feminist ideology and family stability. Cultural resistance influenced institutional normative conditions that constrained MOGEF's attempts to dismantle patriarchy and led the femocrats to allow status-quo policy programs.

3. The Strategic Dissociation of Women's Issues from Family Issues in Response to Social Political Conservatives

Trying to shift family policy jurisdiction officially to MOGE necessitated the process of denying that feminist ideas were infused in the family policies due to the cultural resistance from social political conservatives based on the cultural assumption of the trade-off between feminist ideas and family stability. Due to the bureaucratic logic of organizational power and its relationships with the civil society as a democratic polity, the femocrats strategically dissociated feminist ideology from family policy. I argue that this strategic dissociation in response to the cultural resistance eventually opened the path to supporting status-quo policy programs.

Social political conservatives resisted MOGE femocrats' attempts to expand the institution into MOGEF with jurisdiction over family policy because it would then

control a more general target from feminist perspectives beyond being confined to only women's issues. They were threatened by the idea of 'feminists destroy the family.' In this process of transformation, the femocrats dealt with this antagonistic position by alienating feminist ideas from family policies. While infusing women's rights issues into family policies had previously provided the ministry with a legitimate niche, now it delegitimized the organizational goal of expanding its issues into the family policy arenas. With the Ministry's organizational transformation, the cultural assumptions about the conflict between women's rights and family maintenance became the institutional normative condition and the femocrats' strategy to deal with it contributed to the production of status-quo-family policy programs.

The debates over MOGE's transformation into MOGEF were mostly about the relationship between gender equality policy and family policy. Family disruption was a common fear accompanied by the legislators' insistence that family policy is too broad to be undertaken by MOGE. The law makers did not ignore the general public's discomfort. These common cultural assumptions and the lawmakers' awareness of them were well illustrated in a National Assembly legal expert's analysis of the agenda regarding the transformation of MOGE into MOGEF in the Health and Welfare Committee in the National Assembly meeting:

It seems that focus of transferring family policies from the Ministry of Health and Welfare to MOGE is more on the change in the family policy orientation than on the administrative efficiency- from a residual perspective to a universal perspective. Residual perspective emphasizes strengthening the function of the family to prevent family disruption from the perspective of the family as an indispensable institution meeting the necessity of the individual needs and socialization. Universal perspectives sees the family is not an indispensable institution and acknowledges the phenomenon we've regarded as a family disruption as diversification of the family and emphasizes

women's labor force participation and socialization of care system. [...] The agenda [to transfer the family policy jurisdiction from the Ministry of Health and Welfare to MOGE] implies that the family policy will be oriented to the universal perspective and thus to be characterized by the gender equality orientation. *There seems to be a concern that such a sudden change in the policy orientation, under the current condition that the general public's fear of family disruption is prevalent and the infrastructure of socializing the burden of supporting the elderly population is not established yet, will create a confusion of values among general public regarding the function of the family and the role of the family members* (National Assembly HWC 252-1, 2005:18. Emphasis is mine).

The analysis of the legal advisor to the legislators belonging to the Health and Welfare Committee of the National Assembly showed that the legislators needed to understand the general public's concerns and sentiments regarding the family and family policies. The legislators could not ignore the cultural assumption that family policies oriented toward gender equality was linked to a threat to family stability.

The fear of family disruption was embodied as a suspicion toward MOGE, 'a feminist Ministry' trying to take over family policies. As a legislator put it:

[If MOGE takes over family policies,] the family policies would be based on women's perspective, not family perspective. [...] If half of the officials of MOGE are transferred to other Ministries and recruit new officials trained in family policies, we could agree [with MOGE on the transformation into MOGEF]. If officials trained in MOGE deal with family problems from women's perspective, there should be a problem, I bet (National Assembly GAHAC 252-1, 2005:43-44).

The suspicion came from the perspective that MOGE was an organization pursuing feminist ideology and MOGE bureaucrats were inclined towards the idea and thus family policies under MOGE would lead to family destruction. This fear even led to the debate over the name of the newly established organization. One of the legislators asked the MOGE bureaucrats to name the new ministry the Ministry of Family and Gender Equality as opposed to Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in order to overcome the distrust.

Below is another example of the suspicion that MOGE's attempts to expand its turf to family issues would result in family policies from women's perspective and thus change men's behavior. A female legislator of Gender Equality Committee in the National Assembly who supported MOGE's transformation into MOGEF put it in the legislation debate:

The English name of the *Yŏsŏng bu* is the Ministry of Gender Equality, not Ministry of Women's Equality.⁵ [...] Gender equality for our society is not just an issue of women but also includes the issue of men which advances our society. So, *Yŏsŏng kajok bu*⁶ can be [translated into] Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, but it doesn't mean that women [s issues] are the core and family [issues] are absorbed in the core. It doesn't mean women centered family, but precisely speaking women comma family just like health comma wealth [in the name of Ministry of Health and Wealth] and culture comma tourism [in the name of Ministry of Culture and Tourism]. *In that sense, we have to explain to other legislators that Ministry of Gender Equality and Family is not targeting men [s power].* (National Assembly GAHAC 252-1, 2005:49. Emphasis is mine).

The quote illustrates that when the Ministry which had been doing women's equality policies were trying to make family policies, the fear was about changing the families through feminist perspectives. It was deemed to destroy the family. Under this context, the legislator emphasized the benefits *for* men -not changing men- to persuade the conservative legislators and civic groups.

Under the antagonistic and distrustful situation against MOGE's efforts to take over family policies, infusing gender equality ideas could only delegitimize MOGE's attempts. Dissociation of women's rights and status issues from family policy was a strategy that the MOGEF femocrats chose in order to accomplish the goal of

⁵ The Korean name of the Ministry is *Yŏsŏngbu* that is translated into Ministry of Women in English. However, the English name of the Ministry is Ministry of Gender Equality. For a detailed process of naming the Ministry, see Chapter II.

⁶ The name is translated into Ministry of Women and Family in English. The Korean Name of Ministry of Gender Equality and Family has the vocabulary of women, not gender.

expanding MOGE into MOGEF.

Following is an illustration of dissociation by one MOGE femocrat in responding the legislators' distrust and fear of MOGE's attempts to take over family policies.

Having family tasks transferred to Ministry of Gender Equality and Family does not mean that MOGEF handles family at its own will. When we say Ministry of Culture and Tourism, culture does not absorb tourism, neither does health absorb wealth when we say Ministry of Health and Welfare. MOGE was created with the goal of gender equality and it developed many policies regarding the issues. *Family tasks are related with women's issues more than any other tasks from other ministries and women and family under the same ministry can result in a synergy effects. [Expanding into] MOGEF is synergy effect-wise, not feminizing family from feminist perspective. It cannot happen and the people wouldn't allow it* (National assembly GAHAC 252-1, 2005: 26. Emphasis is mine).

