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Gender Analysis of Politics, Economics and Culture of Korean Reunification: Toward a Feminist Theological Foundation for Reunified Society

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**Gender Analysis of Politics, Economics and Culture of Korean
Reunification:**

Toward a Feminist Theological Foundation for Reunified Society

By
Jin Sung ChoLee

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Claremont Graduate University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate Faculty of Religion

Claremont, California

2012

Approved by

Dr. Karen Jo Torjesen

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APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

We, the undersigned, certify that we have read, reviewed, and critiqued the dissertation of Jin Sung ChoLee and do hereby approve it as adequate in scope and quality for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract of the Dissertation

Gender Analysis of Politics, Economics and Culture of Korean Reunification: Toward a Feminist Theological Foundation for Reunified Society

By

Jin Sung ChoLee

Claremont Graduate University 2012

In this study, I have focused on the process for an eventual reunification of North and South Korea. In this process, Korean political, economic, cultural and religious issues are necessarily present. My study focuses on cultural and religious factors.

I adopt the German reunification as a case study. The German reunification process provides Koreans with lessons about the negative changes in the status of German women since the German reunification caused extreme instances of the loss of status and economic opportunity for women. German reunification shows that the unequal situation and systems in society were not only due to political positions. Strong religious factors deeply influenced the German mentality.

A similar religion-factor is at work in North Korean society which is influenced by Confucianism and in South Korean society which is influenced by Confucianism and conservative Christianity. I argue that religion is one of the major factors in the political culture of Korea, and religion can either assist a fair and equal process for both women and men or it can in a biased way maintain a male-oriented form of reunification. Consequently, the cultural and religious factors in this process of reunification must

include an equalization of women and men. This can only take place if Korean women are major participants in the entire reunification process.

There is a serious need for a reunification theology which incorporate gender into Korean theology, thus providing a 'feminist reunification theology.' A 'feminist reunification theology' presents basic theological principles that will help build an egalitarian community. There are three important ways to include women's concern for true reunification: 1) The creation of an egalitarian community in work, family and society; 2) The restoration of humanity by healing love and forgiveness through the power of Cross; and 3) The need for religion to be reformed in which a women can be a co-leader in family, church and nation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

In this study, my thesis focuses on the process for an eventual reunification of North and South Korea. In this process, Korean political, economic, cultural and religious issues are necessarily present. These issues, however, are only the over-arching background for my central position. My central position can be stated as follows. In the reunification process, cultural and religious factors play a central role. However, without women's perspectives and participation in rebuilding Korea, the reunification process will be seriously inadequate. Consequently, both the cultural and religious factors must include an equalization of women and men.

I will use the data which took place during the reintegration of East and West Germany, since the German process occasioned a serious inequality of women, and this kind of equality should not be duplicated in the reunion of North and South Korea. I will also use data based on the Confucian culture which has dominated Korean society and which continues to do so in both North and South Korea. The Confucian culture has strongly emphasized the superiority of men. In the German situation, Christianity was played a major religious role, and in the Korean situation, Confucianism will be the major 'religious factor.' My thesis which centers on gender equality calls for an equal position for women based on cultural and religious factors which will assure that a reunited Korea will serve the entire population in a positive way. My feminist reunification theology is

based on the Christian Bible and on the best aspects of the Confucian tradition.

Consequently, the reunified Korean community will, hopefully, be a community of love and forgiveness and women will be co-builders of the new community.

1. Statement of the problem

1) Feminist perspective in reunification discourse

The Korean War and the subsequent demarcation made between North and South Korea impacted the lives of all Koreans. It has destroyed the economic foundation of Korean life; it has produced political chaos throughout the two Koreas; and many Korean families have been wounded through death, anger and fear. Korean women, specifically, have experienced a great portion of the wounds and damages inflicted by the consequences of war. Most women suffered severe poverty and yet they had to care for their families. The sexual assaults caused by the war were burdensome. War widows and the lives of *Gijichon*¹ women's were gruesome.

Based on this understanding, we could ask whether reunification will bring a new and better standard of life for Korean women. Presently, however, the dream of a new society in the reunified Korea leaves no room for women. Most politicians and

¹ Gijichon women: Gijichon means villages which formed around foreign bases, but actually it means an entertainment village near the U.S. military bases with night clubs and entertainment facilities. Thus, the term Gijichon women means the women who worked as prostitutes in their poverty for sexually servicing the U.S. soldiers who resided in the area of Gijichon after the division. After liberation of Korea from Japan, many women entered in the area and were known as licensed prostitutes. From the 1970's onward, South Korea suffered from a lack of foreign currency, and therefore the women were praised by the South Korean government as industrial laborers earning U.S. dollars. Actually, their lives were very miserable due to confinement and unpaid wages; some women were even routinely beaten. Officially, the government blindly overlooked these women. Prostitution seemed to help the economic welfare of the country. See *Sungdae Newspaper*, March 9, 2012, "The Human Rights of Gijichon Women screened in Cynicism and Prejudice." www.sknews.com

governors, theologians and researchers in the reunification processes are male. Also, in the discourse about reunification, there is little consideration for women. As we see in the cases of German and Yemen reunification, both countries have shown the difficulties of political, economic and social systems as far as women are concerned after reunification.² Especially, in the case of the German reunification, the process did not provide new opportunities for women. In contrast, German reunification caused further loss of status and economic opportunity for women.³ This fact leads us to the conclusion that Korean reunification could easily affect women in an adverse way, similar to that of Germany, because the positioning of women in the reunification process will be shaped by cultural considerations rather than political factors which should benefit all citizens, both male and female. German reunification shows that the unequal situation and systems in society were not only political but there was also a strong religion-factor which influence deeply the German mentality. A similar religion-factor is already at work in North Korean society which is under the influence of Confucianism and in South Korean society which is under the influence of both Confucianism and Christianity. Thus, I am arguing that religion is a major factor in the political culture of Korea, and religion can either assist a fair and equal process for both women and men or it can in a biased way maintain a male-oriented form of reunification.

Why did reunification in Germany impact women badly? There are two possible responses to this question. First, women did not participate in the unification process.

² Kim Kung Mi, "Dokil Tongilgwa Gu Dongdokjiyeokui Yeosung [German reunification and the women who were in East Germany]," *International Political Science Association Annual Conference Kit*, 2000. 2.

³ Myra Marx Ferree, "After the wall: Explaining the status of women in the former GDR," *Sociological Focus*, Vol.28. No.1 (1995): 10.

Second, women's problems were postponed because national and social problems were the priority after reunification. However, interestingly enough, this was not only true in the case of Germany. According to Jung Hyun-Back, human right violations of women and minority groups have been ignored easily in Korean history.⁴ This historical development means that equal opportunity cannot be given naturally. Women have to figure out what happened in history and they have to make sure that there is no repetition of past mistakes.

Therefore, from the building of the discourse on reunification, women's perspectives and voices have to work together for the future of a reunified society. Park Sun-Kyung asserts that women have to be "a Mother of a Nation,"⁵ which means that women have to be a main body in the national problems. Also, as I mentioned above, in the development of reunification and its theological factors, there were only male centered perspectives and not much study about a reunification theology from the perspective of women. Simply stated, women's voices and experiences were not involved. Therefore, there is a need to develop a feminist reunification theology which engages in the discourse of the role of women. Furthermore, the reunification is not only a problem politically and geographically for there is a greater problem, namely, how wounded hearts can be reconciled as a community. Women's hearts and minds are good soil to bring about healing, and therefore women should be a major part of the reconstruction and rebuilding of one nation as a new family. If women's perspectives

⁴ Hyun- Back Jung, Bundangwa Yeosung guirgo Tongilgwajeong [The Division: Women and The Process of Reunification], *Women Peace Academy*, (2001, Spring): 6 -7. I explain this more clearly in this dissertation, 110 – 111.

⁵ Sun-Kyung Park, *Tongil Shinhakui Mirae [The Future of Reunification Theology]* (Seoul: Four Seasons, 1997), 212.

were involved in theology and politics, there would be more harmony and justice for the new society. Therefore, feminist perspective theology and politics are needed for the future society of Korea.

2) Political and social perspective

Korea has been divided since 1953 into two countries, North and South, and it remains the last divided country in the world today such as Ben Kremenak indicates that Korea's division is the only survived case of the cold war.⁶ Also, there is a unique characteristic since North Korea kept the country apart even after the collapse of Soviet communism.⁷ The division during these 60 years has caused many conflicts. North and South Korea are against each other and are both armed with nuclear weapons, large armies and sizeable defense budgets. This tension creates great difficulty in cooperating with each other along the 38th parallel. There are deep wounds left by the war⁸ and both sides have thought of each other as enemies. Separated families have experienced many traumas called *han*. Still the people who left their families in the North wish to see them again before they die.

Also, the division was used by South Korea dictatorships to keep their regimes under the National Security Law. The security of the nation was a priority during the fifty

⁶ Ben Kremenak, *Korea's Road to Unification: Potholes, Detours, and Dead Ends*, Center for International and Security Studies Papers, v. 5 (Maryland School of Public Affairs, University of Maryland at College Park, May 1997), 75.

⁷ Kong-Dan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, *North Korea through the Looking Glass*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 11.

⁸ See, Gyoung-Ho Jeong, "Korean Christian Ethics for Peaceful Tongil between South and North Korea," (Ph.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, 2002), 2. The Korean War was an disaster. 245, 000 were killed, 300,000 went missing and more than 330,000 were wounded. The number of noncombatants slaughtered was around 130,000 and about 85,000 were kidnapped to North Korea. Nearly 300.000 became widows and 100.000 children became orphans. The number of separated families was calculated as more than 100.000.

years just after the division and it repressed democracy in South Korea. In North Korea, the effects of the law were even worse. Min points out in detail how the politics of security worked in the South Korean society. First, the politics of security were used as a method to extend the existence of the dictatorial governments by oppressing all criticism. Thus, whenever the governing body needed it, the National Security Law was applied and in many ways it is still in operation today. Secondly, the politics of security overwhelmingly led “the political wildness” in South Korea by considering every criticism of the government as criticism against the nation itself. The politics of security prevented both a positive and creative imagination of politics and a development of democracy. Also, welfare policies for the poor were considered as evidence of a communist mentality. Thirdly, the politics of security led South Korea to be a dependent country to the United States. South Korea’s capitalism depended on the economy in the United States and American economics controlled South Korean economics. Thus, if the American government ordered the South Korean government to send Korean soldiers to war, the leaders of South Korea had to do so. Another interesting factor is seen in the fact that the U.S. generals were and still in many ways are the chief leaders of South Korean troops.⁹

Moreover, a serious problem is the gap between the South Koreans in their perspective about the North. For example, when North Korea was suffering from starvation during the 1990s, helping them was an issue in South Korea even though South Korea had the problem which centered on the consumption of the South’s surplus rice.

⁹ Anselm Min, “Hanbando Pyunghwawa Bokjisahoegeonseol [Peace and the construction of welfare society in Peninsula],” *Korean Vision*, First edition (2011): 38-39.

There is a different thinking about North Korea in the South; one group is very negative, and the other group is positive in helping and cooperating. This makes the division even greater. More than just finding ways to help and cooperate with each other, the major problem remains reunification.

A question arises. Is there a possibility of peace and development in South Korea without reunification?¹⁰ Without reunification, South Korea has already been able to keep peace and achieve economic prosperity. Furthermore, had there been no war, South Korea would have kept its status as the 12th economic powerhouse. In 1961, the per capita GDP was \$82, but in 2007, the per capita GDP had jumped to \$20,000. Also, a peace treaty, which ensured the North Korean system, its economic exchanges and a mutual disarmament, would indeed contribute to keep the entire peninsula at peace. However, “no one can deny that there is always uneasy peace and peace with the fire of war if there is no reunification”: uneasy peace has the possibility to change to war anytime and therefore is an obstacle to the future of the nation.¹¹ Because of all this, reunification is crucial for the development of national prosperity and security.

Korean reunification is crucial for the development of national prosperity and international survival. Further examination of the initial causes of the division sheds greater light onto why reunification is necessary. This reason can be understood in two dimensions: external and internal. Externally, we have to see the complex international politics surrounding the Korean peninsula. Dieter Dettke claims that “almost half a

¹⁰ Ibid., 35-36.

¹¹ Ibid.

millennium of common history is a strong indicator that the division of the two Koreas is artificial and they should be together.”¹² The division of Korea was not based on Korea’s self-determination but rather implemented by foreign forces. The division of Korea started with the 1945 Allied Victory in World War II ending thirty-six years of Japanese colonialism. Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Chiang Kai-Sheok agreed that Japan should lose all territories and they affirmed Korea’s freedom and independence at the Cairo Conference.¹³ Following the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, Soviet forces invaded Manchuria and moved into Korea following Joseph Stalin’s agreement with Harry Truman during the Potsdam conference. U.S. leaders, however, worried that the whole peninsula might be occupied by the Soviet Union which may then lead to a Soviet occupation of Japan. The Soviet Union arrived in Korea before the U.S. forces, but they occupied only the northern part of the peninsula. The U.S. forces occupied the southern part, with the 38th Parallel as the dividing line.¹⁴ Under this complication, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to administer Korea under a U.S. and Soviet Joint Commission. This agreement set the foundation for the Korean War in 1950, a conflict which is still without resolution sixty years later.

The second reason for the Korean division was internal. Internally, it can be discussed in two ways: the ideological clash between the Korean communist group and

¹² Dieter Dettke, “The Mellowing of North Korean Power: Lessons of Reconciliation and Unification for Korea from Germany,” in *Korea Briefing, 2000-2001*, eds. Kong-Dan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig (Published in cooperation with the Sia Society, 2002), 185.

¹³ Bruce Cummings, *Divided Korea: United Future?* (New York, Foreign Policy Association, N.306, Spring, 1995), 24-30.

¹⁴ Ibid., 31-32.

the democratic group¹⁵ and the large difference between rich and poor at the end of the *Chosun* dynasty. First, after the colonization of Japan, Korea was divided into two ideological groups. One was the Korean communist group which was supported by the Soviet Union and the other was the democratic group which was supported by the United States. Their ideologies clashed and rejected each other. Thus, even though the Korean division was due to external factors directly, the internal reason has been ingrained in the minds of Koreans so that the nature of Koreans has the tendency to divide in to groups.

Second, according to Min, Korea was already a divided nation before the U.S. and the Soviet Union made Korea in two.¹⁶ One of the main internal reasons was the big difference between rich and poor. These were divided in two group systematically; 10 percent of the nobility ruling group and 90 percent of the middle and low level group (a division which saw a minimum number of people in the ruling group and a majority of poor people in the remainder of the population). The difference of social position and wealth caused *Han* and anger for the poor people throughout the 19th century on the *Chosun* peninsula. *The War of Hong Kyung-Rae* in 1812, *The Revolt of Jesu* in 1813, *the uprising of farmers in Samnam province* in 1862 and *the War of Donghak* in 1894 show the situation of the end of the *Chosun* dynasty. In the 19th century of the *Chosun* hegemony, many poor people were filled with *han* and anger. Thus, Min states that the split between the ruling group and the poor people gave problem-causes to the foreign

¹⁵ Young-Min Baik, *Transforming the Myth of Oneness for Korean Christianity*, (Boston: Northwestern University, 2006), 193.

¹⁶ Anselm Min, "Tongileun Urisidae Minjokui Jisangmyungryungida [Reunification is our Nation Commandment in Our Time]," Unpublished paper for the conference: A Viable Road Map to Accomplish Korea Reunification- Common Roles of Both Korea Governments and Drastic Change of US Korea Policy (January, 17, 2009): 11.

powers for interfering in the *Chosun* dynasty; it started from China during the *Chung* dynasty and next Japan's advancing and finally Japan's occupying Korea.¹⁷

After the colonization of Japan, Korea was divided into two ideologically different groups, as we saw above. One was the communist group which was supported by the Soviet Union and the other was the democratic group which was supported by the United States. Their ideologies clashed and they rejected each other. Thus, even though the Korean division was due to external factors directly, the internal reason has been ingrained in the minds of the Koreans so that the nature of Koreans has the tendency to divide into groups.

For this reason, reunification is necessary in order for Korea to regain control over its own peninsula. Thus, Anselm Min claims that "the searching for the nation's autonomy and prosperity is the right stream of history which will overcome wounded hearts and 'han' caused by the War and confrontations."¹⁸ Thus, solving the nation's division has been the clear task of Koreans since its division. Moreover, Korean reunification would mean the end of the Cold War which would then contribute to building peace in East Asia.¹⁹

Economic reasons are very important to Korea in establishing a unified country in the economic global world today. Every world order is led by an economic power so, without economic power, national autonomy is threatened by other nations. Based on this

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 7- 9.

¹⁹ Ibid.

perspective, building a strong economic country is important for self-reliance and protecting national autonomy.

From an economic perspective, the division of Korea has led to wasted resources in both countries as each country has used far too much money for war expenditures. For example, according to the *Gukbang newspaper*, January 4, 2010, South Korea's defense budget for 2010 was about 295 hundred million dollars, and North Korea's defense budget is estimated as four hundred million, and nine thousand dollars.²⁰ If we count all of the money used for military security during the past fifty years, an enormous amount of money was wasted. All of this indicates that military expenses inhibited the national development of both countries because the military money was not used for productive purposes. Moreover, according to the *Hanguk Newspaper*, August 12, 2011, under the assumption of a reunification in 2030 and under the assumption that South Korea's defense budget could be estimated at 1.5% of the GDP of South Korea, the defense budget from 2022 to 2030 would be 5,853 hundred million dollars which is only South Korea's budget. This shows how much money could be saved and used it would for productive purposes rather than its use as the budget.²¹

These expenditures lead to economic uneasiness and obstructed economic development due to the possibility of conflict. For example, the possibility of military conflict increases uneasiness for the economic activity of the country, and it restricts economic development which is sorely needed in many areas of Korean life. Moreover,

²⁰ *Yunhab Newspaper*, April, 1, 2008.

²¹ Anselm Min, "Hanbando Pyunghwawa Bokjisahoegeonseol [Peace and the Construction of Welfare Society in Peninsula]," 36-37.

these situations restrict national profits which are important if a nation wishes to be a competitive power. That would only be possible if North and South Korea would cooperate with their creativity and labor.²² Therefore, if Korea is reunified, there will be positive economic effects. According to Jin Si- Won, the effort of unification of the South and North would contribute to a larger economy and Korea's economic development and also, the Korean nation's prosperity would multiply with mutual assistance in the combined economic system of South and North Korea.²³ When North and South begin to cooperate together, their creativity, labor forces, and resources would engender a powerful international competitiveness, due to North Korea's cheap and excellent labor forces, development of mineral resources and the promotion of the expansion of domestic markets through the North.²⁴

Moreover, economic integration can contribute to easing North Korea's financial difficulties and revitalizing the North Korean economy. Improving mutual assistance and its effect can ease the tension between the two communities in military affairs and in diplomatic relations. It has both benefits: economic benefits and peace-keeping benefits. Also, economic integration would stay the possibility of sudden collapse in North Korea and prevent an absorption form of reunification that would only yield larger economic burdens.²⁵ According to Dettke, North Korea is in danger of collapse under the burden of

²² Ibid.

²³ Ik-Pyo Hong and Si-Won Jin, *Nambuktonghabui Saeroun Yihae [A New Understanding of North and South Korea's Integration]* (Seoul: Ohreum, 2004), 21.

²⁴ Anselm Min, "Hanbando pyunghwawa Bokjisahoegeonseol [Peace and the construction of welfare society in Peninsula]," 36-36.

²⁵ Ibid., 137-139.

its own oppression, its military expenditure and its dysfunctional economy. In the case of collapse, South Korea would have to absorb the poverty and hunger of about 23 million people living in devastating conditions.²⁶ Therefore, economic integration is needed as the necessity for survival in today's unlimited economic global world.

Also, as Jin Si-Won indicates, reunification has a very important element in 'geo-political strategy' and 'geo-economic strategy.' In these strategies, the central axis of the peninsula moves from an ocean power that connects America and Japan to Eurasia to a land power that connects China, Russia, East Asia and Europe. South Korea is disconnected from the rest of Eurasia because of the geographical restrictions posed by North Korea. Also, North Korea has postponed the normalization of diplomatic relations with America and Japan. The geographical position of Korea is very important in this sense and thus, reunification can satisfy the 'geo-political, geo-economical' elements which could lead to Korea's peace and prosperity.²⁷

Reunification also has nationalistic reasons for its progress. North and South Koreans were one nation with the same blood, language, and culture after *Silla* unified the kingdom in 668 C.E. Therefore, Korea has been looked upon as sharing a same destiny. However, the current division and war has created barriers between the two and led to much hatred and contempt of each other as enemies. Another problem, according to Min, is that the division of Korea means the division of national power and the division of national competitiveness. This is true when there was a Korean separation brought about by Japan's attack in the late 19th century, and the same situation occurred

²⁶ Dieter Dettke, 185.

²⁷ Ik-Pyo Hong and Si-Won Jin, 20.

when the country was divided by the U.S.A and the Soviet Union in the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore, he claims that Koreans have to reunify and rediscover the nation's excellent creativeness, labor and resources to resolve the eventual united nation's *han* and to recover national pride in the international society. Thus, it avoids a Korea which lived in humiliation during the invasion of Japan and the subsequent division by foreign powers. Furthermore it would contribute to peace in East Asia.²⁸ Therefore, reunification is a necessary task for Korean's who suffered with colonization and division. This is the wider task of the Korean reunification today.

3) The phenomenon of Korean Church

Why is the Christian group's attitude about reunification important? In South Korea, about 29.2% of the population is Christian²⁹ and the Christian influence in South Korean society is powerful in politics, economics and culture. Therefore, Christian attitudes about reunification are important in South Korean society. In this research, I will focus on the Korean Protestant perspectives and theologians among the Korean Christians. Unfortunately, however, the majority of Korean churches do not see the importance of reunification; as a result, churches, before the 1990s, did not present strategies and directions for reunification. The majority of Christian Churches had hard times due to this ideological struggling; within the churches there is a conflict between two groups, progressives (called *Jinbo*) as Anti-Americanism, and conservatives (called

²⁸ Min, 9.

²⁹ According to the South Korea census in 2005, Christian population is 29.2 (of which 18.3% is Protestant and 10.9% is Catholic). Christians were about 10,000 at the end of 1960 and South Korea Christianity had its most rapid growth in 1980s. The person who has religion is 53.1%. Among them, Buddhism is 22.8% and Christianity is 29.2%.

Bosu) as Anti-Communism and Nationalism.³⁰ The minority (*Jinbo*) group protested against the politics of anti-communism, and fought for democracy and human rights. These Church leaders were represented as *Minjung* theologians or as a progressive clergy struggling with the industrial workers for their rights on the Protestant side and for peace and justice on the Catholic side. In contrast, the major churches in Protestantism simply reinforced their anti-communist theological positions. One of the reasons why this happened in Protestantism in South Korea was the influx of northern protestant who had fled to the South to avoid persecution by North communists.³¹ These Protestants from the north were basically anti-communist in their religious positions. Also, many clerics were either martyred or kidnapped and many churches were destroyed by the communists. Therefore, they thought that anti-communism is the correct way to keep their faith. Thus, major Christian groups considered that the *Jinbo* group is trying to develop reunification theology and movements as ‘North Korean supporters.’ Moreover, the *Bosu* groups (comprised of the major conservative evangelical Christianity) have the dream of absorption in the eventual unification of North Korea by the South. Thus they want to have the chance to expand Christianity into North Korea. Also, missionary groups in South Korea expect North Korea’s collapse and are waiting for the chance to expand their

³⁰ To categorize Korean Protestantism is not easy because the categories depend not only on political beliefs but also on theological positions. Yu Dong-Sik categorizes Korean Protestantism’s theology in three streams; the conservative fundamentalism, the progressive theology which is open to participation in social actions and the theology of settlement based on cultural dialogue. See, Dong-Sik Yu, *The Vein of Korean Theological Thought*, 6th ed. (Seoul: Junmangsa, 1993), 29-30.

³¹ Anselm Min, “Between Indigenization and Globalization: Korean Christianity after 1989,” In *Falling Walls The Year 1989/90 as a Turning Point in the History of World Christianity*, Herausgegeben von Klaus Koschorke ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009),196.

missions into North Korea without seriously considering how the absorption-reunification would create more national problems for Korea.³²

Also, 'the anti-communism' group created 'the division theology' by the South Korean Christian leaders and 'the division theology' became their belief that defeating communism is God's will. There was no room for talking about 'peaceful reunification.' Nevertheless, there were voices that challenged "the division theology," creating "the reunification theology." The reunification theologians proclaimed that division is sin and peaceful reunification is God's will and the Korean churches' theological mission. 'The division theology' and 'the reunification theology' are still coexisting in the South Korean churches.³³

Luckily, the *Bosu*, conservative group, started to cooperate with the *Jinbo* group with the change of the international political situation, in the dissolution of the Cold War and the German reunification in 1990s. The *Bosu* group came to be interested in reunification in terms of national reconciliation and peace. This is a big change when it is compared to their 'division theology.' North Korea's food shortage became a special motive to the *Bosu* group in joining the reunification movement. They could not turn away from the North Koreans' tragic conditions.

³² Park Sun-Kyung, op. cit., 30.

³³ The progressive group that led by the National Council of Churches in Korea accept the *Josun* Christian Federation as a fair contact. On the other hand, the conservative group lead by the Christian Council of Korea considered the *Josun* Christian Federation as a political institute which was controlled by the North Korea government. So, they considered the underground churches of the North as representatives of North Korea churches. But with the recognition of the changed situation, they admitted both; one side is *Josun* Christian Federation as a method of nation reconciliation and the underground churches as evangelization of North Korea. See, Hee-Mo Lim, "The Problem of Rebuilding North Korean Churches," *Peace and Reunification Theology I*, (Seoul: Handeul, 2002), 113.

Nevertheless, the anti-communist ideology is still alive in Korean society.³⁴ With the win of the election in 2007 by the conservative forces, the new president Lee Myung Park has declared that the relation between the two Koreas would be re-examined. This means that he will not follow the achievements of the two preceding administrations (Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun). During Roh's administration, members of the "progressive Christianity," and members of Protestant activists controlled the Ministry of Reunification. However, the conservative churches discredited the progressive Christian establishment and separated themselves from the liberal Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC). In 1989, they re-formed themselves into an exclusive and conservative General Association of Korean Christian Churches (GAKCC). More interesting aspect of the political change is that president Lee comes from a conservative congregation and he had gained support for his election from the GAKCC and the various New Right movements.³⁵ These factors describe the dual-phenomenon of the South Korean churches as they operate today and these two churches will be active in any and every reunification plan. On this point of a dual church and the several forms of reunification, we can say that selecting the program for reunification is and will be a major challenge for the future of the Korean society generally and for the Christian churches particularly.

2. Thesis

Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, Korea has been divided into two countries remaining as the last divided country in the world today. Because of this

³⁴ Anselm Min, "Between Indigenization and Globalization: Korean Christianity after 1989," *Falling Walls the Year 1989/90 as a Turning Point in the History of World Christianity*, 198-199.

³⁵ Ibid.

division and the war that precipitated it, North and South Koreans have come to view each other as enemies. This has caused deep wounds over the past 60 years since the cease-fire agreement. Since the division was imposed mainly by foreign powers, achieving reunification autonomously is important not only for Korea's peace but for East Asia as well.

Given all of the above, how can we describe what the definition of reunification might be? Reunification is not only a political process but it is a very complex set of new relations which build on common historical, cultural and linguistic unity. Korean reunification would contribute to the Korean nation's prosperity and security. Only then would a reunified Korea give new opportunities and hope to all Koreans. We need to look at the political, social and economic consequences of reunification, especially examining the potential change in the status of women in the reunification process. Historically, women's roles often do not change after a nation's liberation and a people's emancipation. German reunification provides us with many lessons about the negative changes in the status of women. The former Communist East Germany, for economic resources, had integrated women into their labor force and instituted a family policy that made motherhood compatible with full-time employment.³⁶ In contrast to East Germany, West Germany, a Democratic capitalist country, had a family policy which supported motherhood (*Mütterlichkeit*; motherliness) but it was expensive and scarce.³⁷ Thus, it was generally not helpful to employ women. The lives of West German women were influenced by the ideals of a traditional Christian gender role. One might ask: what

³⁶ Lynn Duggan, "Restacking the deck: Family policy and women's fall-back position in Germany before and after unification," *Feminist Economics*, 1:1 (1995):175-194.