The MOGE's high-ranking official perceived the fear from the legislators that feminist solutions to the problems of the family would destroy the family and she directly rejected the feminist perspective. Rather than addressing women's less privileged position within families and solving those problems from a women's perspective in order to solve the family problems, the officer justified MOGE's having jurisdiction over family policies with gender-neutral language such as "family issues *related* with women's issues" and "synergy effect" of having policy authority over family. She emphasized rational organizational operation instead of ideological reasons. Previously, when MOGE did not have jurisdiction over family policies, they had legitimacy in the niche of "equality" from a women's rights perspective. To the contrary, when the issue of family came under debate and became the issue of MOGE's mandate, the feminist perspective was suddenly transformed into an illegitimate one for the Ministry.

The strategic dissociation that was made during the institutional transition was also found in the newly established MOGEF. One femocrat who referred herself as a feminist and was involved in the family policy making processes put it:

Family policy was new [to MOGEF bureaucrats] and there are various values surrounding family policies. So it was hard even for me to pin down what the family policy was. *And when we push women[’s rights] forward too hard, it was hammered so it was expected to maintain a moderate level. [...] In reality, many people have the romantic vision of the family so it is hard to build a consensus on family policies based on gender equality ideology and individualism rather than family values* (Interview with MOGEF official 4, 2009. Emphasis is mine).

The institutional norms regarding family policies did not allow a radical vision based on the feminist idea of overthrowing patriarchy. The femocrats reacted to the norms, which then constrained the range of the policy programs that they could implement, resulting in moderate levels of change.

4. Diluted Concept of Gender Equality, Entrenched Family Ideology, and Taken-for-Granted Assumption of Dissociation within MOGEF

In this section, I analyze cultural mechanisms that operated within MOGEF in the production of the status-quo-family policy programs: the diluted concept of gender equality and deep-rooted family ideology in the bureaucrats. These two cultural processes through which diverse meanings of gender equality were contested within the organization established the dissociation of the feminist ideologies from family policies as a taken-for-granted assumption within MOGEF. The complex internal cultural process led to the family policy programs supporting status-quo.

The diluted concept of gender equality policies-ones benefiting men without emphasizing the political intent of changing men- was started when MOGE was

established and it became institutionalized as family policy frame in MOGEF. As the first Minister to MOGE, the priority of Minister Hahn Myung-Suk, (once a progressive feminist activist and democratization movement activist), was the organizational survival and legitimacy of the institution.⁷ She emphasized the goal of the institution as benefiting men as well as women by using the language of “gender” in a politically neutral way.⁸ The femocratic leader’s interviews with Korean press show how she understood the social antagonism against the Ministry and how she came to the strategy of diluting the concept of gender equality to counter the resistance.

It seems that men tend to consider that MOGE deprives men [of their interests] to benefit women. Some women might regard feminist activism as exclusive to women of big name and MOGE as the same kind (*Mizann*, January 28, 2001. Emphasis is mine).

Rather than creating hostility between men and women by putting too much emphasis on discrimination (against women), MOGE will orient the policies toward women’s social economic participation through female human resource development and partnership between men and women through which men and women could show what they could do on the plain level. Of course there will be temporary policies to benefit women since women have been discriminated more than men throughout the history. However, as shown in the English name of the Ministry (Ministry of Gender Equality), the ultimate goal of the Ministry is creating a society where neither women nor men experience discrimination (KyungHayng Dailly, February 8, 2001. Emphasis is mine).

The Minister strategically used the gender equality concept by emphasizing “men” and not pointing out the political meaning of “gender.” Based on the feminist ideology, the

⁷ For more detailed analysis of femocrats’ strategic efforts to strengthen their organizational legitimacy and the subsequent diluting of the concept of gender equality to deal with gender antagonism, see Chapter II.

⁸ Another strategy that Minister Hahn made was to maintain cooperative and close relationships and avoiding conflicts with other ministries and government agencies. Since the organization became a Ministry from a small Committee, other ministries’ check and resistance became visible and it was an urgent matter to Minister Hahn to establish MOGE (Interview with former MOGEF official 2, 2007). It is said that her strategy was effective in establishing the new-born ministry and combating resistance and antagonism from within the state and the society, upon which the next generation of MOGE was able to accomplish radical policy changes (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2007).

emphasis on “gender” in women’s policies is supposed to be a way to understand gender as social structural institution that builds barriers against women, and thus “gender equality” implicates a status that is accomplished through power structural change (Kim and Shin, 2004; Kim, 2005; Huh, 2009). However, the Korean femocrats did not emphasize the radical meaning of gender equality when they tried to establish the legitimacy of the organization.

This dilution of gender equality concept was institutionalized in MOGEF in the process where femocrats looked for a way to make sense of the two “contradicting” ideologies- women’s rights and family stability - with the introduction of family policies into the Ministry. The diluted concept of gender equality provided MOGEF femocrats with the cultural frame emphasizing harmony between men and women in the family policy making process.

As discussed in the previous section, the tension between women’s rights and family stability within the Ministry was an important cultural issue that MOGE(F) femocrats had to deal with in order to obtain the legitimacy of having the jurisdiction over family policies. Previously, MOGE bureaucrats faced little tension between women’s rights and family policies because they had more ideological freedom to tackle women’s liberation from home for economic reasons, which they linked to equal rights within families. However, once family policy came under its jurisdiction, the bureaucrats themselves needed to find a way through which the two ideologies could coexist.

One then-MOGE femocrat wrote in 2004 when the discussion on transferring family policies from Ministry of Health and Welfare to MOGE had started:

As MOGE will deal with family policies as well as women policies, accomplishing the harmony between these two policies will be the most urgent issue for MOGE to solve. From a women's policy perspective, it is worried that equality between men and women (*namnyŏ p'yŏngdŭng*) issue is diluted by emphasizing family issues whereas from family policy perspective *too much emphasis on equality between men and women (namnyŏ p'yŏngdŭng) would contradict with the policy goal of the harmonious relationships among family members* (Cho, 2004:12. Emphasis is mine).

Her response shows that the bureaucrats within MOGE found it important to resolve the ideological tension. Moreover, when the Ministry was about to have family policy jurisdiction under its control, the femocrats themselves gave in to the cultural assumption of feminist ideology and family stability as being contradictory rather than regarding feminist ideology as a solution to family problems, as Korean feminist activists did.

Under this changed institutional norm context with the organizational transformation from MOGE to MOGEF, the femocrats created new frame of policy that emphasized the synergetic coexistence (*sangsaeng*) of men and women, policies beneficial to both men and women (*namnyŏ-modu-ege-iroun*), and equality for both men and women (*yangsŏng p'yŏngdŭng*) (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2009).

As the organization transformed into MOGEF, the influence of the femocrats' use of the diluted gender equality concept furthered dissociation of feminist ideology from family policies. As one high-ranking official put it:

Male officers used not to prefer to come to MOGE but after the transformation into MOGEF many male officers came in because it looks like the Ministry is less to do with women's issues. Anyways, many superior officers try to come into MOGEF (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2007)

While MOGE seemed from the outside to be a feminist organization and thus was less attractive to male officers, the organizational transformation from MOGE to MOGEF

won over distinguished male officers who regarded MOGEF as an organization dealing with family issues. The original intention of the transformation of the organization and the MOGEF leader's vision was a progressive one for social structural change for the eventual achievement of women's equality. However, this feminist idea was dissociated from family issues in the organizational transformation process. With the institutionalization of the diluted concept of gender equality as MOGEF policy frame, the dissociation was understood outside of the Ministry as well, resulting in the attraction of male bureaucrats who were interested in family issues rather than women's rights issues.