³⁷ Jennifer Lina Schulenberg, *Neuenbundeslander: The Effect of State and Policy Reunification on the Women and Families in the Former GDR* (M. A. diss., The University of Guelph, 2000), 71.

positive values did the reunification bring to the lives of German women? We need to focus on East German women especially. In the reunification, East German women had experienced a “*Ruckfall*,” a loss of status and economic opportunity after reunification. For example, in East Germany, the change from a socialist to a capitalist economy brought a major transformation into the market and this led to high unemployment. 40% of employment positions were lost between 1989 and 1992. Among them, according to *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* in 1993, 64% were women and only 36% were men.

Reunification means more than political and economic change because it brings about social, cultural and gender-role changes as well. Therefore, the German case leads us to the concern that reunification may in fact cause women to lose economic and social status. Why do women fare poorly in the reunification process? I argue that one of the main reasons for this can be found in the cultural and religious beliefs about gender. In German society, the conservative cultural and Christian patriarchal principles defined women’s primary responsibility as motherhood which restricted them to domestic life. These principles handicapped women when economic and social resources were redistributed in the process of reunification. Men as rulers and heads of households claimed the primary position in contemporary economic and political society as breadwinners. The women’s loss of economic opportunities affected also women’s status in society and family.

Then, what shapes the ideology of North and South Koreans, when it comes to political, social and cultural systems? North Korean ideology depends on Marxism and

Leninism but Kim Il-Sung developed his own version, *Juche*³⁸ ideology and North Korea granted women's equal opportunity from the founding of the country. However, research on North Korean women's position shows that women's status and the relationship between men and women are still ruled by Confucianism ideology. South Korea, a Democratic country, benefitted from economic development. The feminist movement in South Korea capitalized on this in order to improve women's economic and political status. However, South Korean society is also still controlled by Confucianism and patriarchal Christian cultural ideologies. These cultural and religious influences on both Koreas are likely to impact the status of women in the process of Korean reunification.

After the division of Korea in 1953, South Korean Christian leaders created 'division theology.' 'Division theology' considered an anti-communist ideology as 'God's will.' The opposition to the anticommunist ideology was even considered as a Christian heterodoxy.³⁹ The 'division theology' supported the South Korean government's '*Bukjin Tongil*' policy, namely, "march North Korea and unify the fatherland."⁴⁰ 'Division theology' came out of the experience of persecution by the North Korean communists; Christians who were considered pro-American and anti-communist were executed during the war which led to the massacre of innocent Christians.⁴¹ Also, five hundred church leaders were martyred or kidnapped and over a

³⁸ *Juche* means that the Korean masses are the masters of the country's development and the word also has been translated in North Korean sources as "Spirit of self-reliance." – From Wikipedia, '*Juche*' 10, 18, 2011.

³⁹ Ji-Yeon Jang, *Minjoktongileul Hyanghan Hankukgyohoeui Banghyanggwa Gwaje [Korean Churches' direction and task for the national reunification]* (M. A. diss., Homan Theological University, 2003), 39.

⁴⁰ Sang Gyu Lee, "*The Past and the Present of the Conventions on the Reunification Movement*," 33.

⁴¹ Hankuk Kidokkyo Yeoksa Yonguso Bukhan Kyohoesa Jippil Uiwonhoe, *Bukhan Gyohoesa [History of Christianity in North Korea]* (Seoul: Hankul Kidokkyo Yeoksa Yonguso, 1999), 419-423.

thousand churches were destroyed or damaged.⁴² Thus, anti-communism believed that *Bukjin Tongil* was the only way to protect Korea. ‘Peaceful reunification’ was not a possibility between the divided counties at the time because speaking about ‘peace’ was prohibited by the South Korean government. In this period (1945 – 1972)⁴³, there were voices challenging ‘division theology.’ Their challenges and vision for the peaceful reunification were dangerous in the dark age of Korean dictatorships.

For this dissertation, among South Korean Christian theologians who challenge ‘the division theology,’ there are three significant Protestant reunification theologians, Han Sok-Hon, No Jong-Sun and Kim Yong-Bok. They define the division as ‘sin’ according to the Bible and claim that the peaceful reunification is God’s will. Furthermore, reunification can be achieved by national independence and *minjung*.

However, even though they created the theological foundation for peaceful reunification, there was no place for women in their thinking about reunification. As we see in the case of German reunification, Korean reunification would be dangerous to women without women participation in the political process and without any consideration of the cultural and religious factors. Therefore, there is a need to incorporate gender into Korean Presbyterian theology and provide a ‘feminist reunification theology.’

⁴² Yonguwon Jaryo, “Haebangyihu Hankukgyohoeui Jaehyeongsung [Restructuring of Korean Church after Independence from Japanese Colonialism],” *Hyundae Kidokkyo Chongsuh* 4 (2009), 269.

⁴³ 1945 is the year of Rhee Seung –Man government’s inauguration as South Korea president and 1972 is the year of 7.4 South –North Cooperation Declaration.

This is my thesis as I mentioned in the introduction that it focuses on the process for an eventual reunification of North and South Korea. I claim that in the reunification process, cultural and religious factors play a central role. Without women's perspectives and participation in rebuilding Korea, the reunification process will be seriously inadequate. Consequently, both the cultural and religious factors must include an equalization of women and men. It is my hope that this feminist reunification theology will contribute in building an egalitarian community in the process of Korean reunification and the Korean society.

3. Outline of the Content

In the introduction chapter, I will outline the relationships between reunification as a national task and the political and economic social and theological factors. This analysis will provide the framework for why feminist perspective is needed in the reunification discourse.

In Chapter II, I will explain the theological framework. First of all, I will give an historical account of South Korean Christianity's attitudes about reunification. Secondly, I will explore the theological responses to Korean reunification by examining three theologians who are representative Protestant theologians. These three figures are fundamental to the establishment of Korean reunification theology. I will discuss their theologies and analyze them from a feminist theological perspective.

In Chapter III, as a political framework for Korean Reunification, I will explore how Germany's reunification negatively impacted the lives of German women. This begins with an investigation of why the German women lost ground in reunification.

Then, I will explain how the position of women in reunification is shaped by cultural considerations, especially religion and attitudes toward gender. I will specifically investigate the role of religion. Then, I will describe how the division has impacted the lives of Korean women and I will claim the need for feminist perspective reunification politics.

In Chapter IV, I will provide a cultural framework. I will explain how Confucianism effected Korean women's lives; North Korean women were influenced by Confucianism and South Korean women were influenced by Confucianism and Christianity.

In Chapter V, I will propose a Christian feminist reunification theology in order to help build an egalitarian community. This community is based on a right interpretation of the Bible and is looking to build up a community. Also, the community will be built through the power of the cross: by restoration, love and forgiveness. Furthermore, this newly established community allows women to be co-builders.

4. Methodology

In this study, my methodological approach will use theological, political, historical and analytical forms of method. In order to understand the possible impact of reunification on Korean women, I will use Germany as a case study, examining how German reunification impacted women's lives. By comparing Korea to the case of Germany, we can understand the potential impact that reunification will have on Korean women.

With the German case study, I raise the question: why does reunification impact women differently, placing women in the loss of status in the process of reunification? To answer this, I claim that this loss of position is not only a result of political and economic factors but also a result of cultural and religious factors. Therefore, in this study, the theological, political, economic, social, historical, religious, and gendered factors will be examined together. This study looks at how each exclusive area impacts the others.

However, I raise the following questions, what are the standards which shape politics? How does politics influence women's economic lives? What are the social side effects of unequal economic systems? I argue that these effects include discrimination based on gender, class, race, and religion which bring about marginalization and oppression in society. Therefore, the political, economic, cultural and religious approaches must function together.

The theological methodology will investigate why Korean reunification is a theological task and how the South Korean Christian theologies can address the problems of division and reunification. Also, through an examination of historical cases, specifically from Germany, I claim that the root cause of this phenomenon is cultural. Then, what are the greatest influences on the cultural factors? In the case of Germany, a major influence is religion, namely Christianity. Especially, in the matter of gender issues, the conservative and patriarchal Christian principles define women's primary responsibility as motherhood. These principles limit women's positions and opportunities in the economic and political field. The religious mind needs to be changed first for society to change since religion, as culture, is a root cause. Thus, based on this cultural

approach, I will investigate how the cultural religious factors influenced women's absence in the German reunification.

I will also examine the role of Confucianism in Korea. Even though North Korea is a communist country and even though they have granted women's position and opportunity from the founding of the country, Confucianism has been working on the lives and minds in a negative way. The influence of Confucianism and Christianity works in the same negative way in South Korea as well. Thus, it shows how Confucianism and Christianity have worked against the progress of women.

Lastly, I will go back to the theological approach. As a theologian, I construct a theological view of reunification theology from a feminist perspective.

5. Limitations

As a South Korean woman and an ordained Christian pastor, I am limited in terms of presenting a holistic perspective of the South Korean mind. In spite of this limited perspective, I believe that when all fields of study and all religious groups try to engage in the discourse of reunification theory and practice in their fields, the day of Korean reunification will be close at hand.

As a theologian and feminist, I am limited in my efforts to explore the political and economic information in the reunification. I am only interested in the political and economic factors. Thus, for the political and economic information, I rely heavily on the literature and analyses of Bruce Cumings, Anselm Min, Hong Ik-Pyo and Jin Si-Won. Even though I cannot approach the political and economic part with professionalism, I can see that feminist theology cannot be separated from politics, economics and the

cultural. The philosophy and theology of feminists have to influence all parts of study and life. Even though this research has limitations, the approach and connection needed for improving practical feminist theology.

The research about North Korean women's lives which are under the influence of Confucianism is helpful to build up a reunified community in order to better understand each other. However, North Korea is still a closed society. The country does not allow the outside world to investigate its situation; as a result, North Koreans are unable to connect with the outside in terms of travel, mass media, and books. Therefore, researching North Korean women's life is not easy. But with the effort of South Koreans who want to prepare for future reunification, there are archives of information speeches, novels, movies, and the testimony of North Korean defectors about North Korean life and its economic and political conditions. A few books, dissertations, articles and testimonies were consulted for the research but these have limitations in describing the whole of North Korean women's life and politics.

Chapter one has provided a statement of my thesis, and also the fundamental reasons why a feminine voice is needed in the reunification process of North-South Korea. In Chapter Two, I will focus on the theological and religious issues involved in this dissertation. Religion and, more particularly, a women's approach to religion cannot be seen as a secondary factor in the reunification process. Rather, it is a major factor. Directly and indirectly it affects the entire movement for reunification.

CHAPTER TWO

A THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR KOREAN REUNIFICATION

1. The Christian's attitudes and the importance of a theology toward Reunification

South Korean churches have two different perspectives about North Korea and Korean reunification: there is the *Bosu* or conservative group on the one hand and there is the *Jinbo* or progressive group on the other hand. The majority of conservative evangelical Korean churches strongly reinforced 'the anti-communist' mind and supported the South Korean government's '*Bukjin Tongil*' policy, namely, that the South Koreans should march into North Korea and unify the fatherland.⁴⁴ The 'anti-communist' mind produced 'the division theology' through which they considered an anti-communist ideology as 'God's will.'

1) The Reason for the emerging 'anticommunist Christianity' mind

The majority of conservative evangelical Korean Christians (*Bosu*) have reinforced "the anti-communist Christianity" mind and this only increased the South Korean anger toward the North and has established strong barriers against a peaceful reunification in the mind of Christians. They thought that building up 'the anti-

⁴⁴ Sang-Gyu Lee, "The Past and the Present of the Conventions on the Reunification Movement," *The Thought of Christianity*, vol. 439 (1995): 33.

communist ideology' was a service to the nation and to God. What were the reasons for the emerging of anticommunist Christianity in South Korea? There are three historical reasons: the Cold War itself, the experiences of persecution by North Korean communists to Christians, and the support from the Rhee Seung-Man government.

Firstly, according to Lee Man Yul's observation, the emergence of anti-communism started from the confrontation of Christianity and the socialists after the Korean liberation from Japan. During the colonial period, Christians and socialists worked together and respected each other because of the persecution of Japan, even though they had different ways of thinking.⁴⁵ The situation, however, was changed after liberation and the two sides were placed in a conflict relationship. The more basic reason for the confrontation, Lee states, was "the Cold War." The Cold War which was led by the United States of America and the Soviet Union resulted in the division of Korea. The emerging two different systems wanted to keep their systems and ideologies, but the efforts to preserve their systems brought about major conflicts with each other.⁴⁶ Lee points out that "the reason of conflict between Christianity and communism was that they were not aware how to overcome the Cold War order and the two systems did not meet together as regards the objectives of a nation."⁴⁷ Furthermore, the political division produced the division of denominational and theological stances within the Korean Church. Some churches were conservative while others were progressive.

⁴⁵ Man-Yul Lee, *Korean Christianity and National Reunification Movement*, (Seoul, Four Seasons, 1997), 354-356.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 354.

The influence of Western missionaries had a great influence on South Korea after the March 1st movement. The Western missionaries had a strong asocial tendency and this attitude conflicted with many social movements which started at the same time. There were labor movements, peasant movements, and youth and student movements. Korean Christianity had focused on inward faith, church growth and private piety of soul salvation.⁴⁸ Moreover, the asocial tendency of Christianity conflicted with communism, which began to be introduced in Korea and actually led to the killing of Christians in Manchuria. Because of this situation, missionaries defined communism as the center of anti-Christianity and these South Korean churches adopted anti-communist policies.⁴⁹

The second reason was the experience of North Korean Christians who were persecuted by North Korean communists which began in the late 1940s and lasted during the Korean War. The Korean War resulted in many thousands of combatant and civilian deaths. Twenty-five percent of the North Korean population was killed. Christians who were considered pro-American and anti-Communist were executed during the war which led to a massacre of innocent Christians.⁵⁰ Also, five hundred church leaders were martyred or kidnapped and a thousand churches were destroyed or damaged.⁵¹ Thus, many pastors and Christian leaders escaped to South Korea for religious freedom away from the persecution and they became the leaders of the South Korean church with its

⁴⁸ Man- Gil Kang, *Gochyeo Sseun Hankuk Hyundaesa [Revised Modern History of Korea]* (Seoul: Changbi, 2006), 57-70.

⁴⁹ Kyoung- Bae Min, *Gyohoewa Minjok [Church and Nation]*, 2ed. (Seoul: Korean Christian Publisher, 1992), 251-252.

⁵⁰ Hankuk Kidokkyo Yeoksa Yonguso Bukhan Kyohoesa Jippil Uiwonhoe, 419-423.

⁵¹ Yunguwon Jaryo, "Haebangyihu Hankukgyohoeui Jaehyeongsung [Restructuring of Korean Church after Independence from Japanese Colonialism]," *Hyundae Kidokkyo Chongsuh*, 4 (2009), 269.

anti-communist mindset. These situations made many Christians believe that all communists were atheists and evil. Thus, their stance was “the confrontation between evil and angel.”⁵²

The third reason was the support from Rhee Seung-Man government. Because of Rhee Seung-Man’s election, who was the first president in South Korea (1945) and an elder in the Christian church, Christianity’s attitude towards unification began to change. Many Christian groups developed a religious perspective, the goal of which was victory over communism. This perspective provided a stronger division in South Korea on the issue of reunification.⁵³ Rhee held the view that the development of Korea based on the ideology of Christianity and on the support of the United States was the best democratic model.⁵⁴ About fifty-percent of cabinet-level officials in the new government were Christian.⁵⁵ In addition, the experience of horrendous terrors and disaster during the Korean War led to the belief that anti-communism was the only way to protect South Korea from North Korea.⁵⁶ Thus, North Korea was considered as an enemy to defeat and “the theory of a forced unification” and “the theory of an attack-on-North—Korea-

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Gi-Youn Jang and Dong- Sun Kim, “Minjok Tongilgwa Bukhansungyo [Reunification of Nation and the North Mission],” *Missio Dei*, 393.

⁵⁴ Jong-Chol An, “From Enlightenment to Anti-Communism: the Relationship between Syng-man Rhee and Christianity, 1912~1950,” *Dongbang Hakji* 145 (2009): 193.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 109.

⁵⁶ Won-Jin Nam, “A Study on Discourse of National Literature of South and North Koreas (1945-1962),” *Bukhan Yeongu Hakhoe*, 10, no. 1. (2006), 178-179.

reunification”⁵⁷ prevailed. Any other way of reunification was considered as communist ideology.⁵⁸

The anti-communist ideology worked together in the churches and public education. I remember the public education program about anti-communism during my own elementary to high school years (1970's - 1980's). We learned that communists were cruel and that they killed a child whose name was Lee Seung-Bok because he shouted “I dislike communists.” Moreover, whenever I enter the school, I saw a large sign in front of the school's building that read, “I dislike communists.” Every year, a student competition was held for the best anti-communist posters and writings in which usually North Korean communists were described as red devils. We even thought that North Koreans had red colored skin. In contrast, the United States was considered as the savior of South Korea who would eventually defeat North Korean communists.

With this mixing of the anti-communist ideology and the Christian mind, anti-communism became a national characteristic with its Christian identity. Therefore, South Korean Christians supported the government and the theory of a North Korean attack-reunification. North Korea was defined as the devil.⁵⁹ Furthermore, this perspective engendered a silence by South Korean church leaders, so that they could not openly criticize the unethical activities of the South Korean government. Many Christian groups lost their prophetic voices and the church prospered under the name of national security.

⁵⁷ Kang-Sik Kim, “Bundangwa Tongileul Eoddeoge Bol Gotinga? [How can one see the division and reunification?],” *Shindongah*, (1987): 602-603.

⁵⁸ Won-Bum Jung, 174.

⁵⁹ Philo B. Kim, “Tasks of South Korean Church for North Korea,” *The Bible and Theology* 37 (2005):13. The pastor, Han Kyung-Jik, is an example of this new trend. Han was one of the representative Presbyterian church pastors who in his preaching strongly insisted that a communist is the red dragon in the Apocalypse and therefore Christians have to confront this dragon in a negative way.

However, the April 19 Revolution in 1960, and the May 16 Coup d'états in 1961 provided a chance to change Korean Christianity. The revolution of April 19 led to a new nationalism. A large number of Christians had accepted Rhee Seung-Man government's illegal election, but they began to realize the need for a stern self-examination. They addressed their responsibility as Christians to the national problems.⁶⁰ Also, discussions about reunification were started by Christian leaders and pastors such as Kang Won-Young, Park Sang-Jeung, and Mun Ik-Han.

2) The development of “division theology” in the 1960s

The anti-communist mindset in South Korean Christianity produced “division theology.” This attitude of Christianity is shown in its history. When the ceasefire talks were held between the two Koreas, the Presbyterian conventions (in 1952 and 1953) clarified their position, stating that they opposed the cease-fire and expected reunification.⁶¹ Also, the Presbyterians expressed their dissatisfaction with the third agreement of the Joint Communiqué of 1972. This attitude led to the preference of the policy of an absorptive reunification in the 1980s.⁶² Therefore, the Korean Presbyterians had taken the position that war could be allowed for the elimination of communism and

⁶⁰ Man-Yul Lee, 393.

⁶¹ In-Chul Kang, “Bundangwa Pyounghwae daehan kidokgyoui Yeiksajeok Chaekim [Christian's Historical Responsibility on the Division and Peace],” *TC*, 438 (June 1995): 25.

⁶² Bueng-Guan Kim, *Korean Reunification and Jesus' Ethic: Guidance for Korean Churches*, (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997), 41.

that his war could be called “a sacred war,” or “a war of the crusade.”⁶³ Korean Christianity supported *Pukjin Tongilron*⁶⁴ and *Myulkong Tongilron*.⁶⁵

Even though discussion of reunification was started by a few Christians, the main idea of the movement in the 1960s was anti-communism. Division theology maintained that the anti-communist stance reflected the ideology of “God’s will,” and that opposition to the anti-communist stance was “heterodoxy.” Therefore, in their prayers they asked God to save and expand the churches to North Korea. They did not pray for the social responsibility of the churches in either the personal or the public level.⁶⁶ As a result, many reunification theologians asserted that Christianity had to confess the sin which had developed through “division theology.” The National Council of Churches in Korea⁶⁷ confessed that South Korean Christianity had sinned: “We confess that the Korean church’s silence in the history of Korean division. The churches had turned away from the movement for national reunification which had been strong in the past, and that this rejection had justified the division.”⁶⁸

3) The Emerging of reunification theology (1970s)

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ It mean that the principle of “march North and unify the fatherland.”

⁶⁵ It mean that the principle of “eradicate communism and unify the fatherland.” See Sang Gyu Lee, “The Past and the Present of the Conservative Conventions on the Reunification Movement,” 33.

⁶⁶ Ji-Youn Jang, 39.

⁶⁷ 37th General Assembly in February 29, 1988.

⁶⁸ Ji-Youn Jang and Dong-Sun Kim, 307, 315-316.

The regime of Park Chung-Hee (1970s) changed the policy about North Korea⁶⁹

In his “Declaration of Peace Reunification” on August 15, 1970; Park admitted that there were “the two Koreas.” He abandoned “the theory of the only one legal government.”⁷⁰

On July 4, 1972, the South-North Cooperation Declaration⁷¹ was a significant chance to change Christianity’s attitude for reunification. Up to this date, the major group of Christians (a conservative group) did not overcome the anti-Communist logic and did not have plans and directions for reunification even though reunification discussions through the N.C.C. had tried to amend the anti-communism ideals.⁷² The South North Cooperation Declaration was the first meeting between the North and South after the division and the delegates formulated the North South Joint Agreement Document. The South North Cooperation Declaration gave both great joy and shocking news to the people of South Korean, but South Korean Christians suffered an even greater shock and embarrassment because of their attitude and theology concerning o the North.⁷³ Even though many Korean Christians accepted the changing situation, they remained cautious about anti-communism.⁷⁴ Park Hyeong Gyu criticized their Christian attitude on the basis

⁶⁹ Sang-Jung Park, “Salgiuihan Nambuktongil [Reunification of North and South is Alive],” *The Christian Thought*, 1961, n. 2 (1961): 55.

⁷⁰ Won-Bum Jung, “Minjok Tongilgwa Hankuk Gidokgyo [Reunification of Nation and Korean Christianity],” *Theology and Culture*, (1995):178.

⁷¹ The July 4th South –North Cooperation Declaration was influenced by the changes in the international situation and conditions. East-West reconciliation and détente began to take place from the late 1960s to the early 1970s with Nixon’s visit to China and the Soviet Union, with Breckenridge’s visit to the U.S., and with Neff Tanaka’s visit to China.

⁷² Sun-Kung Park, 30.

⁷³ Moon-Gyu Kang, “Minjokbundanui Yeoksawa hanguk Gyohoeui Jagi Bansung”[History of National Division and the Korean Churches’ Self-Reflection] *The Christian Thought*(1989.3): 48.

⁷⁴ Sam-Yul Lee, *Pyeonghwaui Cheolhakgwa Tongilui Silcheon [The Philosophy of Peace and the Practice of Reunification]* (Seoul: Sunshine Press, 1991): 318.

that the Christians had maintained too much toleration for Capitalism's contradictions and evil, and in contrast these same Christian had maintained a pathological aversion to the communist system.⁷⁵

Another important incident in the 1970s was the emergence of various democratic movements in South Korean society. There was a strong dictatorship in the South Korean governments during span of 31 years (1961-1988).⁷⁶ However, progressive Christians had accepted the idea that the reunification movement could be achieved through democratization. As a result, many of Christian reunification activists joined the democratization movements against the dictatorial governments.⁷⁷ Thus, the Christian reunification movement's direction was "First democratization and then reunification." In this position, they tried to establish the basis for reunification an overcoming of internal problems, especially the problem of a dictatorship. The interconnection of reunification movements and democracy movements, however, was based solely on the progressive religious groups rather than on the entirety of the South Korean churches. Thus, these two streams of theology in South Korea came together but only on the basis of a change in government in South Korea.

Further problems, however, were also influential: the exclusiveness between the two theologies rubbed against the sharing of the same religious confession, the sharing of

⁷⁵ Hyong -Gyu Park, "Hwahaewi Bokeumgwa Nambukui Daehwa [The Gospel of Reconciliation and Dialogue of North and South]," *The Third Day*, Vol.13(1971,October) and Young-Bok Kim, "Minjokbundangwa Gidokgyiui Daeung [Nation Division and the Christian Response]," In: Jong-Ho No ed., *Korea Christian Social Movements* (Seoul: Roh Press, 1986), 202.

⁷⁶ In 1961 Park Jung-Hee was the president and in 1988 No Tae-Woo was the president.

⁷⁷ Man-Yul Lee, 394.

the same Bible, and the sharing of the same organizations. In all of this, they did not consider each other as partners. Rather than develop and explore new ways of theology through dialogues, they excluded each other leaving no room for listening to one another. Kim Dong Sun describes their attitude as follows: the progressive churches were sending cold smiles and they had a sense of superiority over and against the conservatives from the other side.⁷⁸ Thus, exclusiveness created further restrictions to develop the reunification movement.⁷⁹

4) Reunification as the churches' mission task in the 1980s

The 1980s became a crucial time for Korean Christianity. In this period of years, reunification was discussed mutually in an earnest way. Until the late 1980s, the government had monopolized the problem of reunification, but several major Christian groups had formed research organizations to discuss the issue of reunification within the churches.⁸⁰ Another important change in Korean Christianity involved the democratic movements and the reunification movements in a unity which could not be separated. The two movements were one. According to Lee Sam-Yul, these Korean Christians gave priority to the eventual democracy and social justice in South Korean society. These Christians fought against the Park Jung-Hee's dictatorship, but they also watched the establishment of a new dictatorship after the Park dictatorship. Therefore, these Christians realized that the basic reason for the reunification problems was the

⁷⁸ Ji-Youn Jang, 29-30.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Won-Bum Jung, 181.

government which was an undemocratic political system and an overbearing power structure. Also, they realized that the division of Korea had given enormous justification for the Korean dictatorship.⁸¹

Another change was that these Christians started to recognize that the problem of reunification was a mission task of the church.⁸² The Presbyterian Church in South Korea proclaimed on March 1980 that “the reunification is the churches’ mission task.” Also, they included the reunification problem in the article of Confession of Faith for the first time and added the view of a peaceful reunification as the South Korean Christian’s commission. The most representative proclamation of reunification as the mission of the church was “the Declaration of the Korean Christian Church for National Reunification and Peace” issued in February 1988 by the National Council of Churches in Korea (KNCC).⁸³ Thus, in the 1980s the Christian reunification movement contributed to expand the discussion of reunification from churches to the general public and evoked international interests about the problem of Korea’s division and reunification.⁸⁴

5) Cooperation between *Jinbo* (progressive group) and *Bosu* (conservative group) in the 1990s

⁸¹ Sam-Yul Lee, 1991, 319

⁸² Hung-Su Kim, “Hankukgyohoeui Tongilundongyeoksae Dahan Jaegumto [Review of the Korean Churches’ Reunification Movement History],” *Christian Social Issues Institute Mukeu*, 3 (1991): 115.

⁸³ Won-Bum Jung, 184.

⁸⁴ Sang-Jeung Park, “Gidokgyoui Sigakeseo Bon Hanbando Tongilmunjae [The Reunification Issue from the Christian Perspective],” *The Mission World*, vol.2 (1994): 70.

The 1990s had new changes internationally such as the dissolution of the Cold War and German reunification in 1990. On the other hand, South Korea achieved its first Civilian government in 32 years. The civilian government proclaimed “the agreement reunification” excluding “the absorption reunification.”⁸⁵ A more interesting change in 1990 was the conservative group’s participation in the reunification movement. The conservative churches started to be interested in the reunification movement for the national reconciliation and peace in Korea. Even though the conservative churches could not overcome “division theology,” they gave serious attention to the problems of North Korea such as food shortages in order to prepare the document “Preparing Nation’s Peace and Reunification.”⁸⁶

Also, the ‘Korean Christian Council for Peace and Reunification’ found and continued to lead both the solidarity and the cooperation reunification movements. These became important steps toward the reunification of Korea by Korean Christians who now had the possibilities to overcome their denominations and theologies. Kim, Hyung-Suk⁸⁷ describes the cooperation of both groups in the following way: “The ‘direct mission absolutist’ approach and ‘the reunification movement supremacist approach’ coincided in one goal. They have now started to recognize the need to cooperate each other.” The conservative churches remained in the Cold War ideology and in the expectation of absorption-reunification, and in the ideology of an imperialistic mission. Nevertheless,

⁸⁵ Mun-Young Heo, “Gidokgyo Tongilundong [Christian Reunification Movement],” *Nation Reunification and Korean Christianity* (Seoul: Korea Christian Student Press, 1994): 127.

⁸⁶ Man-Yul Lee, 352.

⁸⁷ Hyeong-Seok Kim, *KookminDaily* Newspaper, 2002, p.9, 18.

they also recognized that both groups have to join together for one nation and peace in the world.

In order to reach this union, the progressive churches have to accept the advantages of conservative churches, and also the conservative churches have to approve the Korean National Council of Churches in Korea which is a driving force in Korean society. Chae Su- Il suggests that because the reunification movement is a church mission task, the churches have to work together as a solidarity movement. Conservative groups also have to be in the reunification movement with all the advantages brought to it by the conservative denominations, the evangelical movements of North Korea, and the rebuilding movement of the North Korean church itself.⁸⁸ The Korean Christians, therefore, need to be awakened to the national task and have a more historical view. Korea's theological debates for reunification have to be developed even more strongly in the many and varied Korean Churches. Reunification theology must strongly influence and change South Korean society.

2. Korean theological responses for the principles of reunification.

As we saw above, South Korean Christianity had started research about Korean Reunification in the 1980s. Reunification theology focused on overcoming Korea's division and defined the division as hindering the establishment of God's peace in

⁸⁸ Su-Il Chae, "Hangihyeop 88suneon 10junyeon Ginyeomsuneon(Choan) [Declaration of the 10th Anniversary of hangihyeop 88 (draft)]," *The Church and the World* (1988, January –February): 29.

history.⁸⁹ Therefore, the goal of reunification theology was to make one Korean community primarily through peace. Furthermore, the reunification of Korea is not the final goal for it must continue to accomplish unity between North and South Korea.⁹⁰ It is not to be a one-sided victory since its goal is to make one community without mistrust and hostility. Also, it is expected that there will be a peaceful community as the fruit of justice.⁹¹

There are many reunification theologians in South Korea. Among them, I have selected three representatives who are representative Protestant theologians: Ham Sok-Hon, No Jong-Son and Kim Yong-Bock. Their works will be discussed, compared, and also examined from the feminist perspective.

1) **Ham Sok – Hon’s reunification theology**⁹² (1916 – 1989)

Ham is considered one of Asia’s important voices for democracy and non-violence. He was nominated two times for the Nobel Peace Prize (1979 and 1985) and often called the “Gandhi of Korea,” “a Korean prophet” or “a voice in the desert.” He lived as a religious philosopher and writer all his life and was known as a non-church-goer and even as a Quaker. He was incarcerated nine times because he criticized the regimes. We find his criticism in the following areas: his anti-Japanese colonialism, his

⁸⁹ Jong-Hwa Park, “The Achievement of National Reunification and Formation of Tongil Theology,” In *Faith and Theology No.3, Korean Church and Theology on the Transition Period*, ed. Korean Christian Association (Seoul: Yang Seo Gak, 1988),115.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 123.

⁹¹ Ibid., 130.

⁹² Ham Sok-Hon is a base of the thought of reunification and peace. His idea based on Christian pacifism. His national independence and *minjung* centered reunification ideas challenged not only to the Christian groups but also political groups which contrasted with the mainstream of South Korean Churches and the governments.

refusing to cooperate with the interim Soviet military government, and his anti-regime and pro-democracy stances and activities with his monthly magazine the “Voices of the People (*Ssial*).”⁹³ His challenges were made during the regimes of Lee Seung-man, Park Chung-Hee, and Chun Doo-Hwan.

Ham’s main idea of reunification can be characterized as peace,⁹⁴ national independence, *Minjung*,⁹⁵ humanitarianism, and democracy. As a theologian, philosopher, and activist, he defines the national division as a sin with and through a biblical understanding. Thus, he points out that Korea needs repentance and confession for the national division is not just a misfortune but it is also a sin. For national independence and peaceful reunification, he asserts the inspiring *Minjung*’s enlightenment in which the *Minjung* have responsibility for the reunification.⁹⁶ Ham did not separate religion and politics because both are necessary for healing the national problem; he defines it as “the sanctification of politics and the secularization of religion.”⁹⁷ Let us consider each of his main issues.

- **PEACE:** Peaceful reunification is one of the central ideas of Ham. He defines peace as neither a notion nor a theory but as a way of life. Thus, peace, for him, is “a

⁹³ “*Ssial*” means “the ruled” and it corresponds to the word “people.” “Voice of the People” was released from April 1970, the first edition to the 158th edition, January/February 2001. As a founder, Ham criticized the governments socially and politically during the oppressive era of the 1970s.

⁹⁴ Ji-seok Jung, *Ham Sok-Hon’s Pacifism and the Reunification of Korea: A Quaker Theology of Peace* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

⁹⁵ *Minjung*, according to Kim Young-Bock, are oppressed people in Korean history politically and economically and have not created their own destiny.

⁹⁶ Sok-Hon Ham, Hanguk Gidokgyonun Mueoseul Haryununga [What is Christianity Going to Do in Korea] (1962) in *Ham Sokhon Chonjip [The Complete Works of Ham Sok-Hon; The 20 Book Series of Ham Sok-Hon]* (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1993), 180-182.

⁹⁷ Ham, Yoksawa Minjok [History and Nation] (1970), 301-302.

religious belief” and “an historical obligation.” Peace is not a matter of possibility but a decisive command from history.⁹⁸ In the 1970s, he suggested that the pacifist way was a more specific and reliable way toward reunification. This is due to three steps: a non-aggression pact, a mutual arms reduction and adopting peace as a national policy. For him, one of the ways of peace is non-violence rather than war and the use of military forces. He suggests that non-violence is not only speaking with the mouth but also showing with action that we are ready to sacrifice ourselves.⁹⁹ Thus, “if I really want to keep non-violence, I can overcome the social evil with love because it can change the heart of the evildoer.”¹⁰⁰ As the first step for Koreans who develop an awakening to their mission of peaceful reunification, he asserts “put your sword down and think hard.” Thus, according to him, non-violence and peaceful reunification of the only ways of reunification, and when *Minjung* of North and South are enlightened and demand it, peaceful reunification is possible.

As we see in Korean history, the biggest barrier to Korean reunification is the separated mind. Thus, Ham suggests a way to remedy the tragic experience of Korea caused by the division and Ham shows us how North and South Korea might accept each other even though they still consider each other enemies. He explains this with the relation between Jesus and Judas. After Judas betrayed Jesus, he remains a friend of Jesus. Thus, Ham says that when Judas opens his mind and could talk with Jesus about the Kingdom of God and of hell, salvation will come into this world. Therefore, Jesus is

⁹⁸ Ham, *Ssialege Ponaenun Pyonji* [Letter to the Ssial] (1993), 8-91.

⁹⁹ Margaret Bacon, “Ham Sok Hon- an Interview” *Friends Journal*, December 1 (1979): 2.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

still imploring us to love our enemies even though most Christians have failed to answer that call.¹⁰¹ Ham indicates that the way of peace is an open dialogue with enemies. Thus, dialogue with other people and with enemies is one of the ways of reconciliation. Ham stressed that working together is the way to defeat evil.¹⁰² Pacifism, for Ham, is the most important value of Korean reunification.

- **NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE:** Ham named Korea “The Queen of Suffering,” or “The World’s Sewage” or “The Garbage Can.”¹⁰³ These nicknames by Ham show us Korea’s past painful history and the reasons for it. His titles express the pain of division and the reason why North and South Korea have to be one.

Is it not a pity when the armies of the two counties arrived, one in the north and one in the south, how splendid it would have been if we had come out with a firm declaration, ‘We are one nation, one people,’ When the two got together to draw a line across our unscarred middle, the one thrust on us communism, the other capitalism, we should have said, ‘We are neither communist nor capitalist.’ We are one nation. We know only of being, not two. We would sooner die as one than live as two.¹⁰⁴

Ham also indicates the internal reason for the division. Even though the foreign powers were largely responsible, Korea also bears responsibility. Furthermore, he asserts

¹⁰¹ Sok-Hon Ham, *Meditation at Pendle Hill, Dialogue*, Translated by Young-Do Kwahk and assisted by C. Llyod Bailey, Publication of the Seoul Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (February 27, 1983), 3.

¹⁰² Ibid., 3.

¹⁰³ Sok-Hon Ham, “Message from Sok-Hon of Seoul Friends Meeting to the Triennial of the Friends World Committee for Consultation,” Sydney, Australia, August 18-25, 1973. FWCC. Sydney, Triennial Attachment, n. VII, 4. “Garbage can” means that Korea was treated as the garbage can of civilization which became the cause of the Korean War and this led into the division.

¹⁰⁴ Tom Coyner, *Ham Sok-Hon’s Advice for Today: “Put your sword down and think hard!”* Seoul Monthly Meeting, (Ham Sok-Hon Resource Site Updated August 7, 2010), 2.

that reunification is like a revolution. It is neither just a people's revolution nor just a social one. "It is a larger and deeper and newer revolution."¹⁰⁵

Ham realized that the Korean War and the division were due to the lack of national independence. Thus, reunification should be made by Koreans who should not make the mistake again of relying on foreign powers which benefited from the division. Also, he asserts that social reform and democracy are impossible without national independence. In achieving national independence, anti-Communism – that is the South Korean government's policy and the South Korean Churches' faith – is a serious obstacle to reunification. So, Ham seeks for 'neutral reunification' which transcends the ideologies of both the North and the South. Reunification is only possible when there is one mind, even though political systems are different. When the country adopts a high-minded position, it is possible to forgive old enemies unconditionally. Moreover, Ham uses comprehensive peace and warns against statism. He wrote: "Reunification aims ultimately at a revolution eradicating statism and in this sense it is greater and deeper than a national revolution."¹⁰⁶ Thus, he calls for an anti-statism which is beyond one's country's benefit and looks for the other country's benefits. For Ham, reunification means world peace beyond nationalism. He says that "only the whole is holy and if the whole is one, it is also clean and holy, but if it is separated from the whole, it is dirty."¹⁰⁷

- **MINJUNG:** Ham criticizes North and South politicians' greed for maintaining

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁶ Ham, Saenggak hanun Paeksongilya Sanda [People Should Think for a Living], 1993 (1971), 201.

¹⁰⁷ Sung-Su Kim, "Finding the Peace and Reunification in Ham Sok-Hon's Thought," Peace Foundation 14th Expert Forum, October, 24, 2007.

their power through the division. In 1971, he strongly criticized the regime of Park which monopolized the reunification discussion for its own benefit. “Using reunification for dictatorship power is a sin.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, Ham stresses that true reunification is possible only through the *Minjung*’s enlightenment and participation. Thus, *Minjung* have to be a subject to solve the division. He emphasizes *Minjung*’s pain and oppression by the division within political ideology and he defines *Minjung* as victims in the political situation. To him, the ultimate goal of his reunification is the liberation of the *Minjung* from foreign and internal political powers. Therefore, the real revolution is not caused by North and South leaders but by *Minjung* and it is the *Minjung*’s responsibility also. He reminds us what a real reunification is. Ham says that “true reunification should not be only a political reunification between the North and South governments, but reunification between the whole people of North and South Korea.”¹⁰⁹

Peace, national independence and *Minjung* are interrelated in his idea of reunification. Furthermore, Ham insists that whenever the power of religious truth is applied in the world, the social, political and economic problems, both international and national, can be solved.¹¹⁰ Ham insisted on peaceful, non-violent reunification during his whole life and emphasized that real reunification can be achieved through *Minjung*’s enlightenment on the ways in which can build national independence. His peaceful reunification ideology influenced many South Korean leaders who worried about the

¹⁰⁸ Ham, *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹¹⁰ Young Sang Han, “What is the Most Extreme Luxury,” *Quakers: The Voice of Ham Sok-Hon* (Seoul Monthly Meeting of Society of Friends, 1983), p. 1

nation's future¹¹¹ and his ideology became the base of reunification theology. Also, Ham's idea of peace, national independence and *Minjung* became the foundation and key idea of the North and South Korea in the July 4th Joint Communiqué in 1972.

2) No Jong-Son's reunification theology (1945 -)

No Jong-Son is a second representative of reunification theology. He is an expert member on the reunification committee of the NCKK and an ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK). He has taught at Yonsei University in Korea. He studied at Yonsei University, Harvard Divinity School, Yale Divinity School and Union Theological Seminary (Ph. D). Among his publications are: *Toward a Theology of Reunification* (1988), *Liberating God for the Minjung* (1994), and *The Third War: Christian Social Ethics* (2000)

No's idea of reunification can be categorized in four sections; sin, jubilee as an inclusive world view, liberative nationalism, and political realism.

- **SIN:** Like Ham, No understands the division of Korea as sin. He states this in an unconditional way: "Separation is a theological sin."¹¹² He explains it from a biblical perspective because the separation between God and human is caused by human sin. The first separation in the Bible is the separation between Adam and God. The problem was not whether Adam ate the apple or not but the first human action of sin came from Adam's division with God. Therefore, the separated situation between God and human is

¹¹¹ His ideas influenced to Kim Dae-Jung, South Korea's president, who led the July 4th Joint Communiqué between North and South Korea in 1972.

¹¹² Jong-Sun No, "*Toward a Theology of Reunification: Third World Christian Ethics*," (Seoul: Hanul Publishing Co., 1988), 20.

sin.¹¹³ Also, he defines that the separation /division is a situation against God's will. God's will is shown in the separated Israel situation and God proclaims that "they will become one in my hand." (Ezekiel 37:19). Therefore, division and separation are seen as sin. As God saves and cleans Israel, God and Israel are rebuilding their interrelationship and they are entering into unity.¹¹⁴ Therefore, division is the first step of sin and against God's will, and sin becomes more intense when there is a "continuation of a sinful state."¹¹⁵ Therefore, for him, reunification is the recovery of a relationship with God, and this is also the will of God.

No claims that the problem of hindering Korean reunification is the "division-oriented mindset."¹¹⁶ The division-oriented mindset has influenced the way of life of almost all Koreans. Thus, without overcoming the division-oriented mindset and not thinking as one nation and as sisters and brothers, Koreans cannot expect to experience reunification. Thus, he reminds Koreans that they share the same blood ties, same history, same natural heritages and same language.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, many South Korean churches had supported division theology and therefore their beliefs have reinforced the unending division in Korea. Thus, the Korean churches have to agree with the July 4th Joint Statement in which "transcending the thought, ideas and institutions, we as a nation have

¹¹³ Ibid., 57.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 57-58.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 57.

¹¹⁶ Sam-Kyung Park, *Toward an Ethics of Korean Reunification* (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 2009), 142.

¹¹⁷ Jong-Son No, "Division and Reunification of Korea," *The Third War: Christian Social Ethics* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2000), 61.

to promote national unity.” Furthermore,” No asserts, “the Korean churches have to consider autonomy and peaceful reunification.”¹¹⁸

- **LIBERATIVE NATIONALISM:** No stresses the ideological liberation from foreign ideology and criticizes Western theology. He claims that North and South Koreans were brainwashed by the outside political and economic ideologies of Capitalism and Communism. The dependency on foreign ideology led to accepting division ideology; he calls it “Collective pediatric neurosis.” When an adult befalls mental illness it brings neurosis. The adult cannot give mature judgments and actions, and so he/she tries to depend on a strong dictator person. Also, with the dictator’s support, the Koreans claim to find their peace in obedience to the dictator. Furthermore, the two Koreas try to relieve anxiety by depending on strong foreign armed forces and military cultures. No calls this: “Subordinate consciousness and subordinate behavior.” The adult with neurosis is a symbol of the South Korean, for such adults are not independent and so they have fears and anxieties because of their feelings of dependence on foreign powers.¹¹⁹ Therefore, cleansing the Western ideology is a fundamental factor in achieving salvation for Korean Christianity.

Also, he criticizes first-world theologies which protected the colonial, imperial and neo – colonial powers politically, economically and culturally. A spiritual foundation of national independence is possible through the liberation from foreign ideologies and through a strong criticism of Western theologies. However, his national independence is not nationalism in a negative sense. His idea of liberative nationalism is liberation of the

¹¹⁸ Jong-Sun No, *Toward a Theology of Reunification: Third World Christian Ethics* (Seoul: Hanul Publishing Co., 1988), 37.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 47-48.

third world from the oppression of the first world imperialism. Therefore, his reunification theology has the same meaning as liberation from oppression in both the colonized and in the neo-colonized situation.¹²⁰

Thus, he searches for a good world view which needs to be an inclusive worldview for reunification which can be shared by both North and South. He finds this world view in ‘the command of Jubilee’ which is mentioned in Leviticus chapter 25 and Luke chapter 4: 18-19. He defines the command of Jubilee as ‘An Order of God’ in the Bible, and he believes that the world view which accepts the command of Jubilee could be an axis which overcomes division ideology.¹²¹ Also, because western theology and the Korean churches have supported division theology, his claim goes even further. If theology ignores or rejects the reunification, it is anti-reunification theology and therefore it is imperial “idolatry theology.” Anti-reunification theology destroys the image of God and human dignity in the world.¹²²

- **POLITICAL REALISM:**¹²³ No Jung Sun considers liberation of the oppressed people of the third world and the Korean national independence as essential elements of peace. Therefore, he asserts that peace is based on political realism. National independence and security are important elements to him because the Korean division by foreign powers brought the loss of independence and has broken the peace in Korea and Eastern Asia. Therefore, to maintain national independence, military force is necessary.

¹²⁰ No (1994), 47.

¹²¹ Ibid., 37-38.

¹²² Ibid., 61.

¹²³ Ibid., 237.

No says that “Military cooperation between North and South armies, in terms of a reunification army, is necessary for a common security of North and South Korea against the armed intervention by a foreign power.”¹²⁴ No criticizes the nuclear superpowers and asks for a reduction in nuclear weapons. However, he says that “if nuclear armament is the inevitable way for national independence and security of North Korea I am willing to support its nuclear armament.”¹²⁵ His understanding of non-violence is dependent on the perspective of strategic concepts rather than the perspective of a theological and ethical dimension.¹²⁶ Therefore, his idea of peace is based on political realism.

No’s reunification theology starts with a strong criticism of first-world theologies which allowed the first-world’s desire to expand their power to other countries. Thus, recovering from the Western ideology (North Korea–Marxism, South Korea–Capitalism) is the first step for Korean national independence. Also, the third-world minded people need to be liberated from first-world oppressive nationalism.

No’s political realism, which is different from that of Ham, is his unique strategy among reunification theologians. But the interesting part of his political realism is that he distinguishes the meaning of violence from two perspectives; the first-world and the third-world. If the first-world’s violence could be translated as conquest or exploitation, the third-world’s victory could be translated as liberation from evil structures. Therefore, he understands that the meaning of violence is different from the circumstances of the third-world in ethical terms.

¹²⁴ No (2002), 82, 96.

¹²⁵ Interview on 21th July, 2003. I am using material from Ji-Seok Jung.

¹²⁶ Jung Ji-Seok, 239.

3) Kim Yong-Bock's reunification theology (1938 -)

Kim Yong-Bok is a *Minjung* and reunification theologian. He was formerly Co-Director for Research at the Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development in Seoul, Korea. He participated in the reunification movement of the NCKK. He is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK). He studied in Yonsei University in Korea and Princeton Seminary where he received his Ph.D in 1974. He edited a book, *Minjung Theology* (1981) and drafted "The 1988 Reunification Declaration." Kim's idea of reunification is divided into four parts: Jubilee, *Minjung*, nation, and peace, all of which are based on socio-economic security.

- **JUBILEE:** For Kim, the biblical term, Jubilee, is a key concept in reunification theology, and he suggested the concept of Jubilee as a key idea in the discussions on peace and reunification at a KCKK consultation (or conference) in 1987. Jubilee (See Leviticus 25:8-55) means a period of emancipation; lost lands return to the original owners, debts are cancelled, and slaves are liberated. Jubilee is the next year which follows seven Sabbatical years. Thus it is a fiftieth year from the first Sabbatical year. Kim understands that the Sabbatical year is a time when God's sovereignty is concretized in the history of God's people. Thus, Jubilee is a liberation year in which God's community is freed from division and conflict and structures which wound reality. By God's sovereign recovery, the land and house go back to the original cultivator through God's own distribution for life's safety and prosperity.¹²⁷ Kim finds the peace agreement for North and South Korea reunification in Ezekiel 37:15-28, in which there is a peace

¹²⁷ Young -Bock Kim, "Hanguk Gidokgyo Tongil Undonggwa Jeongbuui Tongil Jeongchaek" [Korean Christianity's Reunification Movement and the Government's Policy] *The Christian Thought*, Vol. 428 (August, 1994), 14-15.

agreement for North-South Israel. This jubilee year is a reunification between God and God's people: "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant, I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever" (Ezekiel 37:26, NIV). This peace agreement is understood in its connection with the ruling of empire because it is an agreement for the nations who are under an empire and are suffering from their rule. Thus, the agreement of peace is connected with the vision of peace found in Isaiah 11:1-9 which is the shalom of the messianic kingdom.¹²⁸ The Jubilee is the year of an act of God's people to keep the agreement between God's people and God himself. The Israelites are called on to trust in God's sovereignty. In doing so, they will overcome social and economic conflicts which are made by empirical and political powers, and they will recover a covenantal community of peace.¹²⁹ Therefore, jubilee means to Korea a recovering of God's people in a community which is integrated as a whole and avoids division and conflict.¹³⁰

- **MINJUNG:** Kim considers the *Minjung* as 'the subject of history.' The *Minjung* are oppressed in Korean history politically and economically, and they are not visible in historical explanations. They are unable to create their own destiny. Therefore, Kim asserts that the *Minjung*'s subjectivity has to be recovered and stand as 'a permanent reality within history' and as 'the protagonist in the historical drama.'¹³¹ Kim criticizes every power-centered political messianism which tries to explain theologically the

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 16.

¹³⁰ Young-Bock Kim, "Peace and Tongil," *Meeting of South and North Church and Theology of Peace and Tongil*, ed. KNCC Steering Committee on Tongil (Seoul: Minjung Press, 1990), 355.

¹³¹ Young-Bock Kim, "Korean Christianity as a Messianic Movement of the People," *Minjung Theology : People as the Subject of History* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books: CTC-CCA, 1981), 185-187.

Minjung's historical subjectivity. Thus, the *Minjung*'s struggle for liberation has to be explained in the light of the Messianic Kingdom, which is not a utopian dream but is a struggle of the poor and oppressed people in the history.¹³²

- **PEACE WHICH IS BASED ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC SECURITY:** Kim's understanding of peace which is based on biblical concepts is not only the absence of war but also a realization of social justice. Kim explains that true peace with justice is related to the socio-economic security of the *Minjung*. He regards anti-communism and military logic as a false form of peace-ideology. Therefore, he suggests, as an example, that the tithe can be a religious model of economic democracy. With a repentance of economic greed, the tithe can be considered as a religious "alternative economic system" for the poor, weak and oppressed.¹³³

Kim suggests: "A national diakonia¹³⁴ movement"¹³⁵ as a new step for Korea's reunification if it contains socio-economic security for all. In globalizing the economic world, according to Kim, the problem of economics will be an important issue and North Korea's economic crisis is a systemic problem of North Korea. Also, as we have seen in the German reunification, an absorption-reunification provided an enormous burden for the West German economy and the Germans are still struggling with it. Thus, if South

¹³² Young-Bock Kim, "Messiah and Minjung: Discerning Messianic Politics over against Political Messianism," *Minjung Theology : People as the Subjects of History* (Maryknoll: OrbisBooks: CTC-CCA, 1981), 188.

¹³³ Young-Bock Kim, "World Ecumenical Movement and Global Level of Jubilee," *Jubilee Theology and Movement of Tongil Jubilee* (Seoul: The Korea Theological Study Institute, 1995), 178.

¹³⁴ Diakonia- According to WCC 6th Assembly definition, "Diakonia as the church's ministry of sharing, healing and reconciliation is of the very nature of the church. It demends of individuals and churches a giving which comes not out of what they have, but what they are." (WCC 6th Assembly in Vancouver, Canada, 1983) WWW.oikoumene.org

¹³⁵ Kim(1994), 16.

Korea reunifies with North Korea in a top and bottom relationship in economy, South Korea's burden of economic and North Korea's sacrifice would be huge. Therefore, Kim claims that people (*Minjung*) have to be a subject of social and economic problems in preparing reunification and practice the social diakonia for serving others. Peace, Kim says, is a national common prosperity which is the meaning of biblical shalom. Military conflicts have to be changed to economic cooperation. Only a national economic mutual prosperity will be a true foundation of peace.

Therefore, Kim claims that the South Korean churches have to switch-over the reunification movement from the dimension of politics to the economic-sharing movements. The collapse of North Korean economy is not only North Korea's loss but also a loss for the whole Korea. It would be an enormous burden to the South Korean economy. Thus, Kim suggests that South Korean has to support the North Korea private economy. Kim warns one more thing namely that the economic supports have to coincide with the way of serving and sharing rather than an economic attack or economic subordination.¹³⁶

To Kim, Jubilee is a key concept of reunification theology and a model of Korean reunification just as the jubilee is an axis to overcome the divine ideology to No Jung Sun. Also, Kim focuses on *Minjung* as a subject of reunification. He emphasizes that true peace is based on the socio-economic security of *Minjung*. Economic security is an important concept to Kim. He asserts that only a national economic mutual prosperity can be a true foundation of peace in the peninsula. Therefore, he suggests concrete economic support for North Korea.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 17.

4) Analyzing Korean Reunification Theology and the need for Feminist perspective Theology

A. The common and different ideas in reunification theology

These three reunification theologians are responding to the situation of a divided Korea and look for a peaceful resolution for building a community. They have common ideas in many perspectives.

First, the peace concept is the basic ground and goal for the three theologians and the way of peaceful reunification is based on the biblical perspective. So, they reject war and the use of military force in the process of reunification and define the division as sin. But in the way of armament, only No asserts political realism, Ham and Kim asserts non-violence and disarmament. No asserts the need for armaments to respond to the armed intervention of foreign powers. Thus, he supports nuclear armament if it is the inevitable way for national independence.

Second, the three theologians assert anti-statism. Even though they look to the nation's independence for the recovery of division and conflict, they warn the dangers of nationalism and ask goes beyond the nationalism for the whole world. It is different from an exclusive nationalism or racism.

Third, they assert that the *Minjung* have to be the subject of history. They explain that true reunification is not gained by political reunification but only through reunification between the whole people of North and South Korea. Therefore, they assert the *Minjung's* enlightenment and participation in the reunification movement.

Fourth, the three theologians do not separated religion and politics. They think that theology have to contribute to build peaceful and justice world. Thus, reunification theology has to contribute to building a reunified nation. Their theology is not confined to churches, but they apply their theology to the Korean nation and to world as well. Thus, they criticize dictatorships in Korea and also first world imperial and neo-colonialism.

If we see each theologian's characteristics, Ham could be defined as a founder of the reunification theology. Ham influenced No and Kim in their basic ideas for the reunification theology in the concept of peaceful reunification, national independence, anti-statism and *Minjung* as a subject of history. Ham's theology and philosophy influenced later reunification theologians and *Minjung* theologians. Also, Ham's need for national independence deeply influenced the Korean people and theologians. But whereas No and Kim are Presbyterian Church pastors, Ham joined a 'non-church movement' which against institutionalized churches resulted in a spiritual hierarchy, and a renewal of Christian faith movement which aroused in Japan by Uchimura Kanzo. Thus, Even though Ham based on Christian thought and Quaker, he does not follow orthodox Christian doctrine for he believes that all religions are basically one religion,¹³⁷ whereas No and Kim stresses the Korean churches' ideology and practice in the process of reunification of Korea.

As we see above, No's 'political realism' is different from the other theologians. No accepts the necessity of the military force for keeping national independence for a while, Ham and Kim assert non-violence and pacifism. Also, as his characteristic of

¹³⁷ Hye-Jean Chung, "Ham Sok-Hon Gone But Not Forgotten," *Korea Times*, March 16, 2001.

reunification theology, No focuses on the national independence through liberation from foreign ideology and criticizes Western theology.

Kim's characteristic of reunification theology is his developing peaceful reunification in the concept of Jubilee. He connects the meaning between the reunification of Korea and the Jubilee in the Old Testament, looking for the community of God's people in aiming toward a realization of a national jubilee. It is the way of reconciliation and integration as a whole. The socio-economic security of the *Minjung* is his unique contribution.