As a result, within the Ministry, family policies less to do with feminist politics and more to do with stabilizing families became less contested: Moving from demanding a radical change in men to accepting a minimal modification of men's lives in order to relocate them within the family became taken-for-granted in the family policy area. Even if a MOGEF leader indicated supporting the more fundamental change in the family lives by emphasizing the vision of the family policies as the institutionalization of care and the goal of abolishing the patriarchy, this progressive vision was not necessarily carried throughout the whole Ministry. One lower-ranking official put men as the beneficiary group without a hint of feminist goals:

We hardly use the word feminist perspective in MOGEF. We use the language of gender equality. I think female human resource development policies need gender equality perspective more than family policies. [...] Family policies not only consider women. They should be seen from the perspective of emphasizing men's role that has not been done [in the family]. Up until the 80's, women's domestic role was emphasized but since the 90's, women's economic activity has increased and thus men's role of caring and rights to family lives has got to be emphasized. [...] It is not because MOGEF has taken over family policies to emphasize men's role. (Interview with MOGEF official 7, 2007. Emphasis is mine).

As MOGEF's institutional norm, the interviewee did not see the convergence between family policies and MOGEF's vision of gender equality. The officer made a distinction between a feminist perspective and gender equality. He saw gender equality as implying equality of both men and women which was thus more acceptable language within the Ministry than a feminist perspective implying political struggle to win women's rights. More importantly, the interviewee saw the gender equality perspective as less necessary in family policies in spite of his emphasis on men's involvement. It is different to emphasize men's right to family life in order to change social structures (a more feminist political intent) than to insist on men's rights to family life in order to make up for their "lost" rights and to contribute to the goal of a stable family (a more conservative intent). Without the safeguard of feminist consciousness in the idea of engaging men in family lives, policy programs that fall short of changing the gendered division of labor within the family can be produced.

Moreover, with the change of feminist ideas into a status-quo vision within MOGEF, men were considered more or less a target group that MOGEF family policies should *benefit* rather than *change*. While feminist ideas were marginalized and were not the explicit primary goal in the family policies created, serving men as a niche only helped MOGEF obtain its organizational jurisdiction. An exemplary remark on the difference of MOGEF's family policies from other Ministry's ones as follows:

Since family policies overlap with other ministries' tasks, it is difficult to avoid conflict with them and coordinate them. [...] However, MOGEF's family policies are different from other ministries.' For example, Ministry of Health and Welfare use the language of "Pro-natal" but it includes only women. MOGEF use the language of "family friendly" which includes men as well as women (Interview with MOGEF official 7, 2007).

Pro-natal policies that were made by Ministry of Health and Welfare had been criticized by the feminist activists because they did not aim at the social economic structural change that guarantee both women's maternal rights and economic rights (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008). From this perspective, the interviewee's opinion that pro-natal policies benefited women was not associated with feminist ideas. Moreover, since the officer did not see the overlap between feminist ideas and MOGEF family policies, including men had less to do with social structural change for equalizing gender power but more to do with finding an institutional niche for its ministerial operation.

Along with the institutionalization of the diluted gender equality concept, the bureaucrats' family ideology also made it possible to dissociate the feminist ideology from family policies. The family was an ideal too sacred to change. This entrenched idea was illustrated by a high-ranking official (who referred to herself as a feminist) expressing the difficulties in pursuing women's rights in making family policies. She comments on the feminist-consciousness of bureaucrats making family policies and her own opinion on the trade-off between feminist ideology and family stability:

[Under the circumstance that emphasizing women's perspective in making family policies brings about criticism], *I don't think it is easy to demand that the bureaucrats [making family policies] have a feminist-consciousness. It can be criticized severely [as destroying the family] even within the Ministry and arouse the flat rejection against the idea. So it is really hard to be consistent among policies since the issue of individual and the family issues are contradictory.* I think it is important to maintain a happy family as a value of the family but at the same time policies based on the individual are also important if the concept of family is fluid in the real life (Interview with MOGEF official 4, 2009. Emphasis is mine).

While the femocrat made the strategic decision to dissociate feminist issues from family policies, at the same time, she did not challenge the cultural assumption of the

antithetical relationship between family policies and feminist ideas. More importantly, the officer had difficulty in pushing the feminist ideology within the Ministry due to the cultural notion of family stability that other bureaucrats had. The cultural norm of maintaining the family constrained policy decisions to preserve the family and more moderate choices.

With the ideology of the family deeply rooted in the bureaucrats' minds, their policy ideas did not go beyond making the family stable and happy. The following remark from a lower-ranking official illustrates the prevalent taken-for-granted assumption of family policies dissociated from feminist politics. The officer explained the goal of the Family Friendly Society Promotion Act as follows:

By promoting the [intimate] relationship among family members, the Act can enhance the workers' quality of life which increases the company's productivity. Ultimately, by doing this, the Act pursues the improvement in the national competency and overcomes the problem of low birth rate and aging population, not gender equal family. Empirically, theoretically, family friendly system enhances the worker satisfaction and commitment which improves the productivity. ... The business organization could have egalitarian culture and the worker can spend more time with family and the family bond could become stronger which helps build gender equal family. However, it is not the ultimate goal of the Act (Interview with MOGEF official 7, 2007. Emphasis is mine).

Family friendly policies had the potential to increase women's economic activity and further to change work-centered and male-dominated corporate culture that recognized men as "the standard worker" and as the breadwinner and thus devalued men's involvement in child-rearing. Despite that, the interviewee did not recognize the political meaning of family policies from a women's rights perspective.

The bureaucrats' deep-rooted ideology of the family and low consciousness of feminist politics regarding family policies constrained their imagination regarding how

they could ‘change’ the unequal cultural practices within the family and inequality among families. A remark by a feminist activist who tried to do a project on changing family culture in cooperation with the Bureau of Family Policies within MOGEF evidenced this problem:

When we had a meeting with the MOGEF bureaucrats, we were shocked at their low consciousness [of feminist ideas] and lack of ideas. When we talked about family culture, all they could think about was leisure activities. We said family culture can be seen from broader perspective [including gender equal practices within the family] but they didn’t understand in the beginning (Interview with Womenlink activist 2, 2008).

While feminist activists considered the project regarding family culture as a way of changing the values and practices reproducing discrimination against women and ‘abnormal’ families, the MOGEF bureaucrats oriented the cultural project towards maintaining family solidarity (Interview with Womenlink activist 1, 2009). Again the interview illustrates the deep-rooted ideology of the family within the Ministry, despite the progressive leadership of the organization, regarding the priority of family policies.