B. Critique from the feminist perspective

These theologians have powerfully contributed to building a peaceful reunification theology in the conflicted and divided peninsula. Moreover, their views have strengthened national independence and reunification for the *Minjung*. Nevertheless, the reunification theology of all three theologians has serious limitations.

- **THERE ARE NO VOICES OF WOMEN:** Even though they consider the *Minjung* who are weak, poor and alienated and oppressed as a subject of history, they missed the recognition that women are the most oppressed. There were no women among the *Minjung*. Reunification theology is struggling for the oppressed but there are no voices of women. Historically, there was no liberation of women and no solving the problems of women's oppression and alienation when women participated in the liberation movement. I can see the contradiction in my own experience. I joined the Korean democracy movement in my college days, and we fought for democracy against the dictatorships of South Korea. We had hoped to build a peaceful and equal society and

criticized their hierarchy of systems and authoritarianism. However, when the male activists came back home, they were still patriarchal, and hierarchical masters to their wives. At that time, I realized that the democratic movement alone cannot bring women's equality in to society. Therefore, women's voices have to be raised in any social movement.

- **THERE ARE LACKS OF CONCERN ABOUT WOMEN'S ISSUES:** Also, Ham's interview and the writing about his wife show us his lack of concern about women's issues and accepting women's traditional virtue as good. Ham had an interview with Han Young Sang which was published in Seoul Monthly Meeting of Society of Friends in 1983. Han Young Sang had several questions. Among them were two questions about women. The first question was whether the Women's Rights Movement was first introduced by the Quakers? But Ham's answer about that was very short and he went directly to explaining the Quakers.¹³⁸ During the interview, Han Young Sang had another question about women and also about the Quaker movement for the equality of men and women. However, Ham had the same response; without answering the question, he passed into a different answer.¹³⁹ Even though he had many concerns about peace, reunification, national independence and *Minjung*, he had no interest in women's unequal problems and the movement of the Quakers for the rights of women. It may look like he included women in the *Minjung*'s problem but actually he had no concern about women.

Ham's attitude about women's problems is also seen in his writings about his wife, after she passed away. He laments his wife's death and her suffering for their

¹³⁸ Young- Sang Han, "War is the Most Extreme Luxury: The voice of Ham Sok-Hon," *Seoul Monthly Meeting of Society of Friends* (1983), 3.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 12.

family with the title, “I am Nothing.”¹⁴⁰ In his essay, he honors her self-sacrifice, obedience and patience during her life. He regrets that he never considered his wife as a companion in his beliefs. In the lifetime of Ham, women’s virtues were the same as those of his wife. Men could not consider a wife or women as a companion. I think, however, that Ham had a different ideology and had opened his mind to the oppressed and unjust world.

- **THEY DID NOT OVERCOME A PATRUARCHAL IDOEOLOGY:**

Nevertheless, he did not overcome a patriarchal ideology in his real life and in his relationship with his wife. He laments her suffering life and honors her, but he does not have any awakening why her nick-name was “I am nothing”; it means that she never claimed anything for herself. He did not raised questions why his wife’s life had been filled with suffering, and why she had considered herself as nothing. Also, if he did not think of his wife as a companion, it is a contradiction because he was an enlightened person for the *Minjung*. Nevertheless, he did not make any effort to help her find her identity and status. He just felt thanks to her after her illness and death. After his wife was ill with Parkinson’s disease, he felt guilt and thought that “God punished her, in order to punish me.”¹⁴¹ He did not realize exactly why he was guilty about her. He just had shame for her difficult life while married to him. He considered her suffering in a personal dimension but not in a cultural social perspective. As I mentioned, Ham’s attitude toward his wife was natural at the time and there would be no blame to him because all men lived in the same way. Thus, even though the reunification theologians included

¹⁴⁰ Sok-Hon Ham, “I am Nothing,” *Voice of the People Korean Quaker News* (February 1979).

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

enlightenment, even though male leaders opened their eyes to the social injustice and oppression, they were not aware of the gender issue, namely, what was happening to one's family, one's wife and one's daughters.

I understand why the male theologians could not be aware the suffering and oppression of women because we can easily forget and lose attention to outsider's experience. As we see, many theologies raised their theological themes from their experience of the personal and from the temporal context. The male theologians did not have a woman's experiences. I do not blame their non recognition about the suffering of women. However, I think that they have to listen, learn and try to sympathize from and with women's experiences and they should cry because theology has to provide an answer to the issues and theologies which affect women. Furthermore, male theologians have to make room for women in order that their theology can find completion.

There will be real peace and equality when the feminist discourse is included in reunification theology. True reunification is not only the integration of political, economic and social systems but it means a true peaceful society in which there is no oppression, exploitation and injustice. Therefore, reunification theology has to be developed with women's voices (experience) and women's characteristics to build a peaceful community.

In this chapter, I have presented the theological aspects which affect the reunification process for North-South Korea. We have seen the views of three major Korean theologians who have written on this subject. Their work is of tremendous value for the process of reunification. Nonetheless, there was and remains an insufficient theological component which deals with the question of a woman's voice and presence

throughout the reunification process. I will deal with this in the final chapter. In the next chapter, Chapter Three, we will study a major component of the reunification process, namely, a review of a similar reunification process which took place in Germany and how the strengths and the failures of the German process can be of major assistance to the Korean process of reunification.

CHAPTER THREE

A POLITICAL FRAMEWORK FOR KOREAN REUNIFICATION

Chapter Three is divided into two sections. In the first section, I will present in some detail the reunification of Germany which began in 1990 after forty years of separation between East Germany and West Germany. The German process of reunification provides the Korean leaders and people with a major case study on the reunification process from a political, social, economic, familial, and religious point of view.

The second section of Chapter Three centers on a reunification of North Korea and South Korea which hopefully will take place in the near future. The Korean process of unification can learn much from a profound study of the German situation, as regards both what to do and as regards what not to do. In both cases, the German reunification and the Korean reunification, I will focus the material at least in the conclusion of each section on the need for women to be vitally part of reunification, which is the focus of my thesis.

In presenting the German case study of reunification, I will go into detail, since in these details we find out what historically was beneficial and helpful and what was not beneficial or helpful. In each of the points of view - political, social, economic, familial and religious - I will indicate strongly the presence or non-presence of women and how politically, socially, economically, and in a family way, German woman-both East German and West German- suffered from their exclusion from the reunification process. I will try to be as straightforward as possible and I will remain focused on the German

issues. Only in the second section of Chapter Three will I make cross-references to the Korean and German reunification efforts.

There is an abundance of statistical material which is needed to verify the situation of German reunification that accounts for the non-inclusion of the presence of women. It is, in my view, necessary to present this abundance of statistical material since the statistics provide the basis for the German reunification as a unique and important case study for the Korean reunification.

1. The Reunification of East and West Germany: a Case Study

1) Germany family policies and East German women in the united Germany

The forty-year separation of East and West Germany made many powerful differences in the lives of the German people, especially in the socio-economic systems. Prior to reunification, there were major and opposing policies on family life. Among these differences, the relation of women to the labor force and to social domestic positions was different. The East Germany government tried to integrate women into their labor force and made motherhood compatible with full-time employment. In the East German constitution, the government guaranteed the equal rights of women when it states: "Men and women have equal rights and the same legal standing in all areas of social, state and personal life. Advancement of women, especially in the professional qualification, is a task for state and society."¹⁴² Article 20, paragraph 3, indicates that the state supports motherhood with a guaranteed pregnancy leave, maternity leave, and both material and financial support at birth, as well as children's allowances and special

¹⁴² Patricia Spakes, "Women, Work and Babies: Family-Labor market Policies in Three European Centuries," *Affilia*, 10 (4) (1995): 380.

medical care needs. Furthermore, the government guaranteed equal positions to married women with children and unmarried women.¹⁴³ Even though the government guaranteed women's equal rights, according to Trzcinski, East German women experienced equality in employment but a lack of equality in the home and political areas.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the government of East Germany aimed to encourage women's full integration in to the labor market.

The West German government also guaranteed equality for their citizens, stating that everyone is equal regardless of gender. The government also prohibited discrimination on the basis of gender.¹⁴⁵ The family policy in West Germany encouraged nuclear families to gear their private lives and they did this by offering special benefits for family life. However, in West Germany the family policy had a strong gender division: namely, one person is the breadwinner, and the second parent when necessary leaves the labor force to raise children. In West Germany women's lives were influenced by the ideals of the conservative Christian Democratic Party¹⁴⁶ and consequently the traditional female role in a family was emphasized more strongly than in East Germany.¹⁴⁷

The above definitions of the roles for women show that in both East and West Germany's and later in the United Germany there were different approaches. In East

¹⁴³ Eileen Trzcinski, "Gender and German Unification," *Affilia*, 13(1) (1998): 80.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 98.

¹⁴⁵ Trzcinski, 75.

¹⁴⁶ West Germany (FRG) was governed by the Christian Democrats until the mid 1960's. During these years, the family was viewed as a natural order and as a gift of God. See Friedhelm Niedhardt, "The Federal Republic of Germany," in *Family Policy: Government and Families in Fourteen Countries*, ed. Sheila B. Kammerman and Alfred J. Kahn (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1978), 218.

¹⁴⁷ Jennifer Lina Schulenberg, *Neuenbundeslander: The Effect of State and Policy Reunification on the Women and Families in the Former GDR* (M.A. diss., The University of Guelph, 2000), 70.

Germany, women were considered in two ways: as workers in production and mothers in reproduction.¹⁴⁸ In contrast, West Germany and the United Germany considered women as dependent on men for their economic–well-being. The husband was seen as the head of the household and therefore he was the overseer of the wife, and women were the mothers.¹⁴⁹

In the former East Germany, all women participated in work systematically and contributed to their nation; equal rights were better than those of West Germany.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, at the time of the reunification, the former East German women's lives were challenged socially and culturally by the changes in the systems of comprehensive welfare benefits for family and women.¹⁵¹ This change has been called “three steps back for women.”¹⁵² That means the reunified German policy had failed to provide a true equality of women. East German women have been called by Lynn Duggan the “losers” of unification.¹⁵³ His classification is valid since East German women lost their desire to

¹⁴⁸ Trzcinski (1998), 81.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Jone Jonson Lewis explains the German women's education as follows: “By the mid-1960s, East German women accounted for about half of all secondary school graduates who had prepared to study at institutes of higher learning in the GDR; by the 1975-76 academic year, they were in the majority (53 percent). To assist women in completing their studies, an extensive support system, including supplementary payments and child care, was provided. Expanded educational opportunities for West German women were slower in coming and never equaled the levels reached in the east. Only in the early 1980s did West German women qualify for admission to university in the same numbers as men.” See Jone Johnson Lewis, “Germany- Status of Women,” *Encyclopedia of Women's History*, <http://womenshistory.about.com>, May 2, 2012.

¹⁵¹ Anneliese Braun, Gerda Jasper, and Ursula Schroter, ‘*Rolling back the gender status of East German women.*’ In *German unification: the destruction of an economy*, ed. H. Behrend. (London: Pluto Press, 1995), 142.

¹⁵² Myra Marx Ferree, “After the wall: Explaining the status of women in the former GDR,” *Sociological Focus*, v. 28, n.1 (February, 1995): 10.

¹⁵³ Lynn Duggan, “Restacking the deck: Family policy and women's fall-back position in Germany before

be only mother but were unable to find new jobs even though many professional women earned more than they did in the old system. Jone Johnson Lewis explains the East German women's suffering in the reunification process as follows:

Some reports indicated that two-thirds of working women in the new Lander were unemployed, and many more were turned into part-time workers as a result of privatization, downsizing of firms, and elimination of support services such as day-care and after-school centers. To improve their prospects for employment, some women in eastern Germany reportedly were resorting to sterilization, one of the factors contributing to the steep decline in births from twelve per 1,000 in 1989 to 5.3 per 1,000 in 1993.¹⁵⁴

2) The Political, Economic, and Social Situations of East and West German women.

A. Women's employment situations

In East Germany, the equality of women and men within the socialist society was part of the official goal and an essential ideological aspect of communism. Also, in this economic situation, the women's labor force was needed urgently. In contrast, in West Germany a mother's employment was not desirable when the children were born before the mother was 25 years old.¹⁵⁵ According to Sibylle Meyer and Eva Schulze's interview results, East German women did not feel that their actions were determined by state policy. They thought that the East German politic combined motherhood and employment in a healthy way. East German women enjoyed social privileges like the

and after unification," *Feminist Economics*, 1:1(2010): 175-194. This article was downloaded by from Ingenta Content Distribution-Routledge, on 21 September 2010.

¹⁵⁴ Jone Johnson Lewis, 2.

¹⁵⁵ Sibylle Meyer and Eva Schulze, "After the Fall of the Wall: The Impact of the Transition on East German Women," *Political Psychology*, v.19, no 1(Mar., 1998): 98.

right to work for equal pay, protection of motherhood, fully paid pregnancy and maternity leave, free contraception, free abortion on demand in the first trimester, paid leave to care for sick children, and supportive social programs for the family. Child care was also part of social welfare and it was not expensive. The East German government tried to ease the burden of child rearing for working women, and it encouraged women to enter traditional male professions by offering continuous occupational skill and professional expertise training.¹⁵⁶ Also, the government paid attention to younger women who wished to pursue a vocational education and wanted to be employed until retirement, except for a year of “baby break” for each child.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, according to a Ruth Leger Sivard’s survey of the 1980s, East Germany had a high female rating in three areas: (1) the highest rate world wide of female participation in the labor force, (2) the first in literacy rates for adult women, and (3) the third position in the proportion of women enrollment in higher education.¹⁵⁸ For example, 9 out of 10 mothers in East Germany had a job, mostly full-time, and most of the women returned to their work one year after the birth of a child.¹⁵⁹

Table 1: Women as a Percentage of the Paid Labor Force¹⁶⁰

	1950	1960	1970	1980
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¹⁵⁶ Jennifer Lina Schulenberg, 158, 163-164.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 98.

¹⁵⁸ G. Goldberg, “Women on the Verge: Winners and Losers in German Unification, “*Social Policy*, 22 (2) (1991): 35.

¹⁵⁹ Statistisches Bundesamt, Hg. Statistisches Jahrbuch 1998, CD-ROM, Bonn: Statistisches Bundesamt (1999), 110. I am using material from Schulenberg, p. 107.

¹⁶⁰ Sources: For Western European countries, OECD Labor Force Statistics 1959-70 and 1969-80. For Eastern European Countries, ILO World Labor Report, vol.1, 1984. I am using material from Duggan’s, 51.

GDR	44.2	46.3	49.9	49.8
FRG	37.8	36.6	38.0	38.9

Sources: For Western European countries, OECD Labor Force Statistics 1959-1970 and 1969-1980

In West Germany, during the same period of time, 38% of women were in the labor force, and 80% of women were biological mothers in comparison to East Germany in which 49% of women were in the labor force and 91 % of women became biological mothers.¹⁶¹ Also, the employment rate of women in FRG rose only 4 % (from 34.4% to 38.9%) during the timeline of 1966 to 1983, and 90% of part-time workers were women by the late 1980's.¹⁶² The West German women were less likely to work for pay and less likely to have children. Twenty-five percent of East German women were in part-time jobs while 41% of West German women were in part-time jobs.¹⁶³ East German women's average work week was 43 ¾ hours and West German women worked 38 hours per week.

Even though part-time job meant low pay, low benefits, lack of job training and security, West German women were attracted to part-time jobs for a variety of reasons. First, they could manage their family concerns by flexible scheduling.¹⁶⁴ Kindergartens and elementary schools operated only half days, and the school day lasted until noon or early afternoon with no school lunch programs, and school vacations were longer than work vacations. In contrast, East German schools operated until mid-afternoon and

¹⁶¹Notburga Ott, Radtke Heidrun, Thiel Wera und Wagner Gert, "*Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforchung*," (*German Institute for Economic Research*), (West Berlin, 1990), 6,10.

¹⁶² Patricia Spakes, "Women, Work and Babies: Family-Labor market Policies in Three European Centuries," *Affilia*, 10 (4) (1995): 383.

¹⁶³ Lynn Duggan, 60.

¹⁶⁴ Ann Doris Duffy, "*Few Choices: Women, Work and Family*" (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1989), 92

provided state after-school programs. “The problems with childcare are the most significant predictors of absenteeism and unproductive time at work.”¹⁶⁵

Second, a store’s business hours influenced women’s employment. In West Germany, shops did not open evenings or all-day Sunday, and Saturday hours were 8 or 9 am to 1 pm. In East Germany, the stores were open late one night per week, and also a special store with late hours could be found in each city district.¹⁶⁶ These environments made women take part-time jobs in West Germany but they allowed full-time employment in East Germany. The following table shows West German female labor force participation rates.

Table 2: West German Female Labor Force Participation Rate by Marital Status

	Total	Married	Single	Separated	Divorced
1972	46.9	40.7	69.7	67.9	74.6
1980	48.2	44.1	57.6	64.5	71.8
1989	50.5	44.7	62.9	61.3	67.7
Without children	54.9	47.3	63.1	66.8	67.0
With children					
Under 18 yrs	44.6	42.7	42.7	52.9	64.1
Under 6 yrs	36.3	35.2	47.9	41.9	45.3
Under 3 yrs	32.5	31.9	41.6	33.1	36.6

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1989.

This table shows how the labor force participation rates were different for the women who have young children. For example, women who have children younger than three have a 32.5 % participation compared to 54.9% of women who do not have children.

The “*Mütterlichkeit*” (motherliness) family policy in West Germany limited the type of work, the hours and the conditions of work for women. Thus, women who are in

¹⁶⁵ Ford Foundation, “*Work and Family Responsibilities: Achieving a Balance*” (New York, Ford Foundation, 1989), 22-23.

¹⁶⁶ Lynn Susan Duggan, *Production and Reproduction: Family Policy and Gender Inequality in East and West Germany* (Ph.D. diss., Massachusetts University at Amherst, 1993), 66.

patriarchal and capitalist economies are under cheap, unorganized and marginal labor reserve. Also, they have the double burden of paid work and domestic responsibilities. An even more interesting reality in the West Germany mothers' employment is that they have to submit documentation which proves childcare availability. Women are unable to work without this document.¹⁶⁷

Household income is important to marital power. East German women's contribution to household income was higher than that of West German women. East German women contributed 41% whereas West German women only 18%. West German women more frequently withdrew from the work force than East German women. Also, as to potential earnings, 91% of East German women were working daily or were in training programs compared to 18% of West German women. Among East German women, more than one-third were skilled workers compare to 7% of West German women and more than one-third were white collar workers compared to 11%. Also, 87% of East German women had finished some form of occupational training in 1988 compared to 69% of West German women in 1985. The East German women's employment led to the conclusion that women could always exist on their own financially and would not be dependent on their husbands. This financial situation impacted divorce: women could end married life relatively easily and two-thirds of all divorces were initiated by women in 1986.¹⁶⁸

B. Family policies

¹⁶⁷ G. Helwig, "Frau und Familie: Bundesrepublik Deutschland- Deutsche Demokratische Republik," [Women and Family: German Federal Republic-German Democratic Republic] (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1989), 46. I am using material from Jennifer Schulenberg, 73.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 104.

a. Child-care systems

The two constitutions of Germany guaranteed citizen's rights. According to article 3 of West Germany, the constitution guaranteed equal rights regardless of gender and prohibited any form of discrimination on the basis of gender.¹⁶⁹ The East Germany Constitution guaranteed equal rights of men and women: "men and women have equal rights and the same legal standing in all areas of social, state and personal life.

Advancement of women, especially in professional qualification, is a task for state and society."¹⁷⁰ The East Germany (GDR) more fully integrated family and state; according to the interpretation of Article 6, "an institutional guarantee against the undermining of the family as a result of laws."¹⁷¹ Also, Article 20, paragraph 2 promises protection of marriage, family and motherhood by the state; "the promotion of women especially in employment is a societal and state responsibility"¹⁷² and it guarantees women's pregnancy and maternity leaves, material and financial support at birth, child allowances and equal position in the work place in Article 20, paragraph 3.¹⁷³ Even though the West and East German Constitutions guarantee equal rights to women and men, Trzcinski finds issues which can be criticized, for example the guarantees do not apply to all women's activities on a daily basis.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Eileen Trzcinski, "Gender and German Unification," *Affilia*, 13 (1) (1998) : 75.

¹⁷⁰ Patrica Spakes, "Women, Work and Babies: Family-Labor Market Policies in Three European Countries," *Affilia*, 10 (4) (1995): 380.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

East and West Germany have very different state support systems for child care. Child care responsibility belonged in the private sector in West Germany compared to East Germany which supports child care by the state. 95% of children under 3 in East Germany had a place in childcare centers in 1987 and only 5 - 6% of children in the West Germany. Eighty-one percent of 6-10 year old children in East Germany had after school care compared to West Germany (FRG), in which only 4 -6% had a place.¹⁷⁵

East Germany (GDR) started to promote public childcare and parent support systems in the 1960s to increase women's employment. They had nursery schools and kindergartens for young children and after-school groups such as the Pioneers or FDJ (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*) clubs for older children. These social supporting systems helped the parents pursue their careers.

In West Germany, the state did not try to integrate women into the labor forces as in the East Germany and so they provided childcare only in a limited degree; Also, because the states provide childcare for only a small fraction, the few childcare spaces were extraordinarily expensive.

Table 3: Daytime Childcare for under 3 years old children of Working Mothers in West Germany (1975)

Source of Care	% of Children
Mother	17.6
Grandparents	45.6
Other Relatives	6.6
Other Sisters or Brothers	2.5
Friends, Neighbors	4.4
Specialized Persons	7.2
Other Families	6.1

¹⁷⁵ Sandra L. Hohn and Sharon Gennis Deich, "Recent U.S. Child Care and Family Legislation in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Family Issues*, 15 (September, 1994): 436.

Various Institutional Arrangements	12.6
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Sources: Niedhardt, (1995)¹⁷⁶

As the table illustrates, 45.6 % of children under the age of 3 were cared for by their grandparent and only 12.5 % of children were placed in daycare spots.

b. Maternity leave and paid leave to care for sick children

Both countries have maternity leave; East Germany established a maternity leave in 1976 called “*Baby Jahr*” (baby year). It was a paid leave for the second and subsequent babies and this policy expanded to the first born in 1986. Also, there was a revision in the Labor Law Code in which women who have babies less than 18 months old leave work one day a month for the household. The paid leave follows this rule; 26 weeks is at full pay, for the additional leave, 60% pay for the first baby and 90% for the second or subsequent babies until the baby’s first birthday. They can get additional leave, up to when the baby is 18 month old. According to Adams, this maternity leave caused a rise to 87% employment in women ages 16 to 60 and increased the birth rate also.¹⁷⁷

In West Germany, 14 weeks were allowed with full pay. Among the 14 weeks, six weeks were taken prior to childbirth and eight weeks after, then, the mother was allowed to return to work. After that, one of the parents could leave until the baby is 15 months old. It expanded to 18 months in 1990. They could receive 600 DM which was 27% of Western German workers average earnings.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Niedhardt¹⁷⁶ (1995, 235). I am using material from Jennifer Schulenberg, 72.

¹⁷⁷ P. Adams, “Family Policy and Labor Migration in East and West Germany,” *Social Service Review*, 63 (1989): 381.

¹⁷⁸ Lynn Duggan, 67.

In both countries, men were allowed the additional leave also, but usually women took the maternity leave because women's wages were lower than men's.

In the case of sick children, parents are allowed five days of fully paid leave per year in West Germany. However, it had a limitation in practice because health insurance allowed parents to leave for sick children but it needed the confirmation of a doctor that stated that the parent was absolutely necessary for the care of sick children because nobody else was available.¹⁷⁹

c. The side effects of the family policies in both West and East Germany.

The family policies were launched from the perspective of helping motherhood and work, and these did indeed help women enter the traditional male spheres. However, they also undermined the women's position in the labor market for employers had less desire to employ women because of the family policy programs such as maternity leaves, day-time housework leaves, paid leaves to care for sick children, and a shortened work week. Actually, "mothers spend twenty-three fewer hours on a paying-job per month than fathers."¹⁸⁰ It was also hard for women to do overtime work. From an employer's standpoint, women employees missed work more than men and were therefore less dedicated to work than men. All of this brought the result, Goldenberg states, that "male working teams were evidently unwilling to put up with absences of women colleagues, so women stayed in female dominated fields, where assuming family responsibilities was acceptable."¹⁸¹ These factors created segregation in so far as women have different

¹⁷⁹ Martine R. Textor, "Youth and Family Welfare Services in Germany," *International Social Work*, 38 (4) (1995): 385.

¹⁸⁰ Lynn Duggan, 159.

¹⁸¹ Goldenberg, "Women on the Verge: Winners and Losers in German Unification," *Social Policy*, 22 (2) (1991): 39.

categories of work and lower paid jobs, while men have the tendency to achieve high level positions which brings about money, power and other rewards. Furthermore, these factors reinforced the thought that women have child-rearing responsibilities which men do not have. The women's role is primarily that of a parent. Women as the primary parent increased women's dependency on men especially in West Germany. This latter situation eventually engendered a view in both countries that, at least to some degree, "women remained second-class citizens."¹⁸² Even though East Germany tried to achieve women's equality in employment and "encourage women's full integration into the labor force,"¹⁸³ government leaders recognized that men were failing to perform household tasks.¹⁸⁴

A comparison of the family policies in both East and West Germany family shows that, the East Germany family policy contributed to women's participation in the labor force and the birth-rate even though it did not overcome reinforcing traditional sex roles. In West Germany, as Duggan states, the "West German policies were not overtly gendered," rather the family policies simply reduced women's labor force participation and increased traditional sex roles.¹⁸⁵

C. Position in the family

Participating in the labor force gives women a different position in family and society. Women who have full time jobs are more independent, have a higher status and

¹⁸² Lynn Duggan, 84.

¹⁸³ Barbara Lobodzinska ed., *Family, Women and Employment in Central-Eastern Europe* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995), 103-104.

¹⁸⁴ Jennifer Schulenberg, 51.

¹⁸⁵ Lynn Duggan, 160.

more decision making power compared with women who are only housewives.

Therefore, reduced social support system for women diminishes their personal options.¹⁸⁶

a. House work (household)

In sharing housework, the two countries had different policies even though both countries' Constitution encouraged husbands and wives' cooperation in household duties. East Germany family laws encourage more male participation in housework and child care. The East Germany's Family Code paragraph 7 (1965) indicate it well: "Both spouses do their share in the education and care of the children and the conduct of the household. The relations of the spouses to each other are to be so shaped that the wife can combine her professional and social activities with those of motherhood."¹⁸⁷ In contrast, West Germany allowed women's employment not to interfere in their marital and family duties until 1977 when the First Act on Reform of Marriage and Family Life was passed. The West German Constitution paragraphs 1356 and 1360 shows that one of the spouses was in charge of the whole household until 1976.¹⁸⁸ The reading of the West German childcare system means that women, found it difficult to be employed and so they took full responsibility for their household.

¹⁸⁶ Jennifer Schulenberg, 120.

¹⁸⁷ MDJ, 1970 a, p.43. I am using material from Duggan, 158.

¹⁸⁸ The West German Constitution paragraphs 1356: Spouses arrange the conduct of the household in mutual agreement. If only one of the spouses takes full charge of the household, then, he or she alone assumes full responsibility for it. (2) Both spouses are entitled to be gainfully employed. In the choice and the performance of their gainful occupation, they are to give due consideration to the interests of the other spouse.

The West German Constitution paragraphs 1360: The spouses are obligated to each other to adequately support the family by their work and personal means. If one of the spouses is left in charge of the household, then, he (or she) meets his (or her) obligation to work for the support of the family as a general rule by taking care of the household. *Bundesgesetzblatt* (1976), 1421-1422. I am using material from Duggan, 158.

Also, the West Germany laws gave more time off from women's job, since they considered the mother as the primary parent. This reinforced both the double burden of the woman and the discrimination of the employer against women. Household work includes shopping, housework, child-care, gardening, auto repairs and labor force work. According to the survey of Sibylle Meyer and Eva Schulze, most of the house work and the majority of duties in the family remained with women. However, the men in the East did more house work and child-care compared to Western men. The interview by Sibylle Meyer and Eva Schulze presents the case that husbands finished work earlier than their wives. Thus, husbands took the children home from school, completed the shopping for the family, fed and played with the children, and lastly put them to bed. The following provides us with a two recorded examples:

Mr. Q, born 1970, a photographer, currently a part-time film projectionist, lives together with Ms. N, 1969, and their 2-year-old son: Right at the moment I'm picking him up from the day care center. Regina brings him there in the morning. It usually depends on if we need something, doing the rounds and a little shopping. 'Cause sooner or later you have to stock up on groceries. If I pick him up, it's around quarter to five. Then you go for a round of shopping and by the time you've got everything, it's after five in no time. At half past five you have to start again with the bathing and feeding. So this phase after picking him up goes by very quickly. You play with him a little bit, wash up, eat, and then it's off to bed.

Ms. E. born 1957, a dietitian, currently a manufacturing consultant, since 1990 divorced and living since that time with Mr. G, born 1961, a mason. Both of Ms. E's children, 10 and 13 years old, live at home: A sick child belongs at home and not in the nursery school. Usually the mother then stayed at home, but it was also possible for the father to call in sick. We also managed to have Eckardt call in sick and stay home for three days and I went to work. That's still taxing for the mother since she goes crazy-what with the sick child at home and the husband too. When you come home, the dishes are done, but incorrectly done because the husband did them. You don't want to complain because he did his best, but he just couldn't do it. Inside I felt completely spent because even if the husband

did help out, the most involved situation responsibility nevertheless remained with the mother¹⁸⁹

These two cases show how the East German men participated in housework and child-care. The first case shows the well divided house work: Finishing work early the father picks the child up and takes care of him up to bedtime. So, the wife whose work is done late does not need to be exhausted with the left over house work. However, the second case shows the more usual case. It is that even though the East men divided the housework in everyday life, the housework was not equally divided and the responsibility of work was still with the women.

Table 4 “Time use of families (Men and Women) in East and West on normal workday (full-time employed couples with children only)”¹⁹⁰

Hours of daily activities		West* / up to 35 years old	West / 35 to years old	East** / up to 35 years old	East/ 35 to 50 years old
Housework	Women	3.18	3.22	2.62	2.91
	Men	0.93	0.8	1.1	1.07
Child Care	Women	4.1	1.85	2.96	1.91
	Men	1.62	0.92	1.84	1.01
Total	Women	7.28	5.07	5.48	4.82
	Men	2.55	1.72	2.94	2.08

Source: SOEP¹⁹¹

*SOEP-West, 1987 and Meyer and Schulze’s own calculations.

**SOEP-East, 1990 and Meyer and Schulze’s own calculations.

The table shows that Western women work more hours than Eastern women. On average, the women of Western Germany up to the age of 35 spend up to 7 hours and 28 minutes doing housework and taking care of children whereas the women of Eastern

¹⁸⁹ Silbylle Meyer and Eva Schulze, 100-101.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 101.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

Germany spend up to 5 hours and 48 minutes doing the same tasks. If the women are distinguished by age, then – in both countries – the women between 35 and 50 years of age work more than those who are not yet 35 years old. In contrast, the Eastern men work more hours than the Western men and also, in contrast, men who age are 35 years old and below work more than the men whose age is between 35 to 50 years old. One of the reasons for this is that women who are older are more influenced by patriarchal culture, and younger men are less influenced by it. In conclusion, Eastern men do more work house than Western men. Eastern German men spend up to 2 hours and 94 minutes doing housework and taking care of children compared to Western German men who spend 2 hours and 55 minutes. Nevertheless, it is clear that women's house work hours are longer than those of men; however, women assume the responsibility of house work in both countries.

b. Decision making

Another aspect of measuring the marital power of East women is “decision making” in the family. In the decisions regarding marriage and divorce, regarding new partners or decisions about fertility, or regarding the timing of children's birth, women hold a more significant position in the family. According to the research of Meyer and Schulze, Eastern women participated in all family affairs, and in very important family decisions they shared decision-making equally with their husbands. Moreover, Eastern women made more decisions than men at the beginning of pregnancy. Even though men wanted children, women made the final decision. We can see that the Eastern German women's independence and self-reliance are stronger. In contrast, in the West women who divorced were considered as “bad housewives” until the 1960s. They also needed

their husband's permission for their outside work until 1977.¹⁹² Thus, Western German women had the tendency to depend on the decisions of men because of their part-time jobs and their unemployment due to child care responsibility. Western German women's decision making and self-confidence was lower than that of Eastern German women.

D. Social network

Also, the close relation to groups outside the family' called "*Arbeitskollektive*" (work collectives) and the close relationship with their relatives' important resources for women. The close relationship between colleagues at work through group excursions to films, theater, concerts, or exhibitions gave women the space to discuss personal subjects. Partner conflicts, worries about children, and the tribulations of everyday life were discussed with colleagues.

Also, the close relationship with relatives was another important resource for women since most often it strengthened their family and work positions. In close relations with relatives, they received important material and emotional support. This also helped their constant lack of goods which brought about emotional instability. These women's networks were stronger than those of Western women and they strongly strengthened the positions of women in their domestic partnership and in their work relationships.

The Eastern women surpassed the Western women in the following areas:
possibilities for occupational training, employment, the labor-work in family and home,

¹⁹² Katrin Bennhold, "20 Years After Fall of Wall, Women of Former East Germany Thrive," The New York Times, October, 6, 2010.

their positions within the family, and at time their concerns about income. All these resources contributed toward a greater ability by Eastern German women to gain more equal relationships.

3) The effect on women's lives after the reunification

With the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9th, 1989, the two different systems of government with different economic systems, social structures and ideologies caused unification to take one year to complete. However, West Germany's policies, laws and legislation were forced onto the people of East Germany.¹⁹³ Goldberg states that the situation caused "no systematic attempt to evaluate the institutions of the former socialist state with a view toward saving or incorporating positive policies in the unified nation."¹⁹⁴ By the colonized reunification, East Germany's social programs and its understanding of personal identity could not apply in the United Germany. Let us consider some of the main effects which this reunification engendered.

A. Women's unemployment rate and lower level jobs

The impact on women's life in the social support systems and the position of women in the society or family after unification was enormous. What was changed in the lives of German women after the unification? Even though they achieved being one nation, the position of East German women was weakened and their independence was reduced.

¹⁹³ Hanna Behrend, "East German Women- Chief Losers in German Reunification," In Barbara Lobodzinska ed., *Family, Women and Employment in Central Eastern Europe* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press; 1995), 113-121.

¹⁹⁴ G. Goldberg (1991), 40.

Unemployment was the major influence which caused their weakened position. The change from a socialist to a capitalist economy brought about a profound transformation in the labor market which led to high unemployment. Forty percent of employment positions were lost since 1989, and 1,100,749 persons were registered as unemployed in the new federal German state on December 1992. Among them, according to the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* in 1993, 64% were women.¹⁹⁵ Women had a higher unemployment rate due to the closing of factories especially in the textile industry. The dismissals which occurred in the East German area affected more women than men. East German goods were rejected as inferior products, a judgment that led East Germany into a trade breakdown and West German products in the Eastern area destroyed the East German markets. In December 1992, the male unemployment rate in the East was 10% whereas that of females was 19%. The female unemployment rate was almost twice that of the West, which was 7% for men and 8% for women in December 1992.¹⁹⁶ These numbers show that the situation of women during the reunification became worse than that of men. According to the weekly newspaper, *Freitag*, May 29, 1992, “82% of the women in the former East Germany are worse off after reunification.”¹⁹⁷

Table 5: Female Unemployment Percentages in the NFS, 1991-1996

Year	Number of Unemployed Women	Percentage of Female Unemployed from Total number of Female	Total Unemployment Rate (Men and Women)
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¹⁹⁵ According to Trzcinski, women’s long term unemployment was 69% in 1993. Eileen Trzcinski, “Gender and German Unification,” *Affilia*, 13 (1), p.92.

¹⁹⁶ Konrad Jarausch, *The Rush to German Unity* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc.1994), p.151.

¹⁹⁷ Barbara Ketelhut, “The Family in the German Democratic Republic from a Western Point of View,” In Lobodzinska, B. ed., *Family, Women and Employment in Central-Eastern Europe* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press,1995), p.123.

1991	529,961	58.1	10.3
1992	741.145	63.3	14.8
1993	743,320	63.9	15.8
1994	740,644	64.8	16.0
1995	660,079	63.0	14.9
1996	673,776	57.6	16.7

Source: BMFSFJ¹⁹⁸

The above table demonstrates that women's unemployment became permanent in the New Federal States (NFS) after reunification. With the reunification, women lost their jobs and the unemployment situation continued for six years after reunification. Thus, we can understand why people define the women's situation after reunification as "three steps back for women."

Another feature is that the percentage of women who were in highly skilled occupations suffered a major drop and women considered transferring to less highly valued jobs. In unemployment, both men and women in East Germany both their jobs but men who lost jobs had other alternatives. The men held two- thirds of all subsidized temporary jobs and interestingly, 80% of men who reported living in the East were employed in the West. This shows that men made this move for their independence or to support their family but women, who had already had their children, maintained their responsibility of childcare and they could not move to seek their fortune in the West.¹⁹⁹

Also, the unemployment of women not only increased but they had to look for lower level jobs. Myra sees the same case during the Great Depression in the United State as an example. In the U.S. women who were in higher -level positions were laid off

¹⁹⁸BMFSFJ : *Bundesministerium für Familie und Senioren, Frauen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, v. 72 (Bonn, 1998), 107

¹⁹⁹ Myra Marx Ferree, 12.

and men were replaced the positions. Some women made an effort to increase their job qualifications and this helped to provide a competitive advantage against other women. However, their position did not prevent them from being replaced by men even though the men were not qualified and had less job experience. Consequently, women lost high status jobs.²⁰⁰ According to Uta Maier's research, there were 100,000 women who held upper management positions in East Germany in 1989, but there were only a few left in unified Germany in 1995. In contrast, men had experienced a drop from 200,000 in 1990 to 80,000 in 1992 (60%). In the case of highly qualified white collar jobs, men's numbers dropped from 850,000 to 660,000 (20%) compared to women who dropped from 600,000 to 420,000 (30%) from 1990 to 1991. In East Germany, financial management jobs, like insurance, accounting and banking work, were completely female jobs but these are mixed sex occupations in West Germany. Maier points out this situation, noting that "employment figures in former East Germany show men now entering these fields in substantial numbers, as the labor force changes to reflect the West German standard of 'normality.'"²⁰¹

Another feature is the "mini jobs" of women. In the 1980s, according to the *Statistisches Bundesamt* report,²⁰² nine out of ten mothers in the East Germany had full time jobs and they returned to work at least one year after child birth. However, the mother's activity rate for those who had children less than six years old declined in the New Federal States (NFS). The main reason is child-care. For example, the mother's

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 14.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 14-15.

²⁰² Jennifer Lina Schulenberg, 108-109.

working-rate, with 3-to-5-year-old children, dropped from 83% to 65% between 1991 and 1996. Also, mothers with than children less than three years old saw a decline from 63.5% to 22.0%.²⁰³ An even more interesting fact is that mothers with children have a tendency to be in “mini jobs.” According to the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW), “some 5.4 million people were engaged in ‘mini jobs’ of which 1.4 million of them had a secondary activity in addition to their main full-time job.”²⁰⁴ The mini job in terms of DIW produced gross earnings below the level of 610 DM per month and was not permanent but contractual. In the report of the DIW, 40% were married women, 25% were students, 10% were pensioners and 7% were sole parents among 4 million mini-job persons.²⁰⁵ This statistic clearly shows the married women’s employment situation. However, compared to men, men’s working rate, between 15 and 64 years old with children under 3 years old, was 80.7% in 1996, while women, with 6- to 14- year-old children, was 52.8%, and women with children under 3 years old was 26.4% in 1996.²⁰⁶ The *Statistisches Bundesamt* researched as part of a national census a questionnaire asking what they felt about their employment opportunity in their market places. 14% of men versus 8 % of women answered that they felt they had good employment opportunities from 1988 to 1990 in East Germany. Furthermore, 29% of men and 15% of women in Unified Germany answered similarly in 1993.²⁰⁷ With this phenomenon,

²⁰³ Bundesministerium für Familie und Senioren (BMFSFJ), *Die Familie im Spiegel der Amtlichen Statistik*, (Bonn, 1999), 117. I am using material from Jennifer Schlegelberg, 108.

²⁰⁴ BMFSFJ(1999), 111. I am using material from Jennifer Schlegelberg, 198.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ BMFSFJ(1999), 114, Jennifer Schlegelberg, 109.

²⁰⁷ The Statistisches Bundesamt(1996), 488.

Jennifer Schulenberg states that “with the East Germany social infrastructure completely dismantled with the imposition of FRG law and policy, women lost the policies and social supports that permitted them to combine labor force participation and household responsibility.”²⁰⁸

As the major reasons for a higher unemployment rate for women, Quack and Maier explain the labor market policy of Germany in four parts.²⁰⁹

- There have been severe cutbacks in female-dominated industries.
- Women’s positions have been cut more severely than men’s positions, even in industries that have been male dominated. Women in these industries have benefited less from labor market policies that buffer core production.
- Migration and commuting to West Germany are less viable for East German women, who are less mobile than East German men because of their care giving responsibilities.
- The East German policies and social support that permitted women to combine labor market and household responsibilities were eliminated.

B. Reduced social support system

Finding new jobs for women was more difficult than in the former East Germany because they had to combine motherhood and an occupation while dealing with a lack of social support. Many child-care social systems were reduced or closed, and company

²⁰⁸ Jennifer Schulenberg, 109.

²⁰⁹ Eileen Trzeinski, “Gender and German Unification,” *AFFILIA*, Vol.13 No.1 (Spring, 1998): 70-71.

child care centers hardly existed. For example, child-care centers, kindergartens, and afternoon centers for children decreased by about 5000 from 1990 to 1992 in New Brandenburg.²¹⁰ As mentioned above, with German unification in December 1990, West Germany massively cut the former extensive East German policies such as child support assurance, free public child-care, and liberal maternity and sick leaves. The amount of the child support system assured by the state until a child reaches 16 year old was dependent on their parents income in East Germany, but the West and unified Germany provided for a maximum of only three years before a child reaches age 6 and half-day public school. Child-care became a restriction for women looking for jobs.

This situation increased women's responsibility for childcare and they had double burdens due to the threat of unemployment and childcare. The story of a woman who lived in the East after unification shows well the hardness of their lives.

Ms. S, the employed nursery school teacher in 1983: At our place they are now beginning to close the nurseries and are terminating teaching positions. A terrible story. I have to come to terms with the fact that I could be the next one to go. For me it would be horrible- I can't even imagine it happening. Deep down, with all my heart and soul, I am a nursery school teacher. It would be simply unthinkable for me not to have a foothold in this profession. This anxiety is shared by all of my colleagues. You can feel it everywhere. "Just don't call in sick" is the motto. Almost nobody feels confident enough to stay at home if their child gets sick. I notice this attitude among my colleagues and also with our mothers who bring their children to the building even when they're running a temperature. It didn't used to be that way. Everyone is scared about losing their job.²¹¹

Moreover, the family has an expanded responsibility in caring for the old, sick and disabled in the transformation of the social security system. Before German

²¹⁰ New Brandenburg is a city in the north of the new states.

²¹¹ Meyer and Schulze, 108.

unification, the East German families did not have the responsibility of caring for the old and the sick in their homes. In the West, 80% of elderly persons were cared for by middle-aged daughters or daughters-in-law, but the East German women could not imagine doing this because the middle-aged women had a higher employment rate. These tasks were considered as a part of the collective responsibility of the state and these issues were reflected in the government's health and social policies, such as the socialization of children in the former East Germany.²¹²

East Germany had the highest elderly population in the world during the 1970s. Twenty-two percent of the elderly were over 60 years old and 92 % who were over 80 years old were women, compared to 50% of men who were without partners in 1974.²¹³ The East German Constitution, article 36, guaranteed the elderly financial security, providing age-adequate job positions, age-adequate housing, medical and social care in the neighborhood and special nursing support at home and in nursing homes.²¹⁴ East Germany tried to keep integrating elderly people into society as long as possible with pensions for comfortable living. Also, the elderly people worked in infant-care, health-care, cultural activities and holiday accommodations. However, with the reunification, the family had the responsibility to take care of elderly persons. As we saw above, the duties for the care of elderly persons fell mostly upon women.

²¹² Ibid., 112.

²¹³ Gwyn Edwards, "The Impact of Reunification on East German Elderly," *Ageing International*, 17 (2) (1990): 7.

²¹⁴ Carsten Otte, "Chapter 9: Germany," in *International Handbook on Social Work Theory and Practice*, eds., Mayadas, Nazneen, Watts, Thomas and Elliott, Doreen, (Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1997), 137.

Also, older women experienced more drastic changes after the unification. Above all, the definition of “older” changed from around 50 to 40 years old in many industries and occupations, leading to a highly unbalanced unemployment rate. First of all, the 50-to-60-year-old age group began to be laid off from the labor market. The older women workers were not wanted by employers. Therefore, there were no options but to accept early retirement. According to the German Institute for Economic Research, 45% women who were aged 50 to 60 were no longer in the labor market in March 1991. This early retirement dropped the women into a poverty group because the early retirement benefit was fixed at 65% of previous income levels, averaging 682 Marks per month. At the time, an income of fewer than 1000 Marks per month was considered as severe poverty. Statistics show how the early retired women’s group was in severe poverty and that 16% of families in East Germany and 3% of families in West Germany had income under 1000 Marks per month. All of this brought about the “the feminization of poverty”²¹⁵ in the New Federal States.

C. The result of unemployment and reduced social support system on women

The mass unemployment of the former East German women has had a huge impact on their lives. The young women’s first choice was not to have children. The birth rate began to fall steadily. There were 178,000 births in 1989; it dropped to only 87,000 in 1992.²¹⁶ It was cut almost in half in three years. This shows the social difficulties generated by the process of unification. People had fear for their future and decided not to

²¹⁵ Schlenberg, 117.

²¹⁶ *Statistisches Bundesamt* (1993).

have children. The following interview by Meyer and Schulze show how they feel about their life and future plans.²¹⁷

Ms. B, the industrial designer: In these times, I cannot have a second child. I mean, it would be better for Marie to grow up with a little sister, but somehow I just don't believe I could do it- I say that in all honesty. I mean, it would work out here in the apartment- that wouldn't be the problem. But I simply fear the future. The child care facilities, on which we could always rely, will no longer be here in the future. In the past I always know, I can leave my child there, it will be taken care of. In the past I would certainly have had a second child. I even would have managed to convince my husband if he would have hesitated. I know, even if the relationship falls apart, with my income I would have been able to raise my children alone. Nowadays it's no longer like this. What will become of my job, I don't know yet. Many of my colleagues are already laid off. I'm much more dependent upon my husband than before. And due to this it's much more important for me to come to an agreement with my husband in such far-reaching decisions as having a second child. And he is at the moment very hesitant.

Also, young women postponed their marriages. The number of marriages dropped by 50% from 1989-1992 due to unemployment and lack of job security (and the age of first marriage also rose.) Another consequence of unification was that the divorce rate dropped dramatically for East German women. Ferree explain this: "In 1989, the GDR had a divorce rate of 122.8 per 10,000 existing marriages. This had dropped by 1991 to a rate of 22.6, indicating how much worse the situation is perceived to be for women who are attempting to raise their children on their own."²¹⁸

Additionally, there was a male preference in the work place. Employers wanted to maximize their productivity and so they began to reduce wages and preferred employees who could work full-time. This meant that a worker who has responsibilities at home

²¹⁷ Meyer and Schulze, 110.

²¹⁸ Myra Marx Ferree, 13

such as cooking meals, cleaning, child-care, and buying food, is not preferred at the workplace. As Myra Marx points out: “In all countries, capitalist and socialist alike, women still carry the bulk of this burden of unpaid work.”²¹⁹ Thus, women who have to share their time and energy are considered less flexible and this places them at a disadvantage in a competitive system. So, Maier says that “the invisible hand of the market was never gender neutral.”²²⁰ The continuing responsibility of women at home in providing for the family led them to be at a disadvantage. Also, single mothers who cannot work overtime faced discrimination at work and being overburdened made them miss their life in East Germany which had seemed easy and secure.²²¹

The changed situation for East German women has affected the position of women in the family. Due to high unemployment, a women’s position was weakened as regards financial independence and self-confidence. Women lost their economic independence and were dependent on men. This has enhanced the status of men as breadwinners in the family and also the women’s position as an equal partner has weakened. Women lost their integration into the important network of their colleagues. By the transfer to a capitalistic system, people became harder and more exhausted leading to decreased emotional contacts and reducing the solidarity of colleagues by the competitiveness in the work place. According to Meyer and Schulze’s interviews, they said that close links between people have become more distant and everybody has been forced to increase their responsibilities.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 17.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

This weakened position of women has influenced the domestic labor division. Meyer and Schulze insist that “there is a close coherence between the lack of women’s financial independence, the reduction of child care facilities and the ‘new but old’ patriarchy of husbands and familial structures.”²²² The lives of women have affected men’s help with the housework. This happened especially to women who were laid-off from work after the reunification of Germany. Domestic work became exclusively the job of a woman in the family. Below is as another example: a woman has problems with her husband, who is unemployed, concerning domestic work.

Ms. S. the nursery school teacher: Although my husband is unemployed and I need to get further qualifications for my job, everything has now changed with raising the children. He does less household work than before. While we were both employed we shared the household work almost equally – almost, I say. But now he acts as if it’s a loss of dignity when he is supposed to clean or do the washing up.²²³

Usually we think that if women are unemployed, the duty of domestic work is theirs. But this case of the husband not being employed is different. We need to examine the husband’s response; “he acts as if it’s a loss of dignity when he is supposed to clean or do the washing.” If a woman is unemployed, she still has responsibility for the housework, but if men are unemployed, they struggle not to do the housework because it hurts their dignity. When men are unemployed they try to find a new job or improve their skills for the future. However, when women are unemployed, people think that it is the time to come back home to their original settings. However, this thinking misses one point that when women have all the domestic responsibility, their possibilities for looking

²²² Meyer and Schulze, 109.

²²³ Ibid., 110.

for new jobs are restricted. Also housework limits their time and energy needed for their jobs when they are employed.

Women's unemployment problem produced another phenomenon: the increasing incidence of violence and abuse within households. Duggan says that it is the ultimate expression of one family member's power over the other.²²⁴ When violence happens in households, women have a tendency to endure the violence because there are no economical options for them or their children. Moreover, the financial dependence makes it harder to have a partnership in marital relationship, even though there is no physical violence. Therefore, Duggan points out the failure of women's policies in the unification of Germany; "German unification would seem to provide the perfect opportunity for such a blend (East- West family policies). But this has not taken place; the current government has reversed all East German progress toward expanding women's fallback position."²²⁵ Therefore, East German women, losing economic independence, have to choose between a career and motherhood. If they decide on motherhood, they have to decide whether to seek part-time jobs. Moreover, it reinforced the traditional gender division of labor. The part-time job with low pay leads to less investment in worker's training, and chronic unemployment results in greater economic marginalization of women.

Thus, Myra predicted that women would be "losers" in the four years since unification and Schulenberg defines that many East German women are excluded from the labor market in the economic outcome of reunification. This is a serious negative

²²⁴ Lynn Duggan, 188.

²²⁵ Ibid., 189.

impact of reunification that influenced the restructuring of the economy and the contraction of the labor force.²²⁶ Trzcinski asserts that

The integration of East German women into the German economy proceeded with an apparent disregard for the women's desires and needs and these desires and needs had been artificially created and maintained through coercion by the East Germany and hence (women) would gladly accept the more natural arrangements offered by the West Germany policy.²²⁷

D. Conclusion

East German women lost their status and economic opportunities after unification. Johnson Lewis explains this: "Discrimination remains in united Germany. Income inequalities persist: a woman's wages and salaries range between 65 percent and 78 percent of a man's for many positions. In most fields, women do not hold key positions. Generally, the higher the position, the more powerful is male dominance."²²⁸ This shift meant that German unification was in no way a new opportunity and new world for East German women. One of the important reasons why the unification gave women these problems was the lack of their participation in the process of German unification. Therefore, women's influence was low under the structure of the systemized political decision making. Also, it was due to their lack of identity in East Germany. Because East German communism was based on patriarchy, the politics of women in East Germany and in the new unified nation as well were also dominated by patriarchal politics.

²²⁶ Myra Marx Ferree, 11. Schlenberg, 115.

²²⁷ Elieen Trzcinski, 72.

²²⁸ Jone Johnson Lewis, p.2. Johnson adds: "For example, women are heavily represented in the traditional care-giving fields of health and education, but even in such field there is wide disparity between the number of females working in hospitals (75 percent of total staff) and schools (more than 50 percent) and the number of female physicians (4 percent) and principals (20 percent in the west and 32 percent in the east). In the late 1980s, only 5 percent of university professors in West Germany were women." 2.

Therefore, the resultant policies did not reflect the needs and difficultness of East German women.

Secondly, the process of reunification of Germany did not provide equal positions between East Germany and West Germany. Rather, the process was controlled by West Germany which meant that the New Federal State had to accept all West Germany's institutions and social structures. Schulenberg states that the German reunification was "an extension of the FRG."²²⁹ Patricia Smith describes the process of German reunification in a slightly different way: "East Germans essentially abdicated any significant role in the design and implementation of the unification process and accepted the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, along with the political, economic, and social systems and institutions of West Germany."²³⁰ All of this looks like cultural colonization, and feminists rightfully see it as "a re-masculinization of Germany."²³¹ Marxist scholars regarded the union as "capitalistic and they predicted economic disaster, and intellectuals mourned the loss of Eastern identity."²³² Therefore, East Germany's social programs and identity were not applied to the NFS. Finally, according to Kim Kung Mi,²³³ at the time of unification, there was a strong stream of Neo-liberalism that preferred reducing the welfare system and labor market-flexibility. This also created policies that were against women.

²²⁹ Schulenberg, 102.

²³⁰ Patricia Smith, *After the Wall: Eastern Germany Since 1989* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. 1998), 4.

²³¹ Konard Jarausch, 199.

²³² Jenniffer Schulenberg, 103.

²³³ Kung Mi Kim, "Dokil Tongilgwa Gu Dongdokglyeokui Yeosung" [German reunification and women who were in East Germany], *International Political Science Association Annual Conference Kit*, 2000.

However, a more basic problem is clearly seen when the two social systems are compared as far as the family policy is concerned. Margrit Eichler divides the “models of the family” into three: the patriarchal model of the family, the individual responsible model and social responsibility model. The patriarchal model of the family is part of a nuclear family of the family and the model in which the husband is the only social and economic leader in the household. Men are measured in economic terms, while females are measured in moral, sexual and social terms.²³⁴ This latter model of family is “unrealistic in contemporary times and can be harmful.”²³⁵ A father’s power is strong and children who are born outside marriage are illegitimate. A wife’s or a mother’s unpaid labors in the household are ignored and women are economically dependent on the husband.²³⁶ In the individual responsibility model of the family, however, both husband and wife have the same economic functions. Thus, spouses are considered interdependent.²³⁷ Both parents have the responsibility to take care of family members but the public has no responsibility for it except in cases where parents are absent or unable to take the responsibility. The social responsibility model is, according to Eichler, a new model that should improve family policies. Families and state have an interaction to improve familiar relations and the well-being of the family. The stratification of men and women is minimal in ideological emphasis. Both parents have responsibility for their

²³⁴ Margatet Eichler, *Family Shifts: Families, Policies and Gender Equality* (Don Mills, Oxford University Press,1997), 11.

²³⁵ Ibid, 15.

²³⁶ Ibid, 104.

²³⁷ Ibid.

children in economic and in social care. Furthermore, the characteristic of this model is that the state shares the responsibility.

If one parent is really absent or unable to contribute his or her share, society will pay the cost of his or her contribution. The cost of care for inevitably dependent adults is public responsibility, while the delivery of the care may be rendered by a family member.²³⁸

The state has a responsibility for the care of the family: a child care system, adequate parental leave for family purposes, employment benefits and child support. Also, state supports the care of the elderly.²³⁹

The Eichler model points out the problems in the United Germany's family policies compared to the West and East Germany. The West Germany (and also the United Germany) had a conservative laissez-faire family-state relationship. It resembled the patriarchal model of the family in which they supported married parents with children while state support had few care giving programs for children and the elderly. East Germany family policy "represents an interventionist family-state relationship that indicates public patriarchy within the realm of a social responsible framework." Comparing the two shows how the state family policy impacts family lives in sharing responsibilities for child care and the elderly, which are major reasons for women's employment and status in the society.

Thus, German women, especially East German women, became losers in the reunification. However, questions can be raised; what does the unemployment rate and the changed state supported family policies mean? And what are gender attitudes behind the unemployment rate?