In this section, I analyzed two internal cultural mechanisms that operated within MOGEF in the production of the status-quo-family policy programs: the diluted concept of gender equality and deep-rooted family ideology in the bureaucrats. The diluted gender equality concept that had been institutionalized throughout the history of MOGEF provided the femocrats with the cultural frame to dissociate feminist ideology from family policies; with the institutionalization of the depoliticized concept of gender equality, the dissociation became taken-for-granted. Associating feminist ideas with family policies was more contested than the dissociation because the bureaucrats maintained the family ideology deeply rooted in their minds. When the

focus of the policy shifted from women to family, women's rights issues were not clearly associated with family policies. The dissociation might be effective to obtain legitimacy of the feminist policies within the organization. However, this approach of disintegrating feminist ideas had a danger of losing the original political meaning of changing men. Under these institutional and personal norms, the bureaucrats were limited in their sophistication of combining progressive feminist ideas with family policies. Thus the "progressive" family policies were limited to "harmonize" men and women and fell short of changing gendered power relationships within the family.

E. Logic of Bureaucracy, Democratic Polity in Relationships with Civil Society, and Cultural Resonance of the Policy Programs

While the previous sections focus on ideology of MOGE(F), in this section, I analyze the production of status-quo policy programs through the influence of MOGEF's limited resources to be a powerful bureaucracy, institutional structural complexities caused by its complex relationships with civil society organizations, and bureaucrats' decisions based on the cultural resonance of the program. I focus on the actors participating in family policy programs who had different perspectives in making family policies. I argue that MOGEF bureaucrats made policy decisions based on the cultural resonance of the policy programs while being faced with the challenges of restrictions on institutional resources and the complex ideological terrain spanning conservative to the progressive. The implementation body that MOGEF had to work with consisted of conservative civil society actors, which limited its policy choices.

MOGEF's embracing of conservative organizations as partners was inevitable

when the jurisdiction over family policies was shifted to it. MOGEF took over family policies from the Ministry of Health and Welfare, which had previously run family policies in cooperation with conservative civil society organizations. Having been already involved in the family policy implementation, the conservative civil society organizations had grown their power and influence over family policy making processes. As a Ministry, MOGEF could not reject the existing conservative organizations' implementing the Healthy Family Support Centers. In order to operate as a ministry, MOGEF needed them as a resource.

Also, as a state agency expected to have ideological balance, MOGEF could not exclude organizations that held a different perspective on family policies and who were already involved in the family policy making processes. Excluding them would be a particularly bad political move because of the prevalent fear and suspicion of MOGE's efforts based on the cultural assumptions of the contradictory relationship between feminist ideology and family stability. When MOGEF accepted these conservative organizations as actors in family policy making, two conflicting ideas lodged within the organizational structure: family policies from gender sensitive perspectives advocated by feminist activists and ones for family maintenance through the prevention of family problems asserted by pro-family groups.

The conflicting views on the family and the orientation of family policies appeared in the different actors' views about the issue of men's involvement within the family. Feminist activists advocated male's involvement from the perspective of overhauling the male-centered and work-centered social structure that discriminates against men trying to be involved in the family as well as women trying to stay in the

labor market. On the other hand, male's involvement in the family was not the pro-family groups' priority for family policies because their initiatives started from family maintenance through consultation and education to prevent family problems. The feminist agenda focusing on women's economic rights and changing men's consciousness and social structures to involve men within families contrasts sharply with the conservative groups' ideas.

The following remarks on the family policies illustrate the different views of male participation in family lives. A feminist activist put it:

Family policies started from gender perspective that reflects women's interests and needs. It is important to raise the issue such as men and women's joint participation both in the production and reproduction of which the key is women's economic empowerment and men's participation in caring and it is necessary to link this issue with women's human resource development, employment, wage, and sharing of domestic labor. It is necessary to make policies to reflect these issues and at the same time change consciousness (Yoo, 2008:34)

The feminist equated family policy with women's policy that affects both domestic labor and the labor market. Therefore, involving men in family responsibilities went beyond men's participation in childcare. It meant an overhaul of the deep-rooted ideology of gender division of labor- male as breadwinners and female as care givers.

To the contrary, home science scholars working in the Healthy Family Support Centers put it:

Feminists don't even like the word "home." They think gender equality is the most important value in the family but home science scholars disagree. We think that gender equality does not represent all the values of the family although it is important. Even family policies are under MOGEF, I disagree to see the family from only women's perspective or gender equality perspective (Interview with HFSC staff 1, 2007).

The perspective of this interviewee contrasts with the feminist who equates family

policies with women's policy. Since the feminist perspective should not be the fundamental principal of family policies, home science scholars' view of male participation in the family supported the status-quo. Another home science scholar who ran one of Healthy Family Support Center put it:

When we advocate the family, it is not just an argument from the conservative perspective. Once we get in the family lives after all, even though men's and women's interest conflict with each other, it is time for men and women to consider how to understand each other and live in harmony. I think we need different and diverse approaches to this issue and the gender equality issue should be dealt with from more elaborated approach rather than emphasizing only discrimination. In this sense, I think education for males is effective. [...] The education for men was effective because it was more than an opportunity to learn the skills necessary for family lives. It was an opportunity for men to reflect on their lives such as setting up their life goal, something that they haven't had before (Interview with HFSC staff 2, 2007).

Rather than problematizing the gender division of labor within the family that leads to women's discrimination in the labor market, the interviewee considered education for men to be a way to maintain harmonious relationships. Moreover, the interviewee saw education as an opportunity for men's self-actualization rather than as a way to emphasize gender cooperation in domestic work and childrearing in order to minimize male dominance within the family.

From the conservative actors' perspective, men were included in the policy in order to encourage their inclusion in family life, to provide more skills, and knowledge for their self-actualization, which would improve family function. There seemed to be little space for the idea of gender equality. A staff of a Healthy Family Support Center put it:

Because MOGEF put a lot of emphasis on the participation of males in the program, I think the feminist idea had become diluted since the transformation into MOGEF. Targeting men, we did education on fathers, family leisure programs, couple consultation, and education on economy. [...] We made an economic education

program that teaches financial literacy and expertise in order to help men sustain the sound financial status which will eventually help to maintain a healthy family and reduce suicide and divorce (Interview with HFSC staff 3, 2009. Emphasis is mine).

The staff saw little association of male involvement within the family with feminist ideas; the staff did not come up with a change in the division of labor within the family through the education program on fathers. It was a taken -for-granted assumption of the staff that equality was not necessary to achieve the family policy goals. Moreover, to the staff, the goal of sustaining healthy families was accomplished through supporting men to re-establish their positions within families by doing better in a breadwinner role.

These contrasting views of male involvement in families existed within one institutional structure. The remaining question is the role of the MOGEF femocrats who had to negotiate between the two conflicting camps to run the family policy programs. I argue that femocrats felt constrained within the conflicting ideological terrain, and therefore not only embraced the conservative organizations as implementation bodies, but also emphasized the cultural resonance of the policy programs as being important to being easily accepted by men. Rather than going with progressive ideas, the MOGEF femocrats allowed the conservative implantation body to run the status-quo-policy programs.