²³⁸ Margrit Eichler, 1997, 144.

²³⁹ Jennifer Schulenberg , 22.

2. Cultural and religious reflection on the phenomenon of German women in the reunification

In the New York Times, Katrin Bennhold states that “women in the former Communist East seemed to be the big losers” when the Berlin Wall collapsed.²⁴⁰ German women became losers in the reunification process of the two Germanys. This result raises the question: what are the gender attitudes behind the unemployment rate? It is clear that culture, politics and religion impacted the number of unemployed women after the German reunification. Thus, I claim that culture and religion play a strong role than the role of politics in human lives and consequently culture and religion must be part of any reunification of political entities. Religion is a major factor, influencing both politics and culture.

In the process of the unification of Germany from 1990 to 1994, the number of women employed in East Germany fell from 10 million to 6 million. In the East, the paid employment of women between the ages of 16 and 65 was 85%, compared to 54% in the West. However, after unification, women’s employment fell to 49% and 44%.²⁴¹

These rates are the result of the outside structures of the labor-market and the market- policy of Germany.²⁴² Even though both East and West Germany had guaranteed equality in their constitutions and even though the unified Germany was based on the

²⁴⁰ Katrin Bennhold, “20 Years After Fall of Wall, Women of Former East Germany Thrive,” The New York Times, October, 6, 2010.

²⁴¹ Bundesministerium fuer Fruen und Jugend, Frauen in der Bundesrepublik Deutashcland [Women in the Federal Republic of Germany], (Born, Germany, 1992).

²⁴² Eileen Trzcinski, 69-70.

same ideology, internal factors brought about these results of unemployment. Questions can be raised: what were the reason for the severe elimination of women in the work-force and the consequent lack of social support for women, and what was the fundamental reason why in the political structure women have primary responsibilities in the household? I will discuss the concept of women's primary responsibility as motherhood, and how it affects the society and also how the political culture and family policy institutions were influenced by women's position and employment.

1) **Is the primary responsibility of women motherhood?**

In *The Encyclopedia of Women's History*, Jone Johnson Lewis defines women's role in German society in using the three "K" words: Kinder (children), Kirche (church), and Kuche (kitchen).²⁴³

Trzcinski asserts that a dichotomous category about gender brought unequal outcomes as a natural result of inherent differences between women and men. Also, policies were made that favored men systematically and that these policies were a disadvantage to women. However, the greater problem is that the unbalanced systems and culture in the two Germanys are hard to reveal. Hare-Mustin and Marecek say that "inequalities of power are often concreted on our culture." This means that when the dichotomous category about gender occurs slowly as a social and economic relationship,

²⁴³ Jone Johnson Lewis, *Encyclopedia of Women's History*, "Germany- Status of Women," <http://womenshistory.about.com>, May 2, 2012.

Also, Lewis describes German women's status at the society in the above *Encyclopedia of Women's History*: "In West Germany, the Basic Law of 1948 declared that men and women were equal, but it was not until 1957 that the civil code was amended to conform with this statement. Even in the early 1950s, women could be dismissed from the civil service when they married.... Employment and social welfare program remained predicated on the male breadwinner model. West Germany turned to millions of migrants or immigrants-including large numbers of GDR refugees- to satisfy its booming economy's labor requirements. Women became homemakers and mothers again and largely withdrew from employment outside the home."

it is easy to conceal. Moreover, when gender is categorized in politics, society and culture, it is used to create and maintain unequal outcomes, and the outcomes are considered as natural and inevitable.²⁴⁴ This is the reason why people do not raise questions about the unequal situations and consider them as natural and inevitable in the society.

Both East and West Germany proclaimed equality in their constitutions. However, as Spakes points out, even though the Constitutions guaranteed equality, it was not possible to form an equal opportunity when policies continued to reinforce the assumption that the primary responsibility of women is motherhood.²⁴⁵ This view asserts that women's primary duty is being wife and mother. Also, women's primary parent responsibility was encoded in the governmental policy. Even East Germany decreed in their Family Law Code of 1965 that both parents have responsibility to take care of home and family but the government assumed until 1989 that women, as mothers, should be the primary parent. Married women with full-time jobs and single parents were allowed a housework day and a shorter working week with full pay. However, fathers were not allowed the benefits without special permission.²⁴⁶ After 1986, married men took parental leave for wives' maternity leave and other special occasions with permission but few men used these benefits. Another example of the unbalanced system and culture was wage-difference between women and men. East Germany's Constitution, article 3, guaranteed equal rights for men and women and the prohibition of discrimination by gender. Thus, wage reductions for women were illegal, but also it recommended in the 1955

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 74.

²⁴⁵ Spakes, 388.

²⁴⁶ Gunnar, Winkler, *Sozialreport '90* (Social Report '90) (East Berlin: Verlag Die Wirtschaft, 1990), 278. 340. Duggan, 70-71.

Constitution that businesses can establish wage-groups that depend on physical labor. It could be used to categorize whether work is easy or difficult. Also, until July 1, 1977, as I mentioned above, East German law stated that a wife can be qualified at the combine work and familial duties. Also, mothers, not fathers, are required to provide the documentation showing proof that child-care is available. This contradicts the Constitution, which guaranteed equality.²⁴⁷ Defining women as mothers has influenced gender base politics and practices. Also, it has protected men more effectively than women in the process of unification.

Trzicinski says that the categorization brought hard situation to women in both German states:

This categorization was the basis for policies before and after unification and shaped men's and women's relationships to power in both the GDR and the FRG. Thus, the lack of equality in the home and in the political sector made it difficult for women in the GDR to achieve equality in the employment sector.²⁴⁸

The high rate of unemployment of women after unification was the result of a revealed phenomenon that concealed power relationships. Therefore, the imbalance in the distribution for women at the beginning of unification was the result of the societies which were based on the conceptualization of the difference between men and women. Also, these societies created and maintained distinctions in the social and economic relationships.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ Trzciniski, 77.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 98.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 89.

2) Political culture

There is another reason for analyzing the unequal outcome after unification in gender and attitude, namely the concept of “political culture”. Marina A. Adler and April Brayfield assert that the gender related attitude of the two regimes have changed with policy-developments in the United States and in the two regions of unified Germany. Political culture is defined as “the dominant values, attitudes and beliefs in a particular country, and the related behaviors of the citizenry.”²⁵⁰ It includes national characteristics, cultural identity of the country, and the population’s attitudes toward the political system and policies, all of which relate to the economic structure of society. Therefore, political cultures are based on maintaining particular welfare systems and gender policies.²⁵¹

Also, social, political, cultural issues affect institutions through social political discourse and interpretations. Kunzler says: “the political culture of a country can determine its development by framing its ‘approach to family and gender relations’ via a combination of Catholicism, conservatism, and corporatism (West Germany), or socialism, egalitarianism, and centralism (East Germany).”²⁵² Therefore, political cultures are associated with the private or public sphere of family policy and functions to force choice in national policies. Political culture in regard to the meaning and value of employment is also related with the political and economic structure of society. Also, it includes the country’s dominant ideologies such as gender-status, motherhood, women’s

²⁵⁰ Marina A. Adler and April Brayfield, “Gender Regimes and Cultures of Care: Public Support for Maternal Employment in Germany and the United States,” *Marriage and Family Review*, Vol .39, N. ¾ (2006): 234.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

independence, work-family balance and a culture of care. It can be expressed as “gender-culture” which is connected with gender-order and public attitudes of the gender division of labor.²⁵³

3) **Religion as one of the major facts of German belief and way of life**

Nationalism influenced German belief and way of life in the definition of the role of women. Helene Slessarev-Jamir asserts that German nationalism has been an important role in reinforcing patriarchy in German society. From the old Prussia state, “good Germans” were meant to have more children for the fatherland with the slogan of “Blut und Boden.” The Nazis followed this same pattern: children for the fatherland. Slessarev-Jamir adds: “after the defeat of the second World War, there remained a great need to repopulate Germany after its enormous losses that no doubt led to government policies encouraging women to see themselves as mother first, rather than workers.”²⁵⁴

She also points out the German unions’ and the Social Democrats’ influence in the role of women. She argues that German unions and the Social Democrats favored the position that women stay at home with children.²⁵⁵ Martin Kitchen in his book, *A History of Modern Germany 1800-2000*, argues in the same way.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Ibid., 235.

²⁵⁴ Helene Slessarev Jamir is one of my committee members and she gave to me her comments on my thesis draft. April 14, 2012.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ “Socialists [during the time of Bismark’s Germany] were in favor of the emancipation of women, but the question was for them of secondary importance, since they insisted that it could only be achieved within the context of a social revolution and the liberation of mankind. Class was of far greater importance than gender, and among women only proletarians were an object of concern ... [August Bebel argued that] Poletarian women were doubly exploited, first as a

In Nazi Germany, the status of women gradually improved. Kitchen writes: "The lot of the vast majority of women in the Third Reich improved greatly. Their husbands had a steady job, real wages were rising, admittedly from a very low level, and the future looked promising." However there were many negative aspects in the Nazi policy toward women: "Under ideal circumstances they were to be confined to the home as mother of racially sound children, all in the interests of eugenics, racial politics, and preparation for war. The Fuhrer needed children, and to this end 'Mother's Day,' which had been instigated during the Weimar Republic, was made into the central event of the Nazi fertility cult, celebrated with great pomp, ceremony, and pathos."²⁵⁷

Gordon Smith in his book, *Politics in Western Europe*, argues that religion and politics are balanced in Western Europe. He describes West Germany's religious balance [Catholic and Protestant parity] as follows: "In these three countries [West Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland], there is a peaceful coexistence of the two; no longer does a person's religion result in political or social discrimination, nevertheless, religion does have a salience for politics, and the two churches are still to an extent in competition with one another."²⁵⁸ Also, he asserts that for middle class men and women, whether they are actually church goers or not, the religious element was an identifying symbol of their

workers and secondly as women." See Martin Kitchen, *A History of Modern Germany 1800-2000*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 159.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 288.

²⁵⁸ Gordon Smith, *Politics in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*, Third Edition (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 21.

values of society, even though for the younger generation the link between party and religion was not very significant.²⁵⁹

As I mentioned above, the political culture of a country affects family policy institutions. Ola Sjoberg in her research compared thirteen industrialized countries in Europe concerning the role of family policy institutions in structuring attitudes towards female labor force participation. She found that there are two different perspectives which explain the role of family policy institutions. First, gender role attitudes differ by the capacity of family-policy institutions which combine home-labor with paid-work. Second, the family policy institutions give rise to the norms about ‘proper’ roles in society.²⁶⁰

One of the major factors influencing the formation of political culture is religion. Institutionalized religions like the Catholic Church and different Protestant churches have been powerful social forces in guiding people’s lives. Both Catholics and Protestants have supported the ideal role of women as “proper wives.” Therefore, according to Hall, this domestic ideology gave working women the image of being unnatural and immoral.²⁶¹ Catholic social doctrine has been a core voice that women are subordinate persons. Thus, women’s family obligations take priority when the family obligation and outside work are conflicted. Therefore, female employment is considered negatively in these religious societies, and motherhood is the priority and natural vocation for women.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 24.

²⁶⁰ Ola Sjoberg, “The Role of Family Institutions in Explaining Gender-Role Attitudes: A Comparative Multilevel Analysis of Thirteen Industrialized Countries,” *Journal of European Social Policy* (2004): 107.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 109.

Even though Catholics and Protestants have the same traditional ideal of family, they have influenced the societies in different ways. Catholic social doctrine has been more influential in policies and in their ideology for most Christian Democratic parties in Europe which strongly reflect Catholic dominated nations because of its rejection of the ideology of secularization of religions.²⁶² Thus, a family policy model supposes the view that the wife's primary responsibility is caring and reproductive work. So, outside work with pay is considered temporary and secondary. The family policy based on Catholic doctrine conflicts with models that encourage women's participation in the labor force and combines the parent (both men and women) model with paid-work. In contrast, Protestant dominated nations show a different phenomenon. According to Ferrarini, the left-wing government in Protestant dominated nations regard gender equality as a base for gender liberation. It has a different view of the traditional roles of women and men. It tries to manifest a policy that reduces the responsibilities of women to the family and gives changes to work outside.²⁶³

When women feel that employment is not compatible with a mother's role, they face a serious identity conflict. Therefore, the support systems of family-policy institutions could ease the conflicted role between women's work and family obligations. Family-policy institutions can be a means of combining work as a mother and work in the paid labor force.²⁶⁴ Therefore, Sjoberg asserts that family policy-institutions can affect

²⁶² M.G. Schmidt, "Gender Labor Force Participation," in F.G. Castles ed. *Families of Nations, Patterns of Public Policy in Western Democracies*, (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company Ltd, 1993), and A. Borchorst, "Welfare State Regimes, Women's interests and the E C," in: D. Stainsbury *Gendering Welfare States* (London: Sage, 1994).

²⁶³ Ola Sjoberg, 109.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 111.

deeply individual lives, identities, self-images and orientations towards the world. Also, it can affect the prevailing norms in society and can be a part of a strategy of societal actors to make better the power resources.²⁶⁵

Guido Heineck shows how religion influences women's paid employment.²⁶⁶ Heineck asserts that women's participation in paid employment is influenced by religious groups, but depending on the groups' strictness.²⁶⁷ It means that a woman, who has a spouse with strong beliefs, tends to react to work negatively. According to sociological and economic theories, religion affects women's decisions whether to work or not. Also, gender roles and the division of labor are differently valued by religious groups. For example, almost 25 percent of "exclusivist Protestants" has strong tendencies that husbands have the prime responsibility for earning a living and wives should take care of the home and family. In contrast, only 8 percent of persons without religion agreed with the view. Also, the exclusivist Protestants did not agree that women who have children under 5 years old should have full-time jobs. Thus, women's paid employment depended on whether husbands and wives are of the same religious group and also, whether the husband belongs to a more liberal religion or not. According to Lehrer, women whose

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 112.

²⁶⁶ According to *Wikipedia*, the statistics of religion in Germany in 2008 were flowing: No religion-34.1%, Roman Catholicism-30.0%, Protestantism-29.9%, Islam-4.0%, Orthodox Christianity-1.6%, Judaism-0.2%, Buddhism-0.2%. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/Religion in Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/Religion_in_Germany), May 2, 2012).

However, Slessarev-Jamir points out that we have to take into account the data regarding church membership: "In West Germany (and now in all of Germany) the Lutheran and Catholic churches are state churches – citizens pay taxes to support the church – therefore on has to be very careful in drawing conclusions about data on church "membership" because in some cases in simply represents the number of people who are paying their church tax. But rarely go to church. Much of the northern part of Germany is largely secular, while pockets of strong belief remain in some Catholic regions of southern Germany." In Slessarev-Jamir's comments on Jin ChoLee's thesis draft, April 14, 2012.

²⁶⁷ Guido Heineck, "Does Religion Influence the Labor Supply of Married Women in Germany?" *DIW Berlin* (Berlin: German Institute for Economic Research, Berlin, February, 2002), 16.

husbands do not belong to the same religious group and belong to a more liberal religion, have a greater possibility of participating in the labor force.²⁶⁸

Heineck distinguishes the groups by religion and married women's employment. The first group shows that married women who belong to stricter religious groups are less employed compared to the opposite groups. For example, 72% of women who do not belong to a major religious group (especially, in the Muslim group in Germany)²⁶⁹ are highly not employed. Women, who belong to Christian churches or groups like Baptists, and Methodists, are not employed; 59% are unemployed. In contrast, women who do not belong to religious groups are more employed at full time jobs. Also, 64% of women who say that belief is very important are not employed. In contrast, 43% of women who say that belief is not important are not employed. Twelve percent of women who believe are employed as a full-time employees compared to 40% of non-religious women who are employed in full-time positions.²⁷⁰ In a similar picture, when women who are Muslim spouses who are also Muslim, both full-and-part- time employment clearly decreases. Also, when Muslim women have husbands with different religions, full time employment increased and were in line with expectations. Therefore, it is clear that there is a religious influence in married women's labor supply. As we see, strict churches or religious groups are negative as regards women's participating in paid employment. Also, an inner-faith

²⁶⁸ E.L. Lehrer, "The Effects of Religion on the Labor Supply of Married Women," *Social Science Research*, 24 (1995): 281-301.

²⁶⁹ What are other religious groups? In Germany, the Roman Catholic Church is 32.3% and the Evangelical Church in Germany is 31.9% (Lutheran, Reformed and United regional churches.) Besides these two Christian churches, there is a variety of other denominations and religious bodies: Orthodox churches and other Protestant groups such as Baptists and Methodists which are considered more 'exclusivist-like.' Muslims are 4%. See Guido Heineck, 4.

²⁷⁰ Guido Heineck, 5.

marriage partner who has the same denominational affiliation should influence negatively while inter-faith marriage might positively or negatively affect women's labor supply. Thus, marital composition influences women's labor participation and women who attend church regularly are often less employed.

Table 6: Employment Status of married women in Germany by denominational affiliation and strength of belief.

	Employment Status in 1997 (Shares in row percentages)			
	Full-time	Part-time	Not employed	Total
Denominational				
Catholic	18.7	29.1	52.2	100
Protestant	19.5	31.3	49.2	100
Other Christian	18.2	(23.1)	58.7	100
Other religious	(11.2)	(16.3)	72.5	100
No denomination	43.8	16.6	39.6	100
Importance of				
Very important	12.4	23.6	64.0	100
Important	20.9	27.7	51.4	100
Slightly	22.7	30.8	46.5	100
Not important	38.9	18.2	42.9	100
Total	23.3	26.6	50.1	100

Source: GSOEP, 1997 and 1998; weighted calculations²⁷¹ Notes: () cell includes less than 30 cases.

In conclusion, the reasons, that German women become losers and the behind of employment rate of women were not just the political situation in forming a new state, but there were other more primary reasons. The dichotomous category of gender considers women's primary responsibility to be motherhood. Also, political culture, and family policy institutions are factors which determine women's position and employment rates in the society. Also, the major fact in determining political culture and family policy

²⁷¹ This material is taken from Guido Heineck, 5.

institutions is religion which influences people's minds, beliefs, way of life and the system of society. Specifically, this section has examined how religion influenced women's paid employment in German society. Married women whose husbands belong to the strictness group and who have the same religion and have strong faith were less employed in paid full time labor forces.

This analysis shows that the unequal situations and systems in society are not only political problems but also religious ones. Therefore, without reconstruction of religious ideology, which confirms women as subordinate being and women's primary job is motherhood, there is no overcoming the conceptualization about gender division in the labor force and developing support systems for family policy. Moreover, there will be no equal position and employment either in the family or work place.

3. Gender Politics in Korean Reunification

1) How the division influenced South Korean women's lives?

A. The division's effect on women

War is the most radical violence for it destroys and erases human life. The number of deaths in the Korean war will never be accurately assessed. The misery of the Korean War continued even after the war itself ended, for the war led to the division of one nation and brought uncountable sufferings to almost every Korean, but among the two populations, North and South, Korean women were in many ways the main victims. How can I say that the Korean women were the utmost victims? In this part, I will describe the division's effect on women in three parts and provide evidence for my thesis through narrating the practical experiences of women which were caused by the division.

First of all, a major reason why the division affected Korean women's lives was the legalization and expansion of the patriarchal Korean culture. While the *Chosun* dynasty strengthened the patriarchal culture in Korean history, the division of the country legalized the expanding of patriarchy beyond that of the *Chosun* dynasty. In the South, everyone had to obey the new laws of the nation because political and social security had become the top priority in South Korean society. Human rights and the freedom of ideas and meetings were prohibited, since they were seen as a danger to political and social security. The new legislation also produced an authoritarianism which emphasized the concentration of authority, effectiveness, hierarchy, order and obedience in the central leadership of South Korea. The culture of authoritarianism and hierarchy seriously affected women's lives. The order of importance can be expressed in the following order: "the nation- then man-then woman- then child." An even more important aspect of the legislation was its ideology which seriously affected women because of sexual violence of women, poverty which had been caused by war, war widows, and *Gijichon* women. Nevertheless, many women considered the situation as not overly problematic and just accepted it as a result of the post-war period. However, women often became victims of violence in these circumstances.²⁷² Furthermore, as Jun Suk- Hee points out, the violence against women was not personal; rather it was a type of "collective violence"²⁷³ caused by the system of a divided nation. Jun defines patriarchy, gender division of labor, gender discrimination in work and family, and violence as evidence of collective violence. The

²⁷² Jung-Ang University System Adapted Center (1997).

²⁷³ Suk-Hee Jun, "Program Development for reunification preparing of Women Leaders," *Dosan Haksul Nonchong*, No.6 (1998, September): 48.

two-nation division system became the justification of women's dehumanization.²⁷⁴ A more serious problem was this: Korean society considered these issues as "just problems of some women." rather than problems affecting all the lives of all Korean women.²⁷⁵

Secondly, Korean women's lives after the division were influenced by the delay of feminine participation in politics. South Korean society suffered even more when there the threat of nuclear weapons. North Korea began to develop nuclear weapons as protection of its sovereignty. To be placed under the danger of nuclear weapons strongly increased the fear of South Koreans vis-a-vis the North Koreans. The politics of safety led to excessive war expenditures and economic uneasiness in South Korea; it also obstructed economic developments with the consequence of requiring sacrifices by all South Korean people. Also, the military dictatorships suppressed any and all democratic developments, efforts to bring about economic justice, and every challenge to the government which had claimed that it was following the "correct interpretation of history" under the name of security. Unluckily, these situations led to major difficulties for women, but the major difficulties for women never became urgent problems in Korean society at large.²⁷⁶ Many women suffered in the work place, in school and even in family life. The division of Korea stifled women's voices and the call for the human rights of women. Likewise, the systematic developments in politics, economics, culture and education remained male-oriented to the detriment of women.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Young-Hee Shim, 60.

²⁷⁶ Suk Hee Jun, 48 or Young Hee Shim, 60.

Therefore, the division of Korea produced poverty and health problems for women, as well as wartime rape on a national level, the problem of *Gijichon* in the economic area, sexual abuse in the area of ordinary life, domestic violence, gender division of labor, and gender discrimination in both the social and the family areas. Patriarchy and unequal gender relations of power excluded women in almost every cultural area.²⁷⁷

B. The experience of two mothers and separated families

The experiences of two mothers who lost their precious sons show us how the division and military dictatorships influenced women's lives. One mother lost her son during the time of the war and the division of the country, and the other mother lost her son during the subsequent military dictatorship of South Korea.

The experience of the first mother was written in her daughter's book, "*Mother's Stake*" by Park Wan- Suh, in which she describes her family history from her youth to her mother's death. The story starts with her mother's spasms. Because of these spasms, her mother fell down on a snowy road and broke her leg. The cause of the mother's instability came from her buried unconscious memory concerning her son's death. With her wild stamping, the needle for the medical solution came out of her arm, spreading blood all over her sheets. She was screaming once again to "the soldier, the teachers of the soldier that only women are living in this house. You do not need to search this house, teacher of soldiers!"²⁷⁸ "Guys, stop there, guys! Kill me instead, guys!"²⁷⁹ She was

²⁷⁷ Young-Hee Shim, "Hanguk Yeosung Peonghwaundongui heureungwa Gwajae [South Korea Women's Peace Movement's flow and the Challenges]," *The Journal of Social Science Studies*, vol. 24 (2005): 8.

²⁷⁸ Wan Shu Park, *Mother's stake* (Seoul: Segyesa, 2002), 2, 65.

asking all this because of the cursing and searching soldiers who were looking for her son. They found him hiding in the house and they killed her son.

The mother and her family lived in the rural district, Kae Sung,²⁸⁰ for she had left her home town for her son's education after she had lost her husband. So, she decided to move to the capital city for her son's education, even though she had been opposed by many of her family. She rejected their opposition because her son was her life's goal and her family's future. She supported him with needlework for prostitutes in the poor area of Seoul.

The North and South governments exchanged control of the capital city every three months at the Korean War time. The mother and son could not openly take refuge in Seoul because her son was considered "a traitor of North Korea." Therefore, they hid in a poor area where they had lived before. However, the son was discovered by the North soldiers and was shot. The surviving two women (mother and daughter) performed the funeral rites without crying because they worried about somebody who might hear their cries. Outside, the mother looked peaceful, but the war engendered in her a profound pain that remained with her for the next thirty years. Her whole life was affected by the pain of "*han*" for she had lost her son in the war.

The second story is the mother of Jeon Tae- Il who lost her son when he was only 22. Jeon was born as a son of a poor worker and grew up peddling wares. He had had only an elementary level education. In 1965, he started work as an assistant tailor in a factory within the Seoul Peace Market. At that time, his wage amounted to the price of

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 2, 66.

²⁸⁰ Kae Sung was a North Korea area before the division.

one cup of tea, even though he had worked 14 hours of labor per day. In 1966, he came to realize how the low wages of young women were. He began to realize how harsh the environment in which he worked truly was, and how tedious was his work as a tailor. He started to be interested in the labor movement. When he tried to help a young woman worker who suffered with pneumonia due to the harsh work and the environment, he was fired.

By chance, he found out about the legislation regarding the Labor Standards Act, and he felt a righteous anger that employers and the government did not enforce even the minimum standard of working conditions. Thus, he organized the first Peace Market labor movement, which he called “the Stupids’ Meeting.” Because of the labor movement, he was fired again but he came back to the Peace Market in September, 1970 and began organizing “Sam Dong Chinmokhoi.” Jeon and his members decided on November, 11, 1970 to perform a burning ceremony of the Labor Standard Act which was in his view a worthless law and did not protect human rights. But when the capitalists and police tried to break up the meeting, Jeon set himself on fire and ran through the streets of the Peace Market shouting: “We are not machines, enforce the labor code.” Because of the fire, he fell down and said as he collapsed: “What I did cannot be in vain because of my death.” In the hospital, he died and but before dying he asked his mother, “Mother, you accomplish the work that I did not finish please.”

The mother of Jeon Tae- Il, Lee So Sun recalled her painful experience: “In a way very troubling. I always think and I have always thought I should not have been born into

the world. I should have had been snatched out of the world by fate. If I had not been born, Tae Il would not have been born.”²⁸¹

In her saying, we can feel the pain of a mother who lost her son and regrets the she herself was even born. After her son’s death, she tried to honor her son with a favor. She lived as “a Mother of Workers” for 39 years. She had lived only 22 years before her son died, she lived her entire life as the mother of Jeon Tea- Il. She suffered severe hardship: she broke the law 18 times and was jailed for three years. Lee So-Sun said that “after I had honored Tae- Il’s request, I ran to the fighting places where even my body could be turned into powder.”²⁸²

In a way similar to the women in these stories, many mothers lost their sons and daughters both during the war and after the division. In Korea there is a saying: “If parent dies, they are buried in the mountain, but if children die, they are buried in their mother’s heart.” Among the biggest sorrows in life, would be a mother losing her children. Because of the war, the division of the nation, and the side effects from the division, many mothers have lived their lives in the sorrow and “*han*.”

Another painful experience brought on by the division was family separation. I cannot forget the television special program called “Looking for separated families” that the South Korean broadcasting company (KBS) produced. It was aired on June 3 1983. The KBS had established a meeting space for families who were separated by the Korean War. On their way to take refuge during the war and even after the war, they had lost

²⁸¹ Young- Ran Lee, “The Mother of Jeon Tae Il, the Mother of Workers. Lee So Sun,” *The Christian Thought* (March, 2009) : 7

²⁸² Ibid.,15.

contact with each other and could not be in contact until after the end of the war. Fifty thousand people gathered around the station with signs that showed their lost family's picture and described where, when and how they were separated. The number of people who gathered around the station showed how many families had been separated by the division. All South Koreans cried together when the separated families met and hugged each other. Many fainted with the pain and joy while others could not stop crying. They hugged each other as if they would have to separate again. On that day, 10,180 families met each other after years of separation. This happened again when North and South Korea made a space for the separated families to meet on August 15, 2000. Still many old people, however, are even today waiting for the time to meet their separated families, even though meetings were held 16 times up to 2009. Family separation is the pain and sorrow of war and division.

C. Does the Reunification Mean a New Life for Women?

Many Korean women expect that Korean reunification will give new life to women such as new roles in economics, education and politics. However, as we saw in the case of German reunification, the impact on women's lives was negative as far as political, economic, and social changes were concerned.

Jung Hyun-Back explains the reasons for the negative impact on women's lives. Because there was a national change in relation to "nation" and "women", human rights violations of women and minority groups could be ignored easily in history. For example, most colonized nations had the task of building an independent and modern nation after their liberation, and women participated as a part of the process economically, politically, and socially for national liberation. Jung explains how women's positions were changed

by the South Korean nation's situation.

In consideration of the colonized *Chosun* dynasty, when the nation lost its sovereignty, woman was symbolized as "Mother" and motherhood was praised. The mother (but not the father), who worked for the cost of living, was honored but the honoring was temporary. After the country recovered its independence, the father's role was symbolized in an honorable way and the role of mother was symbolized with only a passive and marginalized image.²⁸³

This indicates that when the nation was in danger, women were considered as having an important role. But on the other hand, when the danger passed, women's benefits could be sacrificed for the national benefit.²⁸⁴

Another case shows that women's roles have been marginalized in Korean history and this took place during the process of the industrialization in South Korea. After the experience of colonization, Korean society tried to find its national identity and culture. However, the patriarchal and feudalistic Korean society of the past remained at least quietly, and this produced labor exploitation and discrimination against women. In the case of South Korea, the mobilization and exploitation of a cheap female labor force was used for South Korea's industry in the 1970's and 1980's. From the middle of the 1960's onward, South Korea enforced a five year plan of economic development with wage laws, labor intensive activity, and light industry based on a low gain price policy. With these policies, the rural economy collapsed and the phenomenon of rural exodus rapidly increased. Rural girls came to the capital, Seoul, without any plans. They wanted to provide for their family's living costs and for the educational tuition of their brothers. The

²⁸³ Hyun- Back Jung, "Bundangwa Yeosung and Tongilgwasung"[The Division, Women and The Process of Reunification,] *Women Peace Academy* (2001, Spring): 6 -7.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

girls were absorbed as factory workers, bus conductors, housekeepers, entertainment workers, and prostitutes. In the name of national industry, many young women workers had to endure severe labor situations and they were looked upon with contempt. However, women's contributions were not considered as valuable and honorable in the historical evaluation of South Korea's industry development.²⁸⁵

We can see an example of young women worker's lives and the labor situation in which they worked in a report which appeared in the daily newspaper "*Donga Newspaper*" on April 12, 1980. According to the report, under the Sam Il governmental highroad, there was the continuing sound of sewing machines. There are young women workers who sew fabrics that are still wet and have a strong chemical smell. In the area, known as the "Peace Market" area, there were about 600 small factories employing 7000 workers. Young women workers usually worked 10 to 12 hours per day with low wages. In 1980, according to their contract, assistants earned 40\$ per month, sewing assistants 52\$ to 60\$, sewing machine technicians 82\$ to 120\$, and tailor assistants 70\$. The newspaper featured the case of a young woman worker, that of Cho Mi- Ja, who was 20 years old. She had been working since she was 13 years old after graduating from elementary school and now had seven years of experience as a sewing machine technician. She worked from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and her wage is 110\$ a month. Not only was there a low wages problem but also the workers could not earn more money overtime. Even more serious were the problems job-related diseases. The women were working under dim fluorescent lamps and it was hard to find thin thread. Most of the worker's eyes suffered from some sort of eye disease. Also, they sat all day for the work and this produced gastro-intestinal disorders due to the lack of exercise.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

Many of the women developed respiratory diseases. Among all these women, there were many who were still suffering from tuberculosis but they tried to hide it because they worried that they would be fired.²⁸⁶ Even though the young workers sacrificed their lives for South Korean industry, they were looked upon with contempt as “a factory worker.”

At times, we can see that modern democracy has given some fairly good positions to women but at the same time we can see that in general women were marginalized. These historical experiences could be repeated if and when there is a reunification of North and South Korea. Jung warns that sex distinction in the labor market could easily bring about a political and social inside “colonization of gender” and this could easily happen in the process of reunification.²⁸⁷ Women have to remain aware of what happened to women many times in history and they have to be prepared that past mistakes are not repeated.

2) The need for feminist perspective reunification politics

German reunification gives us many lessons. In the German process of reunification, there were few considerations for women. As a result, the policies did not reflect women’s needs and difficulties. Moreover, women’s problems were postponed in the process of integrating both systems, because national problems and other social problems held the priority. This also happened in past Korean history. Park Ye- Kung notes that “the German unification failed in its perspective if the purpose of political integrations goal is sociological integration,”²⁸⁸ Therefore, if Korea would be reunified in

²⁸⁶ *Dong A Newspaper*, April 12, 1980.

²⁸⁷ Jung, op.cit., 9.

²⁸⁸ Ye- Kung Park, “Hangukaeseoui Yeosung, Pyeonghwa and Tongil [Women, Peace and reunification in Korea],” *Deahan Jungchihakhoebo* Vol. 14, No. 2 (2006): 11.

the same way as a democracy and market economy, the North Korean's pain will be increased. The majority of North Koreans would drop to a poorer class – status, because their income and their skills, work experiences and education would not be useful in the reunited society. Therefore, finding work places would not be easy for them. Moreover, since they were under the education of Juche ideology for about 60 years and since they believed and served Kim Il – Sung and Kim Jung-Il as their fathers such as God, the majority of North Korean would be ideologically insecure. Thus, the democratic society's different culture and value – system would be a new and difficult task for them to adopt.

Also, North Korean women would have more problems than South Korean women in the new system. If Korea does not want to follow the German steps, Korea has to develop a new way of reunification. Women have to participate in the process of reunification and make politics for women part and parcel of the historical outlook. Park also warns that there is a possibility that the Korean patriarchal society would become stronger in the process of solving the social and economic problems because of sexist politics, economic employment and gender roles. Let us consider this in some detail.

A. Women's poor participation in South Korean politics and the reasons for this lack.

First of all, it should be noted that to date women's participation and comments appear rarely in the reunification discourse of South Korea. Also, women's participation in political, military, and economic issues is limited to a few women, and even then most women are able to concentrate only on a few social areas. The chart below gives the number of women from 1990 to 2003 who participated in discussions in the Ministry of

Unification department,²⁸⁹ and in the Foreign Affairs Department and in the Defense Department.²⁹⁰

Table 7: Women's participation rates in the Ministry of Unification, the Foreign Affairs Department and the Defense Department.

	The Ministry of Unification	The Foreign Affairs Dep.	The Defense Dep.	Total
1990	9.7 (7/72)	3.3 (2/60)	0.5 (1/203)	9.0(1019/22374)
2000	22.7(17/75)	7.9 (5/63)	4.1 (10/244)	15.0(972/6494)
2003:				
Natural positions	0.0 (0/11)	--	0.0 (0/24)	1.3 (25/1983)
Appointed positions	22.7(10/44)	25.0(2/8)	21.5 (44/205)	27.3(1237/4523)

Source: The Institute of Korea Women's Development www.kwdi.re.kr

According to the chart, the number of women's committees in the Ministry of Unification, the Foreign Affairs Department and the Defense Department respectively totaled 9.7%, 3.3%, and 0.5% in 1990. But the rate increased to 22.7%, 7.9%, and 4.1% in 2000. It looks as if women's position and participation had improved. However, if we study the statistics more carefully, natural positions are 0% and women appear only in appointed positions. The committee of natural positions is restricted to senior officials and to some appointed positions of citizens who only attend meetings a few times a year. This means that of now there are no senior official women who participate in the process of political decisions.²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ The Ministry of Unification is one of the Department of South Korea governments which deal the matter of reunification.

²⁹⁰ Korean Women's Development Institute www.kwdi.re.kr

²⁹¹ Young Hee Shim, "Current Status and Prospect of Gender Relation in the Process of Reunification," *The Journal of Social Science Studies* Vol.25 (2006): 54.

In the case of the Advisory Council on Democratic and Peaceful Unification, which is commissioned to suggest unification policies to the president and to collect statistics on people's willingness and capacity for unification, there is also a low rate of women participants, namely: 2 women are chair people among 20 vice chairmanships (10%); 1 women is among 10 directors of divisions (10%); women among chair-people of the domestic regional issues are (2.2%); and there is only one woman among 22 chair people of the board which considers a broad of regional consultation (4.5%); and 41 women among 213 standing committee members which are appointed positions (19.2%).²⁹² This rate shows that women's participation is low and marginalized in all these official committees which are working for peace and unification.

However, some changes have taken place which favor women's positions and politics in South Korea. Women's participation in society has improved and the equality perspective has increased. Also there is considerable improvement in education, in female participation in economic activities, in women's positions in families, and also in the public voice regarding an awareness of and a response to sexual assault, domestic violence, criticism of the patriarchal culture and participation in politics.²⁹³ However, as we have seen in the Table, there is no women's improvement in the many aspects of the Ministry of Unification, the Foreign Affairs Department, and the Defense Department. Women senior officials in government are rare, and there are no women secretaries. Also, all the representatives of 'the Six Party Talks' were men.

²⁹² <http://www.nuac.go.kr>

²⁹³ Young Hee Shim, 55.

Why is there no women's participation in those areas? Why are women excluded in these areas? There are three reasons.²⁹⁴ The first is this: these areas are considered for males partly due to the patriarchal culture that has been transmitted by the Confucian tradition and was enhanced by the Korean division. Thus, the participation of women has been almost non-existent in these discussions. For example, most of the published books and public school text books in South Korea show gender division pictures: men are symbolized as workers and women as house wives. Caring work is a women's task, while politics and military activity are male tasks.²⁹⁵ From childhood to adulthood, the roles of men and women's are divided clearly in text books and other literature used by children and young boys and girls. Moreover, the lack of women's active participation has been an enduring phenomenon for a long time in South Korean society. Thus, women need to recognize the importance of further women's active participation in these movements and take the initiative to change these issues.

Another reason for the lack of women's participation is the powerlessness of women themselves in politics, the military and economic spheres. Even though there are a few professional women in the areas just mentioned, it is difficult for them to penetrate the male-dominated fields because there are no groups for women's empowerment. For example, my husband and I graduated from a theological seminary and both of us are ordained as pastors. He is a senior pastor in a church and I am a graduate school student and an assistant pastor in my husband's church. When I have a chance to meet my alumni, the male alumni call my husband pastor and address me as the pastor's wife.

²⁹⁴ Jeong- Hyen Back, 5-8, and Young- Hee Shim, 59.

²⁹⁵ Young Hee Shim, Ibid.

Female alumni, however, do call me pastor. What is the difference between male and female alumni in defining my position? It seems to me that male alumni are concerned about their future positions. They share information and introduce each other but they do not consider women alumni as part of their membership. They know that some ordinary churches are unwilling to accept women as senior pastors and therefore, women cannot join their group. These “clerical” distinctions evidence the same phenomenon that the male power lines already have built in politics, the military and the economy. It means that governmental level institutional mechanisms for improving women’s participation and roles are becoming standard for other institutional groups of men.

The third reason for the lack of women’s participation is that women’s studies have missed the context of the Korean division.²⁹⁶ Women studies in South Korean society tend to emphasize discrimination in labor, family, law, and the violation against women. They define South Korean society as a patriarchy and they have tried to enhance the patriarchal cultural identities. These studies indicate that women have been active in confronting the problems of South Korean society. However, women’s studies have apparently missed the context of division in their research even though the division has had a strong influence on women’s lives as we have seen above. Also, women are the main victims of the division but the damages to women have been considered only as women’s problems in South Korean society. The division’s effect on women’s lives has not been considered a problem for the whole Korean civilization. Therefore, there was no research on women’s issues in the context of the division and no research on the ways in which the division has influenced the Korean patriarchal society. Shim notes that

²⁹⁶ Young Hee Shim, 61.

“Korean Women’s Studies have researched Korean society as a subject, but they have been excluded in discussion as if there was no North Korea.”²⁹⁷ She points out that one problem of women’s studies is that there has been little to no preparation for the future reunified society. Without preparation and participation in the reunification discourse and politics, there will be no room for women in the future reunified Korean society.

B. The need for feminist reunification discourse

Why feminist perspective views are needed for the future society? The participation of women in the process of reunification does not mean that women will occupy men’s positions or will even have some positions after the reunification. Rather, the feminist perspective seeks to build a better society in which women’s insecurity is removed and peace and equality are working.²⁹⁸

Shim asserts that “peaceful reunification is the intermediate goal, and security of women has to be the ultimate goal” in the vision of a reunited Korea. Today, we must consider the possibility of the alienation of women after the reunification. The women’s peace movement for reunification has a distinct form, since it not only wants to make reunification possible but it also wants to consider women as an integral and equal part in the future of society. Thus, to build the gender equal society, she suggests four things; first, there can be no more wars or armed conflicts in the newly unified country. Moreover, there can be no dictatorship; there can only be a peace-seeking democratic society. Secondly, there needs to be a free world with a strong remission of poverty and violence in the structure. Also, society needs to take care of marginalized people. In

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Young- Hee Shim, 63.

doing all this, the nation's budget for the military may shrink, but hopefully there will be an increase in funds for social welfare for the weak. Third, there can be no prejudice against women in labor, family, and law. If this happens, there will be an improved gender equal society in which democracy, tolerance and nonviolence prevails. Fourth, there needs to be a reducing of cultural violence such as patriarchal militarism, which then allows for a more caring society and a mutual responsibility among women and men.²⁹⁹

The peace movement discussion, according to Shim, is not only part of the political, economic and military understanding of reunification, but also a part of the reduction of the patriarchal system and ideology. She calls all of this "the power of life." There is no perfect peaceful reunification in the feminist's perspective without solving the problems brought on by the patriarchal militarism in everyday life, by the manner in which women and men are "used," and by the way in which the male privileged military security affects women.³⁰⁰

The way of unification is changing today from an absorbing unification to an establishing of peaceful coexistence unification that is based on reconciliation and cooperation. Thus, it is time for women's roles and perspectives to appear strongly through new forms of men-women relationships through the use of dialogue, understanding and cooperation. Park Ye Kung suggests that a woman's agenda needs to be centered on peace and coexistence and on a system which manifests mutual understanding and cooperation. She hopes that the feminist perspective will contribute

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 64.

positively to the South Korean society gender problems such as the labor market imbalances, inequality of patriarchy, and sexism in the workplace.³⁰¹ Furthermore, the meaning of women's participation in the process of reunification is that the feminist perspective could lead to a new approach; it adds peaceful minds with caring and cooperation to the male centered political areas; and it moves from competitiveness and fighting to reconciliation and cooperation.

3) Women's peace and reunification movements

In discussing the feminist discourse of reunification, the investigation of women's peace and reunification movement is meaningful for it is seeking new directions for the future of women in the reunification movement. Women's peace movements have been started as the response to the women victims that were caused by the division.³⁰² These movements have made many efforts to change the lives of women who have been and still are oppressed and damaged.

The women's peace and reunification movements will be studied in three categories; 1) the women's rights movement, 2) the anti-war movements, and 3) the North and South Korean women's exchange movements.

A. The Women's Rights Movements

How and why do women's rights movements get started? As we have seen above, the division and poverty after the Korean War and the political confusion it engendered became the basic ground for the military dictatorship in South Korea. The

³⁰¹ Ye Kung Park, 14-15.

³⁰² Young -Hee Shim, "Hanguk Yeosungpyeonghwaundongui Heureumgwa Gajae [A Flow and Task of South Korea Women's Peace Movement]," 10-11.

military dictatorship used the division situation to enhance their regime in the name of economic development and they used excessive violence in South Korea to maintain their grasp on the government.³⁰³ During the military dictatorship, from 1960 to 1980 which was a period of industrialization, there was no recognition of civil rights but only the development of the nation and the national security.³⁰⁴ In this situation, there were campaigns against sex tourism, the women's labor movement, the *Gijichon* women's movement, and the Comfort Women's countermeasure activities.

First, the campaign against sex tourism in 1970 was a starting point among the women's rights movement. During the regime of Park Jeong Hee -- president from 1963 to 1979 -- the government implicitly encouraged sex tourism for foreigners, especially Japanese, in order to earn foreign currency. The dark side of sex tourism was considered a personal problem of the women prostitutes themselves; it was not considered a social problem. Most of the newspapers and broadcasts did not mention the dark side of sex tourism. Only the organization of Korean Church Women United and a few other women's organizations raised the problem and exposed it as a structural contradiction.³⁰⁵ The campaign against sex tourism was a challenge to the government of Park Jeong Hee, and the government was caused trouble by the heated response from Japan and other parts of the world.

³⁰³ Hyun- Sook Lee, "Nambuk Hwahae jungjingwa Yeosung" [Promoting North –South Reconciliation and Women], 2002 *Gukjaejungseobyunhwa, Hanbando unmyung, yeosung* [2002 the International Situation Changes, the Peninsula Destiny and Women], Pyeonghwatongil Yeosungjungchak Mayeoneul Uihan Jeonmunga Poreom [A Expert Forum to raise Women's Peaceful Reunification Policy, December, 21, 2001].

³⁰⁴ In Sook Kwon, *Daehanmingkukeun Kundaeda* [The Republic of Korea is Army] (Seoul, Cheong Nyeon, 2005).

³⁰⁵ Korea Women's Association United (1998).

Second, in the 1980s, the most representative women's movement was the women's labor movement. Feminists pointed out again and again the brutality which was part of the women's working conditions at that time and how these conditions maintained systematic violence. More of a problem, however, was the way in which the women's labor movement was considered, namely it was considered as a part of the national democratic movement. It was not considered in and by itself.³⁰⁶ Therefore, the problems of women were not raised as serious social issues, even among women. However, from the mid of 1980s onward, women's problems have been raised through organizations like the "Women Workers Meeting," which was established in March, 1987. The "Women Workers Meeting" was established as an independent women's labor movement and was expanded as the "Korean Council for Women Workers" which asked for the discarding of discriminations such as unequal work, unequal pay and the unequal resolutions of the problems of retirement by marriage.³⁰⁷

Third, there were the *Gijichon* women, who were in the U.S. Military Camp in the 1980s to the 1990s. The problems of *Gijichon* women started in 1945 when the United State army established a base in South Korea. Kim Yun Ja, who worked in the Song Tan and Kun San *Gijichon*, publicly raised the problems of *Gijichon* women. The systematical women's movement of *Gijichon* was started from the "*Durebang*"'s opening³⁰⁸ in *Uijeongbu* city in March, 1986. The major projects of *Durebang* were counseling, English classes, joint dinners, child care, career changes for the ex-

³⁰⁶ Sun Kung Cho and Hea Sook Kim (1995).

³⁰⁷ Korea Women's Association United, 1998.

³⁰⁸ '*Durebang*' was one of the shelter for prostitutes and ex-prostitutes.

prostitutes, and many other *Gijichon* activities. These works were started by the Union Activities of the *Gijichon* Women's Movement and the college women's movement. Women students announced the problems of *Gijichon* at colleges and public places.

However, the *Gijichon* women movement has been changed by the increasing flow of foreign women and the diversity of prostitutes who came from the Philippines and from Russia in the late 1990s. Thus, *Gijichon* includes foreign women, not only Korean women, and cultural diversity among the women brought on prostitution problems such as the subsistence of foreign prostitutes, the increase in phone girls and in massage girls.³⁰⁹

Fourth, the Comfort Women also had problems with the Japan army. Comfort women were sexual slavery by Japanese military government during the Japanese colonial period. Korean young women and also Asian women were kidnapped and forced to serve the Japan soldiers as sexual slaves. They were called as "comfort women." These problems were first raised by Yoon Jeong- Ok in 1988, and the 'Korea Council for Comfort Women' was organized by women's groups and individual gatherings on November 16, 1990. They asked the Japanese government to apologize and give compensation for the misuse of women. They also asked that the Japanese develop legislation for the comfort women. A grandmother, Kim Hak Sun, held a press conference at which the victims who lived in hiding were revealed and the damages to these victims were exposed in 1991. With her witness, the report phone line was opened nationwide and other grandmothers who were comfort women began to show themselves.

³⁰⁹ Yun- Jeong Choi and Young- Ju Cho et al., "2005nyeon Yeosungingwongwa Pyeonghwaundong [2005 Women's Human Rights and Peace Movement]" *Hangukyeosungpyeonghwaundongsa [Korea Women's Peace Movement History]*, Shim Young-Hee et al.(Seoul: Hanul, 2005).

There were a lot of campaigns and protests from the memorial service for comfort women in Oka Seagate, Japan. The protest called “Regular Wednesday Protest for Problem Solving of Japanese Comfort Women” was held every Wednesday in front of the embassy of Japan asking for a public apology of the Japanese government.³¹⁰

Also, the Comfort women problem was raised in the UN Human Rights Commission and in the International Labor Organization. A UN special reporter was appointed for the investigation. The special reporter, Gay Maekdugeol, reported that the problem of the comfort women was actually rape and the service club of comfort women was a rape center. This report changed the international recognition about comfort women. Also, a more notable issue is that the comfort women problem was initiated by Michael Honda, a Democrat, who is a third generation Japanese in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Representatives adopted the “Japan Comfort Women Formal Apology Resolution” (H.R.121) in unanimity on July 30, 2007 with a resolution that asks the Japanese government to recognize and apologize for this brutal activity. They also asked that in schools, young Japanese boys and girls are educated correctly on these historical facts.³¹¹

B. Anti-war and disarmament movements

Antiwar and disarmament is one of the most important peace and reunification movements. It can be classified under two headings; the antiwar and the disarmament

³¹⁰ Young-Hee Shim, “Hanguk Yeosungpyeonghwaundongui heureumgwa Gwajae [Flows and Tasks of South Korea Women’s Peace Movement],” 15.

³¹¹ Byong-Yoon Park, *The Internet Journal* (July 31 2007). The resolution asked to the Japan government 1) They have to recognize and take responsibility about that the army mobilized forcibly the young women as ‘comfort women’, sexual slaves. 2) They have to publicly refute about the denial the comfort women’s force mobilization. 3) They have to educate about it to the current and future generations. 4) The Japanese prime minister has to announce their position through official statement.

movements. The disarmament movement started with “the bomb victims support movement” in the 1970s.³¹² Korea Church Women United (KCWU)³¹³ made the country understand the seriousness of the Korean bomb victims who were exposed by the bomb radiation which was dropped in Japan during the World War II. These people came back to Korea and suffered from various diseases, and too often they had mutated children at birth. Even if they had normal children, these children often suffered from genetic diseases and poverty. However, few Koreans were interested in their suffering. The KCWU conducted a survey about the bomb victims, and they helped the victims get treatment, cost of living for the family and education fees for the second generation until 2000. In the 1980s, the KCWU had been more organized in supporting bomb victims with broadcasts about the status of the victims, kit issues and the risk of nuclear weapons through lectures, seminars, and slide shows. Also, they urged that there be some compensation from the Korean government. They visited the Korean government to try to have laws enacted for the compensation and medical assistance of these victims. They also asked the Japanese government to compensate the bomb victims through the Korean government.³¹⁴

³¹² Hyun- Sook Lee, *Yeosunganbuwa Nambukhwahae Jungjineul Uihan Yeosungjeongchack* [Women's security and the women policy for the promotion of North and South reconciliation,] Expert forum kit for preparing women policy of peaceful reunification, Women Peace Making Group, (2001) and El Li Kim, *Bangwibi Sakgamundongeul Jungsimeuro Bon Guknae Yeosung Pyeonghwagunchukundong* [The domestic women's peace disarmament movement which focused on reducing the defense,] Peace and disarmament specialists invitation workshop Kit, (1999).

³¹³ Korea Church Women United is established in April 15, 1967 as coalition of four denominations for ecumenical and union of churches, union mission to respond to contemporary social issues and for contribute women development and world peace. KCWU in 2002 are developed as a union organization of eight denominations and contributed for peace in distorted Korean history.

³¹⁴ Korean Church Women United, *Hangukgyohoe yeosungyeonhabhoeui Pyeonghwaundong* [Korean Church Women United's Peace Movement,] www.kcwu.org (accessed February 24, 2010).

These movements influenced other disarmament movements such as the anti-nuclear and nuclear power construction movement in the 1980s. Some students and intellectuals raised the problem of the nuclear weapon in South Korea and asked the government to clarify the nuclear weapon arrangement layout. However, the Korean governments have completely blocked any information about the issue because the Korean government groups have supported the U.S peninsula policy which means that Korea is a politically colonized country. Therefore, anti-nuclear discussion was considered anti-state security and supportive of North Korea. Even though the Hiroshima and Nagasaki's nuclear bombing by the U.S. in 1945 made sixty thousand bomb victims some of whom were Korean, the Korean government completely prohibited raising the problem of victims. Korea has suppressed the voices of any and all people who raise the issue because the government believes that this silence is a way to show gratitude to the United States and some Korean leaders have even considered the bombs as a blessing that destroyed Japan's past and brought liberation to Korea.³¹⁵

Jeong Young- Sub criticizes the South Koreans who are in the group approving nuclear arms. Also, according to the polls made by the Dong -A daily newspaper (August 6, 2005), 52% of the South Koreans approve Korea's eventual keeping of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, 57% of Korean respondents are opposed to the holding of nuclear arms while 41% of the people approve of it. These statistics are in contrast to 86% of the Japanese and 93% of the Germans who warns against keeping nuclear weapons on their soil. These statistics show clearly that the defeated countries like Japan

³¹⁵ Young Sub Jeong, "Hanbandoui Haek Hyeonsilgwa banseonbanhaekundong [Korea's nuclear reality and anti-war and anti-nuclear movement]," *People's Solidarity for Social Progress*, Vol. 57, (September, 2005).

and Germany are overwhelmingly opposed to having nuclear bombs on their land, while victorious countries like United States and the Soviet Union approve of nuclear weapons and this reflects a military ideology. Therefore, it also shows that Korea shares the victorious countries' nuclear ideology.³¹⁶

Also, the women's movement approved the defense cuts in Korea in the 1990s. The women's groups recognized that the excessive defense costs affected adversely people's lives and welfare. Furthermore the defense costs could have been used for the improvement of women's welfare. They held a rally in favor of the defense cuts in September, 26 1991, and on Oct. 15, 1991, one thousand persons signed a petition approving the defense cuts. A similar rally was held again urging the defense cuts in 1992 and presented a document which listed women's welfare costs compared to the defense cost.

Anti-war movements which were held from the early 1990's are important activities for the women's peace and unification movement groups. Among of anti-war

³¹⁶ Anti-nuclear movement groups criticize that the U.S. has the use availability and decision of nuclear weapons in the South Korea. The central storage of nuclear weapons was Kunsan air base until 1980. The sixty nuclear bombs which are equipped in F-4, F-16 bomber having ability of nuclear attack had been storage in Kunsan in 1985. Also, the Youngsan base are in charge of nuclear mine, water nuclear (nuclear aircraft carrier, weapons that are firing from submarine), lance missile warhead capable of mounting, and nuclear cell. These nuclear weapon powers, according to the U.S. A.'s posting, are 1,750 times than the power of nuclear weapon which boomed in Japan. The U.S.A. founded the Korean-American Association in 1978 and took over the operational commander in chief from the international allies. Thus, the head quarter of the Korean-American Association became the nuclear commander. It means that the South Korea president has no control power of nuclear but just provides means of transporting to the U. S. A. There were no decision and the right to discuss about the nuclear weapons and the right to know about how many and what kind of nuclear weapon including the scenario of using nuclear weapons. It means that Korea's destiny is put on the foreign powers again like the division and can be a sacrifice for other country's benefits and security. The anti-war and nuclear movements wanted inform about the risk to the Korean people and the movement was not lead independently by women groups but was joint in national democratic movement. See, Young Sub Jeong, 2005 and El- Li Kim, 1999.

movements, three movements are representative; the anti-Gulf War and anti-dispatch troops, the peace settlement activity in the situation of the peninsula war crisis in 1994 and 2002, the anti-Afghanistan and Iraq War in the 2000s.

The first anti-war movement was anti- Gulf War and anti-dispatch troops. After Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the U.S. A. attacked Iraq on January 17, 1991. With the attack of United States, they asked Korea funding allocation for the war and medical troops as an ally. The Korea Women's Associate Groups presented the statement, "Our position on the Persian Gulf War." They hoped that the war would end quickly and reminded of the suffering of 6.25 War and the Vietnam War participations declaring that they will campaign against the dispatch troops. Also, Christian women formed representatives of each group as 'the Meeting for Stopping the Persian Gulf War and Peace' on January 30, 1991 and they held women prayer meeting, "Church Women Prayer Meeting for Stop of Persian Gulf War and Peace."³¹⁷ When the Gulf War looked prolonged and it was announced about additional support, the Korea Women's Associate Group made "Mother's Meeting against the Gulf War and Korean Troop's Dispatch." They raised the questions that what are the true national benefits, and what is the true peace? Also, they urged that it is time for "mothers to go out from the kitchen and help build a peaceful world."³¹⁸

The second anti-war movement was the women' group for peace settlement activity, which, given the situation of the peninsula war crises, took place from 1994 and

³¹⁷ Hyun Sook Lee, *Hangukgyohoe Yoesungyeonhab 25yeonsa [25 Years of Korea Church Women United]* (Seoul: Korea Church Women United, 1992), 378-379 and Kim Ell Li, "Yeosungdeuli haneun Gunchuk Banjeonundong" [Disarmament and Anti-War Movement by Women,] (Seoul, Hanul, 2005).