Since program implementation was based on male's voluntary participation, it was necessary to tune the programs to their needs and cultural assumptions. In this sense, to MOGEF femocrats, Healthy Family Support Centers' approach was a practical route to choose. In other words, MOGEF femocrats' understanding of Korean men's antagonistic attitude towards equal sharing of domestic work was coherent with

the status-quo approach. One officer who had a decision making position put it:

We put a lot of emphasis on men's role in the family. But in order to [educate] men [to be involved in family life], we have to visit work places [rather than expecting them to come visit us]. For a big company, we encouraged internal instructor training and for a small company we encouraged visit-in programs in order to change men as well as [support] work place cultural changes for women's work-family balance. But for the program [that is more conformed to men's self-actualization exercise], it can be because of the back ground of the home science people [who were involved in making the program]. I heard many times about the problem of the approach. *But at the same time, if we need to have the male to do something in the family, we have to solicit them first, and then have them try it so that they can feel it in person. They need to access childcare easily and do it personally in order to change. Still there is antagonism toward this kind of issue so when we push too hard it would make their access harder from the beginning.* There are people criticizing home science people's approach from feminist perspective but I think the strength of Healthy Family Support Center is to reach people in a familiar manner (Interview with MOGEF official 4, 2009. Emphasis is mine).

The officer's remark showed that male's involvement within the family was more acceptable when it emphasized men's benefits rather than the feminist politics of changing men's behavior and values. The officer understood the conservativeness of Korean males toward equal sharing of domestic labor, thus requiring a less-radical way to reach men in order to introduce the concept of male participation in the family.

The femocrat's perception of male conservatism toward gender equality issues paralleled that of a staff member of a Healthy Family Service Center who said that gender equality cannot be the priority of family policies. The staff person answered why males wouldn't participate in the program if it used the language of "gender equality" in the title:

When we say gender equality, to men, it is more like they have to give up something they have. [...] Gender equality from a feminist perspective has been focusing on women relatively more so it makes men to be antagonistic toward and fed up with gender equality issues unnecessarily. So gender equality sounds more like a slogan and the approach with vague ideology is not effective. People are more interested in practical information that they can use in their everyday life than education to change

their consciousness. And in order to encourage a gender equal family through practical information, it is more effective to get into the specific topics and skills such as what they [men] can do to raise their kids and how they can participate in family life as a family member (Interview with HFSC staff 2, 2007).

Not surprisingly, the officer's and the staff's perception of Korean men's conservative attitude toward gender equality issues was supported by a real experience of a staff from a Healthy Family Support Center in implementing father education programs through contact with men in their everyday lives.

If we title the program as "gender equality education," men wouldn't participate in it. One day I asked a personnel staff to permit us to do the education and referred a person who does sex education on children as a speaker, he just refused it and the reason was that men don't like her. I think that person is not that radical person but he said he wanted a male speaker. He said if male speaker told a story from men's position it would be more convincing than if a female speaker preached (Interview with HFSC staff 1, 2007).

Her remark illustrates that the staff faced the important factor of men's conservativeness and uncomfortable feelings in the implementation process.

While the femocrat is conscious of the importance of male's equal sharing in domestic labor, in order for the policy programs to be accepted by men, tuning the programs to the prevalent conservative attitude was an important process to foster the implementation of the policy programs. Policy makers perceived normative social and political conditions to be important factors for acceptance of the policies. This consideration of normative values was a mechanism that opened the path to the creation of status-quo policy programs.

F. Conclusion

Feminist activists and MOGE(F)' femocrat leaders' vision regarding family

policies aimed at overthrowing the patriarchy that was dominant not only within the family but also in the labor market. Engaging men in family lives through policy programs was one of the strategies that feminist activists and MOGE(F) femocrat leaders used to realize the vision of changing men's attitudes and behavior. Feminist activists who supported shifting family policy jurisdiction to MOGE framed family policies using a gender perspective. On the surface, it seemed that this shift accomplished their goals: MOGEF's institutional authority over family issues got stronger. However, ironically, having jurisdiction over family issues constrained the realization of feminist ideology – creating family policies from a gender perspective - because the institutional structural change was accompanied by a change in accepted institutional norms regarding its vision and goals. With the institutional structural change, the Ministry was placed in complex ideological terrain and thus the feminist ideology could not be realized in the policy programs. The normative belief, held both in and outside the Ministry, that the feminist perspective could destroy the family led the bureaucrats to strategically dissociate feminist ideas from family policies and constrained their strategic options to minor modifications in the lives of men.

In exploring how feminist ideals, framed as a gender perspective by the feminist activists, were translated into supporting status-quo policy programs, this chapter has shown how actors' strategies to expand the organization resulted in an ideological compromise. While having the jurisdiction that seems to enable the femocrats to transform men's perception of their role in the family, the idea of transformation is translated into status-quo-policy programs. While equating family problems with women's problems was so important to the feminist activists and

femocratic leaders in pursuing the achievement of women's economic rights and weakening the division of labor within the family, this idea did not penetrate into the whole Ministry. Nor did it establish itself in the policy programs. On the one hand, culturally, the family is so sacred to not only the conservative politicians and the general public, but also to the bureaucrats within MOGEF. Under these circumstances, opposing the conservative family discourse frame was accepted by neither the social political conservatives nor the MOGEF bureaucrats working on family policies. On the other hand, even with the existence of strong advocates of family policies based on a gender perspective within MOGEF, the idea was filtered through institutional imperatives such as ministerial operation and democratic political processes, which weakened the possible influence these bureaucrats could have. In the end, the policies created by MOGEF were ironically supportive of the status quo.

VII. Conclusion: The Possibilities of Women's Policy Institutions for Cultural Change and Future Strategies

In this dissertation, I have focused on how to understand the success and failure of the Korean women's policy machineries' efforts to increase gender equality in Korean society. It is a success of Korean women's activism and the Korean femocrats to establish and expand an institution to redress the problem of women's inequality by strategically making use of the international trends and the domestic political opportunities. Cooperative strategies between the state and the feminist activists made milestones in improving women's status in Korea society (Jones, 2006). With the existence of the institution, Korea has witnessed considerable policy changes regarding women's equal employment, equal legal status within the family, and women's freedom from sexual violence, all of which have attracted global attention. This point is also well supported by a feminist activist, who also served UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Comparing to other countries, particularly Asian countries, Korea made an enormous achievement in women's policies. [...] For example, women from other Asian countries evaluated that they saw no positive results of the implementation of Beijing platform- referring to such [examples] as women became poorer. [...] Comparing with them or even all across the world, I think Korea made a big improvement [regarding *de jure* equality]. That's why CEDAW made a good evaluation on many aspects of Korean women's policies last year (2007). I think the existence of MOGE(F) made it possible (Interview with a CEDAW committeewoman, 2008).

However, from my research, the efforts to increase gender equality have not yet changed entrenched cultural norms and practices such as the association of care work with femininity, the ideology of the family, and unequal domestic responsibilities.

Progressive regimes with the Presidents supporting gender equality - Kim Dae-jung's administration (1998-2002) and Noh Mu Hyun's administration (2003-2007) - were important political opportunities for the feminist activists and the femocrats. Under these two regimes, the women's political machineries were transformed into a full Ministry and expanded into having the jurisdiction over family policies. However, even if they had the political opportunities to pursue fundamental changes in gender norms and gendered social economic structures, these were not possible. We still find policy efforts that do not break from the ideology of gendered division of labor in the labor market and within the family and do not get away from the ideology of the family.

The previous research on the influences on the global norms on the isomorphic changes in the local nation-states termed these apparent differences between the world norms and the local practices as "decoupling" (Meyer et al., 1997: 154). However, the theorists of the diffusion of the global norms do not really delve into the contexts of the local situations that lead to the "decoupled" phenomenon. Several analytic and empirical problems ensue if we analyze the discrepancies between local practices and the global norm using the perspective of "decoupling" and then stop further investigation.

First, world culture is not a single monolithic norm. Therefore, when global gender egalitarian norms work their way into local contexts, so do other global norms such as free-market based economic growth. These diverse norms sometimes work consistently but other times contradict each other. Therefore, it is unclear which global

norm a local practice is decoupled from. A practice can be tightly “coupled” with a global norm while “decoupled” with another global norm. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the local context in order to see what practices are “decoupled” and how this occurred in order to see the back and forth nature of social change. For example, the efforts to provide women with more opportunities to work may be tightly linked with the global norm of women’s equal right to work (e.g. WID paradigm). But maintaining gender norms within the labor market and the family is decoupled from the global norm of changing gendered social economic structures (e.g. GAD paradigm). Therefore, it is analytically ambiguous and empirically incorrect to say that a local society makes linear progress toward a globally shared norm of equality.

Secondly, the paradoxes of the establishment of a women’s policy machinery are produced through much more complicated processes than “decoupling.” Not only global norms, but also the local context itself has more than one set of norms when gender equality is discussed. These co-existing definitions of gender equality (e.g. equal access to work versus de-gendering the labor market) produce issues of cultural resonance regarding policy efforts and actors’ strategic goal setting (e.g. short-term and long-term).

This dissertation looked at the local context while emphasizing factors such as state goals of national development based on neo-liberalism; relationships of the democratic state with civil society organizations; the logic of bureaucracy; the strategies of the actors using political and discursive opportunities; and the

deployment of different meanings of gender equality by diverse civil society and government actors.

Particularly, while analyzing institutional constraints, this dissertation emphasized agents who were trying to make social change happen through exploiting political opportunities, deploying new policy ideas grounded in both global trends and local exigencies, and fitting them to the organizational as well as normative properties of the domestic political institution. Injecting agency into the analysis makes it possible to avoid a false implication that world norms step in to try to “save” local situations but the local actors are not yet ready to change in order to catch up with global standards. The actors are not just an “enactor” (Meyer et al., 1997: 159) of the global gender egalitarian norms. They are creative and strategic in lining up their actions within the complex web of institutional dimensions. In looking at how complex interactions of those factors become the bottleneck for cultural change, this dissertation examines the implications of the roles and the limits of women’s policy machineries and strategies for massive social change in gendered power relations.

A. Can a Women’s Policy Institution De-Gender the Structure and Culture?

Progressive gender politics should aim at destabilizing gendered social economic structures, gender norms, and gendered practice that reproduce different outcomes between men and women. This transformative action is known as “de-gendering” (Charles, 2011, forthcoming). However, in reality, it is a really hard project. Stetson and Mazur (2010)’s findings, analyzing the success and failure of

women's policy agencies in Western postindustrial democracies in adopting feminist frames for policies and opening channels to social movement activists, are similar to my analysis. They found that while women's movement used increasingly more transformative frames which aim to counter the idea of gendered hierarchy based on patriarchy, the tendency on the part of the state agency to use this frame is decreasing (247).

This dissertation also shows that it was not always easy to pursue progressive gender politics in the state arena, even from the beginning of the organizational establishment in the Korean case. The state is not a single unity (Dahlerup, 1975; Stetson and Mazur, 1995; 2010; Randall and Waylen, 1998; Jones, 2006) and it never pursues gender equality as its primary issue. The goals of the women's policy machineries are set under the national primary goals and orientation. For instance, even if the women's movement groups extended themselves much earlier than the state regarding the advancement of women's status, their voices were not heard before the state started seeking the nation's global standing for *national security* -not gender equality- and listened to women's groups in order to attain *domestic political legitimacy*. When the first state bureaucracy (MPA 2) was established, use of women's labor force for national economic development matched both women's movement organizations' discursive strategies and the goals of the state. This discourse of Women in Development recurs throughout the history of Korean women's policy machinery.

Achieving the goal of breaking the ideology of the gendered division of labor through increasing female labor force participation was also hard due to the intersection of the organizational goal with the state primary goals - pulling women from the household into the labor market, creating social service jobs, and increasing labor market flexibility to respond to the competitive global economy. All of these diverse goals were at the intersection with MOGEF's organizational goal to improve women's economic independence.

The increasing visibility of women's policy machineries, MOGEF's symbol as a 'feminist organization,' and the expansion of its power were factors that made it harder to try to de-gender social economic structures and change the gender norms and practices. During the early period of MOGEF, establishing its organizational ideology, redressing de-facto inequality in state regulations, and fighting with other ministries were the primary issues of the organization. While the efforts of women activists and femocrats made an important contribution to the expansion of the organization, these efforts ended up with an ironic result: increased resources with decreased ideological freedom, greater bureaucratic turf battles, and organizational visions which were culturally sensitive but depoliticized. With the organizational transformation into a full Ministry and its development into MOGEF, the institution had to face stronger resistance from other ministries and the general public. The strategies of the femocratic leadership were to seek cooperative relationships with other ministries and to redefine gender equality with a less radical vision.

The irony of the institutionalization of gender equality ideology had an impact on policy programs: they did not aim to change gendered power relations within the family. While establishing a state agency exclusively focusing on redressing women's inequality was a symbolic action of a modern state globally (Berkovitch, 1997), domestically it became, for some, a symbol of women's advocates taking away men's privilege and producing cultural anxiety over family disruption. Therefore, it was necessary to dissociate the feminist politics from the vision of family policies in order to gain legitimacy from the political conservatives who were aware of the general public's ideology of family stability. Internally, the depoliticization of the concept of gender equality - translating the idea of changing power relations into one of benefitting men (as well as women) - that started during the establishment of MOGE, became institutionalized with the placing of family policies under the jurisdiction of the 'feminist' ministry. This history influenced the bureaucrats' definition of family policies. Family policies dissociated from feminist ideology became more easily accepted, while pursuing feminist ideology became contested even within the Ministry.

In addition to the state's international and domestic political exigencies, the power of conservative women's organizations was another factor that made women's policy machinery's attempts at cultural change difficult. The influence of conservative women's organizations had started from the beginning of women's policy machineries. With their modest strategies and visions, KNCW has had a power to frame women's equality issues attractively to social political conservatives. This research found that the "progressive" act by the authoritarian state to establish institutions for women in

1983 was possible because of the conservative views and goals of gender equality policies of KNCW. Later, lacking support from KNCW and other conservative women's organizations was one of the factors leading to the contraction of MOGEF back into MOGE in 2008. After the ideological disputes between the progressive feminist activists groups and the conservative women's groups, the former did not make a strategic coalition with the latter to prevent the shrinkage of MOGEF by the new conservative regime after 2008 Presidential election. Given that women's policy machineries have historical roots in conservative women's organizations' efforts, it is hard to ignore their discursive power even if progressive feminist activism became stronger and more effective. Radical cultural change by women's policy machineries seems to be hard to achieve.

The conservative women's organizations' influence on MOGEF and progressive activists' efforts to achieve some cultural change became salient with the institution's taking over jurisdiction over family policies. The social pressures of the decline in the fertility rate, increase in the divorce rate and the aging population opened up spaces for political competition for resource allocation for family policies. The country's leaders, who believed in gender equality, supported MOGEF's jurisdiction over family policies with the vision of increasing the birth rate through increasing equality within the family and providing care services to support women's work outside the household.

However, because of the irony that MOGEF became ideologically less free to pursue a transformative vision of gender equality with the expansion of its institutional

power, they failed in changing the concept of the family, a modern form of patriarchal family. While increasing female labor force participation did not face resistance from conservative women's organizations, changing the legal definition of the family brought about huge ideological conflicts between the progressive feminist activists and the conservative women's groups. Trapped in the legislative battle, MOGEF ideologically pursued respect for diverse families and individual choices to construct families, while at the same time embracing the conservative organizations as its implementation resource.

In addition to the complex interaction of the women's policy machineries with state goals, other state organizations, and the civil society women's movement groups in pursuing the goal of redressing gender inequality, the femocrats' search for cultural resonance with the policy programs deserves attention to see the possibility of fundamental change in gender hierarchy. While the femocrats did not accept gender essentialism, in order to make a policy that could work, they used existing cultural assumptions about the work of housewives and the prevalent idea of neo-liberal individualism based on merit. If the turf battle limited MOGEF to the niche of housewives, making 'effective' policy programs with reliance on conventional cultural assumptions limited the circumspection of the policy ideas- housewives working as care services providers. Thus, while the femocrats succeeded in grabbing the political opportunity to have authority over female human resource development particularly in the area of housewives, they failed in changing the ideology of the gendered division of labor.

In the case of the family policy programs, MOGEF embraced the conservative civil society organizations because it needed the resources of the conservative women's organizations to implement family policies and it needed to make the gesture of listening to their voices. Moreover, MOGEF allowed these organizations to implement status-quo policy programs since the conservative women's organization's view of family maintenance and their education programs aimed at maintaining the harmonious relationship between men and women, and thus it was culturally more easily accepted. For effective policy implementation resonating with conventional culture, MOGEF femocrats accepted the implementation of the status-quo policy programs. Again, while it was a small victory to attempt to pull men into the family education program, in relying on prevalent cultural assumptions for acceptable family policy, the femocrats failed in changing gender norms regarding the family.

The complex picture presenting the intersection of norms of women's equality, the state goals, and the diverse goals of women's policy institution and their interactions with civil society organizations does not seem likely to change for the near future. Particularly since the Korean women's policy institution is within a complex political administrative web and heavily influenced by the President's affinity for gender equality norms, it is hard for the institution to break with the power struggle and to pursue fundamental change in gender hierarchy. This problem is well illustrated in the remark of an official of MOGE (2008-2010):

Much frustrated by the contraction of the organization, we thought that *since the new President doesn't like women's issues, we had to reset the organization to survive for the next 5 years (of the Presidency)*. Now that the organization became MOGE, we have to focus on women ('s discrimination issues) while MOGEF put more efforts in the daycare services, but we cannot. *It is because MOGE is not a powerful*

organization and due to the downturn of the economy, it is not a good time to bring up women ('s discrimination issues). Even regarding women's issues, we focus more on women's unemployment, support for employment and female labor force development. MOGE is barely alive with female labor force issues because the economy is the primary goals of the state (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2009. Emphasis is mine).

Just like its predecessors did, the newly transformed organization (MOGE 2008-2010) embedded its institutional goals within state goals to survive in the global economy and clung to the intersection of women and the national economic development and the interest of the President for the survival of the organization. The issue of women's economic independence was at the locus of the ministry's survival interest, the President's goal priorities, and the state goals of development.

Stetson and Mazur (2010)'s finding from their research in Western postindustrial democracies is similar to my analysis of the role of the Executive's affinity for gender equality norms in the activities of women's policy institutions. They found that the regime's opposition to the women's movement demands was a critical factor in the failure of women's policy institution in making a transformative policy frame. The regime's disagreement with the feminist case resulted in the agency's co-optation by the central power of the government.

Particularly, if gender equality is pursued under a neo-liberal regime which emphasizes the effective outcome of policies, national competitiveness in the global market, and efficiency over equality, and if the regime has a low gender affinity, the expectations that one could have for women's policies seem to be a minimal

progressive change and sometimes only an ad-hoc reform for women's lives. This point is supported by another quote of the MOGE (2008-2010) official.

From the perspective of the President with the business mind, the ministry that spends the budget should produce some policy outcomes that contribute to achieve the President's policy goals [the national economic prosperity] so focusing only on gender equality doesn't satisfy the President. However, with the current organizational size and resource, we cannot do that. It seems that the President wants MOGE to have family policies. Hopefully we can get the jurisdictions over the family policies after the government organization reshuffle (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2009. Emphasis is mine).

The idea of the President with a "business-mind" reveals that the policy orientation of the state is tuned to neo-liberal principles such as emphasis on efficiency, cost-benefit effectiveness, and visible performance. The quote evidences the complex interactions among power, interests, and cultural norms influencing the operation of the Ministry. For the survival of the organization, the Ministry's pursuit of gender equality is limited to policy goals that produce quantifiable outcomes under the regime of someone with a "business-mind," such as how many women are present in the occupational retraining program, regardless of what kind of occupation these women are getting.

When women's policies are expected to produce visible outcomes, namely quantifiable numbers, and if that is the performance that women's policy machinery is supposed to pursue under the neo-liberal political norm, various experimental policies for qualitative changes in gendered power relations will not easily occur. For instance, rather than *implementing* education programs for men to be involved in care labor and counting the number of men who attended as the outcome of the policy programs, which MOGEF (2005-2007) actually did (Interview with HFSC staff 3, 2009), *supporting* the establishment of a local village where progressive men actively engage

themselves in nurturing their children (Cho-Hahn, 2004) would result in more profound cultural change in everyday lives. However, this type of state support does not seem to gain approval within the state, nor get a budget allocation because not only it is a revolutionary idea, but it also does not seem to produce a quantifiable outcome.

The influences of neo-liberal reform on government support of feminist policies that I discussed are also found in other political contexts that have a strong history of state intervention and large expenses for social welfare. For example, Tehetsoonian and Grace (2001) found that the Canadian government cut funding for women's activist organizations working on women's job training during 1990s in the political context where neo-liberalism was the dominant ideology for political reform. Under the federal government's neoliberal ideology, women were blamed for making unreasonable requests of the government and thus cutting funding for women's job creation was legitimized (256).

Under these circumstances, it is really hard for a state organization to change gender hierarchy. Therefore, growing the power of grassroots organizations for social change is necessary in order to change the policy environment (such as the central power of the government, the dominant political ideology, and deep-rooted gender norms) within which women's policy institution operates. Changing the type of women's policy institution will be also necessary but it also should be accompanied by those grassroots strategies. I will discuss this point in the next section.

B. Dual Strategies for Cultural Change

A vision of fundamental social change is hard to be accepted or be achieved by state-driven policy programs, particularly when gender equality policies are made within the complex web of state goals, internal institutional dimensions of women's policy machineries, and complicated relationships with civil society. Facing this reality, bottom-up cultural change by progressive feminist activists for de-gendering the society and changing the status of women's policy machinery for gendering the state are necessary.

Within the context where transformative policy making is constrained by the political structure and powerful social political conservative norms, grassroots activities by radical feminists outside the state are necessary to change the regime and to expand the critical mass. The pressure to change the state will broaden the channel for the engagement of progressive activism. The expansion of general public support will lower the cultural hurdle that the progressive feminist activists have to overcome and grant legitimacy from the general public of their attempts to change gendered social hierarchy, norms, and practices.

This bottom-up strategy seems to be applicable to other contexts where countermovement from social political conservatives is powerful against progressive activism. An important point that Stetson and Mazur (2010) made deserves attention in light of the Korean case. They did not find any significant countermovement influence to oppose the attempts by women's activists and women's policy agency in Western postindustrial democracies. Comparing the Korean case to the Western postindustrial democracies, it seems that the power of the countermovement is an

important factor influencing the success and failure of feminist movements and women's policy agencies. In other institutional contexts where the influences of religion were very strong, the power of countermovement institutions also prevailed. For example, Chilean women's policy agency had to face resistance from the Catholic Church to women's rights issues with the criticism of that as 'a threat to the family' (Jones, 2006).

The bottom-up strategy is already underway in Korea and deserves notice. The way the Korean progressive feminist activists are trying to change the deeply rooted values and practices in our everyday lives in the long run is not through the operation of the state body but through their activities at the grass-roots level while maintaining the strategy of engagement with state efforts for more urgent problems such as women's povertization (Cho-Hahn, 2004; Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008; Womenlink activist 3, 2009).

The emphasis on 'bottom-up' social transformation over the 'politics of engagement' is a reflection of what progressive feminist activists expect from the state and what they think they need to do to achieve the long-term goal of the cultural change. For instance, the progressive feminist activists succeeded in abolishing the family headship system, the symbolic institution of the patriarchal family supported by the civil law, through strategies of engagement with the state. However, after their failure in changing the legal definition of the family and realizing the intractableness of the ideology of the traditional family, they are trying to find an effective way to engage with the general public even though they know that a rough process is ahead of

them (Interview with KWAU activist 1, 2008). Another example is that, while redressing feminization of poverty by supporting the state's increasing social service jobs, the progressive feminist activists are trying to create a new cultural principle of "care" for our everyday lives (Chapter IV).

The vision of changing society from the 'bottom-up' by establishing "care" for a communal life style is also a manifestation that progressive feminist activists are making a continuing effort to redefine the meaning of gender equality in order to overcome the limits of state-driven gender equality policies. The cooperative efforts of the women's movement and the femocrats have been generally made from the perspective of liberal individualism. For instance, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was introduced to guarantee women's equal 'rights' to work. The Affirmative Action for Female Public Officials was introduced to correct the historical subordination of women and grant them equal opportunity to work in the male-dominated political arena. The Laws on punishing sexual violence were introduced on the basis of women's individual bodily integrity.

However, the cases in this dissertation illustrate that while agreeing with the state's efforts to increase women's economic independence and liberate them from domestic work from the perspective of liberal individualism, the progressive feminist activists are attempting to create a new meaning of gender equality based on communalism in the milieu of the influences of the neo-liberal cultural principles aggravating social inequality. Instead of gendering the activity of care and extolling femininity associated with the activity, the Korean progressive feminist activists make

an attempt to ‘de-gender’ it. For the progressive feminist activists, it is not enough to grant women with the equal opportunities to work or force men to do the diaper change and dish washing. They are trying to establish the activity of caring and a philosophy grounded in care and human interdependency as the basis of society because this will create a society where reproductive activities as well as material production are important parts of both men and women’s lives (Shanley, 1983).

The strategy we have to find on the level of the state organization is to find the most effective organizational type. It is hard to make a sweeping generalization for the most effective organizational type of women’s policy agency due to the diverse social, political, economic, and cultural contexts in which women’s policy machineries and feminist activisms make an attempt to redress gender inequality. For example, Stetson and Mazur (2010) found that ministries which are headed by leaders with feminist experiences, have the policy proposal power, and are close to the dominant power in the government are more likely to produce policies with transformative contents. To the contrary, in the Korean case at hand, while all those factors were in place for MOGEF, MOGEF femocrats were not able to go far to preserve the transformative character in their policy contents (i.e. female labor force participation in Chapter III, family policy programs in Chapter VI). When they made an attempt to do so, they failed (i.e. changing the legal definition of the family in Chapter V). Therefore, strategies to change the state agency to be more transformative in character should be context specific.

In the Korean case, it is a strategy to separate or at least loosen the women's policy agency from the complex institutional web consisting of power, interests, and political norms so that the complex institutional web has less of an influence on the women's policy machinery. That way the organization is free to pursue in a less constrained way its vanguard organizational goal of changing everyday practices and values that reproduce gendered power relationships.

Fortunately, the Korean women's policy machinery has officials who are indeed reflecting on what ideal organizational form would increase women's equality. While femocrats consistently drew blueprints of organizational forms to have more control over implementation until MOGEF (2005-2007), now officials have a different one. As one MOGEF official put it:

After the contraction [of MOGEF to MOGE in 2008], one of the higher-rank officials [of MOGE] in our staff meeting said the organization should take a form of "nomadic" institution, which means the organization should not settle in fixed jurisdictions [for implementation]. It should be an organization to discover new policy arenas [to redress gender inequality] and incubate new policy programs for certain time periods and pass them over to the pertinent ministries. I really agree with the official (Interview with MOGEF official 1, 2008).

I agree with the official's opinion. The form of a 'nomadic' institution will get the organization out of the complex labyrinth of power and interests. When they are free from the turf battles, the exploration of new policy possibilities and pursuing the vanguard organizational goals will be richer.

The dilemma is that the organization could be marginalized within the state when the organization is loosened from the institutional web. This dilemma should be solved through the combination of the ministerial characteristics with the generation of creative and progressive policy ideas by femocrats and feminist activists. This ideal

type should be reached through the ongoing efforts of social movements to change the political norms to allow diverse experimental activities performed by the nomadic institution, to influence the establishment of a more progressive regime, and to raise gender consciousness in our everyday lives.

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