³¹⁸ Ell- Li Kim, Ibid.

2002. The first war crisis originated with the nuclear crisis of *Yongbyon* in North Korea.³¹⁹ Thus, the women's groups responded to the situation. They made "women's solidarity for building peace" in order to prevent the outbreak of war in the peninsula until the nuclear problems will be solved peacefully. They had a press conference on July 20 and asked for an anti-war, peace treaty contract, they opposed the repression in North Korea, caused for the reopening the meeting between North Korea and U.S.A, fulfillment of the agreement between South and North Korea. Luckily, the North Korea and U.S. high level-talks reopened after the former U.S. president Jimmy Carter visited North Korea in June 1994. The crises hardly were over when Kim Il Sung suggested the South and North hold a summit meeting. With this situation, the women groups opened an emergency debate which met on June 29, with the theme, "how can we agree to the South and North Korea summit?" They discussed the effects of the South and North summit which hopefully would bring about an improvement of the relations between the two Koreas.³²⁰

The war crisis was browned one more time on the peninsula in 2002. U.S. A. president Bush included North Korea as an axis of evil. Bush named North Korea, Iran and Iraq as axis of evils who are threatening world peace. With his naming North Korea

³¹⁹ North Korea rejected the confirmation about the information that North Korea is trying to develop the nuclear weapon in 1993 and 1994. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) asked special inspections to North Korea when IAEA guess that North Korea extract few kg's plutonium by the unreported Young byon nuclear facilities. However, North Korea rejected the special inspections and declared the withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The UN Security Council asked several times to North Korea to take the special inspections and to break away the withdrawing from the NPT. But North Korea did not change their attitudes. On the process, the U.S. hard-liners claimed the bombing to the Youngbyon nuclear facilities in summer of 1994. It was the crisis of the peninsula war and the fear about war spread out among South Korean.

³²⁰ Young Hee Shim, "Hanguk Yeosungpyeonghwaundongui Heureugwa Gwajae [Flow and Tasks of South Korea Women's Peace Movement]," 20-21.

as an axis of evil, Korea was put in fear that the next attack by the U.S. would be North Korea. Thereupon, “the Women Peacemaking Meeting” criticized Bush’s strong speaking that was forming war in the peninsula through a statement on February 7, 2002. Also, they asked the support of foreign international organizations to establish peninsula peace and protested the way of “one person relay protests” in front of the U.S. embassy against Bush’s visiting Korea. The 150 women who are the representatives of the women’s groups held a press conference for proclaiming peace ahead of the South Korean and U.S. summit and asked to change the U.S.A’s one way military policy and a meeting to open the way for North and South and North and U.S. dialogue.³²¹

The third anti-war movement is the anti- Afghanistan and Iraq war ground after 9.11 in the 2000s. President Bush proclaimed the war on terrorism and Afghanistan that protected Osama Bin Laden. Accordingly, the women’s groups were opposed to any violence whether it is war on terror or not and asked for peaceful resolve by protests; the women’ street rallies against the war, cyber campaign, one person relay protests, and a memorial rally for the victims of 9.11. They also did international pressure activity by drafting an international journal and writing letters to the U.S presses. The 37 women groups constituted “Women Peace Behavior Anti-War.”

C. North and South women’s exchange movement

Next is the North and South women’s exchange movement for reunification.³²²

This movement started from the fundraising of women’s groups because of the serious food shortages in North Korea caused by the floods of 1995 and 1996, the droughts and

³²¹ El- Li Kim, op.cit,

³²² Hyun Back Jeong, “Hanguk Yeosungpyeonghwaundongui Gwajewa Jeonmang [Tasks and Prospects of South Korea Women’s Peace Movement],” *Women Peace Academy* (2000): 9.

tidal wave in 1997.³²³ The North and South women's exchange movements in the past could be good examples for the future exchange movements and building up community. The women exchange activates stated after the 7.7. Declaration (1988) but it was slight until the 6.15 Joint Declarations in 2000.³²⁴ The four exchange programs will be researched; the women's reunion meeting during the national joint events from 2001 to 2004, the North and South women unified conference in 2002, the women reunion meeting during the national joint events in 2005, and North and South women unified conference in 2005.³²⁵

The first was the women's reunion meeting during the National Joint Events from 2001 to 2004: the North and South civil groups made the meeting in 2001 for North and South exchange and reconciliation by the joint events from the South civil group's visiting to North Korea at the Labor party establishment events in October, 2000. Women commission was consisted in the national joint events' headquarters in 2001 and had chances to meet each other.

³²³ The Women's union group, the Peacemaking women group, and the women's commission in the Korean national council of churches held street campaign for fundraising called 'the movement sharing rice and sharing love.' By the campaign, they collected 159 million won and they prepared it as 26 ton of powdered milk. It was sent to 'the Democratic women's union' in North Korea and to the executive committee of the North in the Asia's peace and women's role discussion meeting. Also, The Women's union group, the Peacemaking women group and women's group in *Won* (a name of religion in Korea) sent underwear in 2000 and 2001 and whenever North Korea has difficultness, they had fundraising and sent it to North Korea. Especially, the women committee in 'the Our Nation in One Headquarters' built 'the Dae Dong River Children Bake Factory.' They produced ten thousand breads a day and distributed that to nurseries and kindergartens children. South Korea supported machines and bread ingredients and North Korea provided buildings and labors. See; Shim Young -Hee (2005) : 23.

³²⁴ Ell- Li Kim, op.cit.

³²⁵ Young Hee Shim, "Hanguk Yeosungpyeonghwaundongui Heureugwa Gwajae [Flow and Tasks of South Korea Women's Peace Movement]," 25.

The second was the North and South women unified conference in 2002: the first independent women's events held at North Korea, *Kum Kang* River in October, 2002. There were 700 North and South women including those from politics, labor, academia, the arts, and religious sectors. They decided on the implementation of the joint declaration of peace.³²⁶ Every event was decided by bilateral consultations and the flag which was hung at the event was decided by mutual agreement.

The third is the women reunion meeting during the national joint events in 2005. There was the women's reunion meeting during the national joint events which held for 5th commemoration of 6.15 Declaration in June 2005 in North Korea.³²⁷ Also, 'the 8.15 North – South Women Solidarity Meeting' held in August 2005 in Seoul.³²⁸

The fourth is South-North Women Reunification Events in 2005: it was held in September from the 10 to 14th in Pyongyang and Mt. *Myohyang*. There were 100 South women attendants and 300 North women attendants including those observing education related facilities and the attending cultural institutions from the North.³²⁹ However, after North Korea's missile launches in July 2006 and nuclear tests in October 2006, the inter-Korea exchanges were stopped.

³²⁶ There were women discussion for the implementation of the joint declaration, handicraft and art exhibition of South and North women, amusement and entertainment game, North- South co-parties, participants' dance, closing ceremonies, resolution adopted, co-climbing, and farewell events.

³²⁷ There were visiting the Korea Democratic Women's Union headquarters, the meeting of representatives of civil and foreign women, and the celebrating performing arts.

³²⁸ There were North and South women's representative speeches, the audiovisual activities of South Korea women headquarters' groups for the peaceful reunification.

³²⁹ Young Hee Shim(2005), 24-26.

The women's groups like the Korean Women's Association United, YWCA, and Women Peace Making Groups presented a proposition at the time of the North and South summit. In this proposition, the women's groups claimed a few things. The first was increasing women's participation in the delegate configuration and working group. Second was the government's active support in women's exchanges. Third was a suggestion that women's issues should be raised in the working meetings and also, the government's supports in economic exchanges and preferential action for women have to be considered. However, the result did not satisfy the women. There were no women in the process of the summit and only two women selected as special attendants and reporters. Nevertheless, they had only small results; the women's rate improved to 25% in the policy advisory committee of the Unification department and some female civil servants were promoted to the office of policy. Moreover, the government tried to fill 30% of women in the role of visits to separated families.³³⁰

The inter-women exchange events increased which improved understanding on each other. However, the exchange depended on the political situations of domestically and in foreign matters. In evaluating the exchange event, Shim defines it in three levels³³¹; the first was low level such as sports, arts, and social cultural exchanges, second as a middle level was economic cooperation and third as a high level was the exchange of political, military, and diplomatic matters. Also, in the intervention areas, first, humanitarian assistance and social and cultural exchange, second, human right issues, third, peace activities. If we evaluate the exchange events with these categories, women's

³³⁰ Hyun Back Jeong, "Bundangwa Yeosung and Tongilgwasung [The Division, Women and The Process of Reunification]," 9-10.

³³¹ Shim, 2006, 58.

role in the inter exchange was limited in the first level, social and cultural exchanges and humanitarian assistance and social and cultural exchange.³³² Nevertheless, these women's exchange events gave the chance to disclose the North Korean's thoughts, culture, and the position of women. Also, the images of being enemies and strangers that each woman had during the division was vanished and confirmed that they have the same blood, culture and inheritance. How can we know each other without meeting and how can we understand without knowing. These exchange meetings have to be held openly and have in many discussions.

D. Women need the strategies for standing as subjects for the reunification

To be a subject in the process of reunification, women need their strategies. Jeong Hyun Back suggests two aspects that we have to consider: one is a diffusing of consensus and another is embracing of heterogeneity.

A diffusing of consensus between South Koreans has to be considered. Even though the women' raised questions and that are good for the government, the diffusing of consensus among South Korean is the first step. Thus, women have to diffuse the idea of peaceful reunification and try to make the support groups of the peaceful reunification. This is the same way the reunification is seen by the *minjung* of reunification theologians. For this, there needs to be the space for sharing their information and discussing their opinions. Jeong says that "as there is need for South-South conversation in the South society, women need Women-Women conversation for the truly peaceful coexistence

³³² Shim Young Hee (2005), 57-58.

system.”³³³ This would be the first step to narrow the gap and conflict between South Koreans.

The second is an embracing of heterogeneity. The North and South Koreans have been experiencing the division since 1950, almost 61 years. The gap of 60 years is not simple. Even though Korea would achieve peaceful reunification, the overcoming of differences would be another social issue. Reunification is the great hope of Koreans but it would be another trauma in a nation with differences. Thus, the effort to overcome the heterogeneity and preparation to be a nation are needed.

Therefore, there are needs to be the process that each other finds what are homogeneity and heterogeneity. Thus, they can accept the difference and make the way to mutual understanding. By the inter exchange, women had five times forums since 1991 and these gave the chance to confirm the homogeneity and heterogeneity. These exchanges would contribute to “a mutual coexistence model” through the forums and dialogue. Jeong thinks that the women’s heterogeneity among heterogeneities is greater than others. There would be a big gap between North and South women’s perceptions and attitudes. Therefore, there needs to be a lot of chances to meet together. To reduce heterogeneity, Jeong suggests two things. First, there are needed to be many channels which expose to women variety of information about relationships and reunification between North and South Korea. Second, dialogue between South and North Korean women are required for reducing heterogeneity. Women can share information and lessen their differences through the dialogue. Also, it could potentially be a gate to producing a

³³³ Hyun Back Jeong, 14.

process leading to joint agreements and narrow disagreements and build a peaceful coexistence between the two groups of women.³³⁴

In this chapter we have considered in detail the issues of women's role in the family, in the work-force, and in political life. We have also seen that religion is a major factor for the Korean reunification program. Emphasis has been placed on the "dislocation" of women, physically, mentally, emotionally, and religiously. All of this provides a major contribution to my thesis which was stated as follows: "My central position can be stated as follows. In the reunification process, cultural and religious factors play a central role. However, without women's perspectives and participation in rebuilding Korea, the reunification process will be seriously inadequate. Consequently both the cultural and religious factors must include an equalization of women and men." The chapter indicates the lack of women's participation in the reunification situation to date. We turn to the next chapter which focuses on the Confucian position that men are more important than women and how this view remains unchanged in both North Korea and South Korea. Chapter Four continues to establish my thesis just as Chapter Three has done, but from a different viewpoint.

³³⁴ Ibid., 11.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURAL FRAMEWORK FOR KOREAN REUNIFICATION

The goal of chapter is the following; I will consider the Korean culture effects on the reunification of the two Koreas. However, Korean culture is strongly Confucian and therefore the cultural effect involves Confucianism. There are two aspects to Confucian reality. The first aspect centers on Confucius himself and his writings. A careful explanation of Confucius' thought can be found in chapter four Fung Yu-Luan's well-accepted volume, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*³³⁵ In this chapter, he carefully indicates what Confucius clearly taught and wrote. Another book that is necessary today for an understanding of Confucius is the volume by Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*.³³⁶

The second aspect of Confucian thought is what many call "Confucianism." Over the centuries there have been many forms of Confucian thought, and Korean Confucianism has also been affected by several different historical forms of Confucian thinking. Wing-Tsit Chan notes that the Confucian interpretation of Chu Hsi (1130-1200): "He (Chu Hsi) gave Confucianism new meaning and for centuries [Chu Hsi's understanding of Confucianism] dominated not only Chinese thought but the thought of

³³⁵ Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, Eng. Trans. By Derk Bodde (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, second ed. 1952).

³³⁶ Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), especially pages 14-48.

Korea and Japan as well.”³³⁷ The Confucian idealism of Wang Yang-Ming (1472-1529) was also extremely influential in both Japan and Korea.

Hopefully, it is clear that I am making a major distinction between Confucius’ own thought and writings and the multiple forms of Confucianism parts of which have little to no connection to Confucius himself. In Korea, Confucianism was very influential during the *Chosun* Dynasty (1392-1910). The political leaders of Korea during this time used Confucian thought to maintain their male supremacy over the country. Confucianism, during this same period of time, strongly influenced family life with its own forms of male dominance. The Communist government of North Korea has openly stated that Korea should no longer be governed by the politics and thought of the *Chosun* Dynasty, and this included Confucian thought. However, the North Korean Communist government still honors certain aspects of Confucianism and they maintain this without mentioning Confucianism. These Confucian aspects are very beneficial to the Communist government itself. In this chapter, I call this form of Confucianism, “Confucian socialism.” Moreover, in South Korea, the military government (1960-1988) also retained and urged certain aspects of Confucian thought. The Democratic Republic which took over in 1988 also maintains certain aspects of Confucian thought.

In this chapter, therefore, the term, Confucianism, refers to its use during the *Chosun* Dynasty, during the Communist government of North Korea, and during the military and then democratic governments of South Korea. In all three of these areas, my focus is on the Confucian influence which maintains a dominantly male government and which maintains a dominantly male family life. Both of these Confucian centers affect

³³⁷ Wing Tsit Chan, op. cit. 588 and also 592.

Korean women: the education of younger women, their married life, their life in the work force, and their legal standing within the framework of the political life.

With this clarification of the term Confucianism, we can now consider the theme of this chapter, namely the Cultural Framework for Korean Reunification. A major aspect of this cultural framework is Confucianism. The chapter is divided into three parts: the effect of Confucianism on Korean women's life, North Korean women's life with its Confucian background and the influence of Confucianism on the lives of South Korean women: their status and roles.

1. The effect of Confucianism on Korean women's lives

We have seen how religions have had a strong influence in the culture and politics of Korean society, particularly in the areas which regulate women's lives. While the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches prevailed in West German society, Confucianism has been the major influence in the Korean society. This influence began during the *Chosun* Dynasty. In contemporary Korea, Confucianism remains a very strong male-centered ideology and system. In order to strengthen patriarchal family systems effectively, there was a need for the absolute right of male power in the home. Therefore, women and children had to obey the men. There were some moral laws for women, such as '*Sam Jong Gi Do*,'³³⁸ '*Chil Gyu Gi Ark*,'³³⁹ Women accepted these moral principles and their acceptance strengthened the male position in the home and in the state.

³³⁸ It means that women have to follow three paths in their lives. Women have to obey their parents when they are young, their husbands when they get married and their children when they are old.

³³⁹ Women could be driven from the married house when they did these things: when they did not obey the parent in law, did not have children, did obscene conduct, jealous, have bad diseases, do lot of talking and stealing.

Therefore, the moral virtue of women became an unconditional obedience, for the role of women focused on supporting their husbands and caring for children.

In this section of my thesis, the topic focuses on understanding of the Confucian effect on Korean women's lives. This understanding of Korean women in their role as mother and wife has been deeply *influenced* by Confucian ideology. For centuries, the influence of Confucianism on women's life was strong, and because of the Confucian emphasis Korean institutions of political culture and family policy became a major influenced on women's position and life.

1) The Confucian understanding of Korean women as mother and wife

Yin and *yang* are among the most basic theories of Confucianism and neo-Confucianism regarding the union between man (*yang*) and woman (*yin*). *Yin* and *Yang* have modified all human relationships, morality, and ritual. The basic idea of yin and yang was to consider both as equally important because they have a complementary nature. This yin-yang principle, however, became the basis for the hierarchical sequence of *Nam Jon Ye Bee*.³⁴⁰ It organized a Korean society based on the relationship of the dominant and the dominated. Therefore, even though the principle of yin and yang emphasizes the complementary nature of male/female, it became a principle of subordination in the practical life of the Korean people. According to the Neo-Confucian philosopher Chu His (1130-1200), man could be expected to find heavenly principles by themselves through self-mastery, but women have an inferior *yin* nature which leads them to be dependent on the father, husbands and sons, and this structure mirrors the way

³⁴⁰ Donga prime dictionary defines *Nam Jon Ye Bee* as predominance of men over women and treatment of women as inferior to men.

of conformity found the cosmic order. Therefore, for cosmic harmony, natural hierarchical distinctions are needed, such as *yang* over *yin*, male over female, and men over women.³⁴¹

Shim Young-Hee and Kang Nam-Soon criticize this form of the *yin* and *yang* ideology. They argue that respect of women is one of the key elements of the universe, for the *yin* is the female dimension and the *yang* is the male dimension. Both should be equally important because they are complementary characteristics. However, the problem is that this principle has been used to make a clear hierarchical order according to a social structure of the relationship of ruler and ruled: *yang* as the ruler and *yin* as the ruled. Thus, *yang* implies strength, growth, light, and life and *yin* implies weakness, decay, darkness, and death. This hierarchical interpretation of *yin* and *yang* has also functioned as defining the human mind vis-à-vis their rational and emotional qualities, in which *yin* causes disorder and error and *yang* is highly regarded and morally superior.³⁴² Also, men are seen in the outer or public sphere, while women are limited to the inner and domestic spheres of human life. This interpretation produces the separation and subordination of women.³⁴³ Kang points out that the discrimination of women is usually justified under the name of noble of Asian values. Thus, women's issues and the demands for women's

³⁴¹ Vivian-Lee Nyitray, "The Real Trouble with Confucianism," *Love, Sex and Gender in the World Religions*, ed. Joseph Runzo and Nancy M. Martin (Oneworld, Oxford, 2000), 187.

³⁴² Ibid., 184-185.

³⁴³ Young-Hee Shim, "Feminism and the Discourse of Sexuality in Korea: Continuities and Changes," *Human Studies*, Vol 24 (2001) :135 and Kang Nam-Soon, "Confucian Feminism and Its Social/Religious Embodiment in Christianity: Reconsidering the Family Discourse from a Feminist Perspective," *Asia Journal of Theology*, (2004): 171.

rights were considered as too ‘Westernized.’ This judgment ignores the Asian culture and as a result the inequality between classes, gender and age is mystified and concealed.³⁴⁴

Thus, the *yin* and *yang* cosmology reinforced women’s subordination and led to the position that the women’s sphere lies in domestic work.³⁴⁵ This defines women’s primary work as service in the need of a larger family or state. In case of China, even though the People’s Republic of China disengaged itself from the patriarchal Confucianism in 1911 with the finale of the last emperor, Confucius and his ideology had been officially tossed away, but only officially since Confucian ideas are still present among many Chinese men and women. In the Maoist era, women’s liberation was a party goal. The Maoist party’s concern was to make the family an area of state-control, and this state-control included women’s bodies and women’s reproductive capacity.

It is the same situation in Korea. Like China, the *Chosun* Dynasty came to an end and the leaders began to build new states such as the “Republic of Korea” and the “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.” Confucian ideology remained part of Korea’s culture and politics. However, according to Vivian-Lee Nyitray, the phenomenon was not new because the female ideal over the centuries had been: “Be a virtuous wife and a good mother.” This indicates that a women’s duty is to create the best family and home environment and in doing so they are also building a harmonious state. This goal and format were the only ways for women to enrich their lives on their own. The ideal has spread into the context of state welfare, and thus the women’s labor force was influenced

³⁴⁴ Kang, Ibid.

³⁴⁵ According to “Naehun,” the women cultural book, it is the obvious truth of women’s reason and make their lives enrich by performing actively the duty of daughter in law, wife and mother.

whenever economic conditions demanded either expansion or shrinkage.³⁴⁶ This is the same case which we noted in Germany. The German leaders understood that a women's role was mother and house wife. This view strongly influenced the reunification of German society, and this view is strongly seen in the ways in which German leadership approached a women's role in employment and in politics.

2) The influence of Confucianism on the lives of Korean women

Confucian ideology has influenced women's life throughout East Asia. Even before Confucius (551 bc -479 bc), in an East Asian family, the son – especially the eldest son – has great importance in the family. The importance of sons begins with the different treatment they receive from birth onward. The *Book of Odes (Shijing)*,³⁴⁷ written before Confucius, describes the difference between son and daughter.

A son will be born
And put to sleep upon the bed.
He will be wrapped in fine robes
And given a jade scepter to play with.
A daughter will be born
And put upon the ground.
She will be wrapped in cloths

³⁴⁶ Vivian-Lee Nyitray, "Confusion, Elision and Erasure," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol.26, 1 (2010): 150.

³⁴⁷The Book of Odes is a collection of 305 early Chinese poems written by many people over many centuries. Confucius rearranged these poems and songs so that they could be used. At the time the Shih (book of Odes) contained more than 3000 pieces, many of them repetitions. Confucius, concerned with history, compiled only those poems that he felt were truly a part of ancient history. The song you present in the text is not written by Confucius but antedates Confucius and is found in the Shih.

And given tiles to play with.³⁴⁸

The poem describes the mind of people at the time and how they considered a son previously compared to a daughter.

According to the *Book of Rites (Liji)*, in a Confucian ritual text during the early *Han* dynasty (202 BCE – 8 CE), women and men were distinguished in everything except at sacrifices and funerals; they cannot hand items to each other, not share the same mat for lying down, nor can they wear similar clothing and they cannot hang their garments on the same stand or rack.³⁴⁹

One of the reasons for the importance of the son is due to continuing the family lineage. The early Chinese thought that maintaining the lineage is the most significant duty of the family, and it can be performed only by the son. According to Mencius, the greatest non-filial shame is having no posterity.³⁵⁰ Posterity means exclusively the presence of a son or sons not a daughter. In some cases, when the father was asked the number of children, the father would leave out daughters in the calculation. For some, only sons were considered as countable family members. Sons can play a potential role by providing his share of the family income, and he can glorify the family through official appointments, thereby continuing the family name. Moreover, after the parent's death, sons will perform the ancestor worship whereas daughters cannot perform the

³⁴⁸ Shijing Xiaoya II. iv.V.8-9; James Legge, trans. *The She King or The Book of Poetry*, vol. IV, *The Chinese Classics* (Oxford University Press, 1871; reprint Hong Kong University Press, 1970), 306-307.

³⁴⁹ James Legge, , trans, *The Four Books: Confucian Analects, the Great learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, and the Works of Mencius*, 1923(New York: Paragon, 1966), 454.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 725.

ancestor worship. Therefore, women were under pressure to conceive and bring forth a healthy son because only sons can keep the clan lineage. The imperative idea of lineage by sons has had many impacts even in contemporary Korean society, e.g. an abortion when the baby is daughter.

The case of my father in law's oldest brother shows how the Korean family considers the clan lineage by the son as important. He had nine daughters. He named them with a number in their middle names followed by word 'sun,' but he refused to put the number 9 to his latest daughter. When his wife had the birth of daughter 8, he persuaded his wife to have one more child, because if he could not have a son, without clan lineage, he cannot go back to his ancestors after death. They tried one more baby for a son but this time the baby was another daughter and the wife fainted recognizing the baby as a daughter. With a desperate mind, they expected the baby to die naturally and so they did not give her much care. The father did not even give a name to her. However, the last daughter's body was strong and she stayed alive. Finally, they accepted her as their last daughter and he gave her name "*Bandal*," meaning half moon, because she did not fulfill their last wish to have a son. The family story was not special when I was young and it was not a special case with daughters 5, 6 or 7 in a family that wanted a son. Also, I have a few friends whose name is "*Humam*," which means that the next baby is male. Their parents were disappointed with their birth and put their expectation on their personal the preference for a son made a strange birth ratio in Korea.³⁵¹

Year	Boys	Girls
Year	Boys	Girls

³⁵¹ Nam-Soon Kang, 188-189 and Wang Yeo, *Hanguk chulsaengsungbi Bulgyunhyeong Munjae mit Gaesun Bangane Gwanhan Yeongy* [The Problem of Sex Ratio Imbalance of South Korea and the Study on the improvement of the Problem] (M.A. diss., Hankuk University, 2007).

1983	107	100
1988	112	100
1994	115.4*	100

*This number sets the world record.

The strange ratio of babies was possible with the development of embryo sex appraisal technology after the middle of 1980. When women became pregnant, they would go to hospitals and take an ultrasonography test to check whether the baby is a boy or girl. They did this especially if they wanted a son in the pregnancy. Following the test, when it is confirmed as female fetuses, the strange baby ratio was produced due to abortions. According to the Korean *Sisal* Journal magazine in 1993, some 620,000 babies were born in a year in Korea while 1.6 million fetuses were aborted. In actual numbers, the estimate is 2.5 times. According to the counting, the number of abortions is 2 million per year or an average about 6,000 per day. The more interesting ratio is that the sex ratio of birth increased depending on whether it is the first, second or third child. If the baby is the first child, the rate was 106 for boys and 100 for girls; if the baby is the second child, the rate was 113 for boys and 100 for girls; and if the baby is the third child, the rate was 196 for boys and 100 for girls.

The reason that a son is considered important is filial piety; it was considered the most basic social and religious concept within a Confucian society. Confucius considered filial piety as a primacy in human moral development. Also, filial piety means ancestor worship which is another basic Confucian tradition.

Sons will perform ancestor veneration after the parent's death; and the ancestor means "male ancestor of the husband."³⁵² Thus, a woman who is born into a family will not be an ancestor for she joins another family and their ancestor worship after marriage is on the side of her husband. Matrilineal worship cannot be accepted as a genealogical record. Only patrilineal lineage was the family lineage. Therefore, if they do not have sons in the family, the genealogical records will cease and this situation does not honor their ancestors. Therefore, the relationship of father and son is the center in a Confucian family. The importance of a son exalts the authority of the male and brings subordination to the wives to their husbands and daughters to the men in the family. Discrimination of society to women was considered as natural.

The next important influence of Confucianism on women's life was the oppression of women's sexuality, which is evident in the prohibition of a widow's remarriage which includes a chastity ideology. The early Neo-Confucian philosopher Cheng Yi (1033-1107) considered it important to preserve family integrity by prohibiting widow's remarriage. He says that "to starve to death is a very small matter, but to lose one's integrity, however, is a grave matter."³⁵³ Even when the widow had no means of support, she should not remarry. Chu His (1130-1200) reproduced Cheng Yi's teaching about widow's remarriage with the hope to prevent a practice of remarriage that was widespread during the *Song* dynasty. He admired widows who committed suicide rather than remarriage.

³⁵² Kang, 174.

³⁵³ Bret Hinsch, "Metaphysics and Reality of the Reminine in Early Neo-Confucian Thought," *Women's Studies International Forum* (November 6, 1988), 594.

Lee Eun-Sun has a different opinion with other feminist scholars. According to her, the prohibition of remarriages was to prevent the tendency of having second and third concubines which were appeared in *Goyeo* Dynasty. Therefore, a ban on remarriage was a guarantee of the wife's integrity and it was a way to keep the integrity of their family, society, and state. Thus, according to her, the prohibition of remarriage was a necessary choice in order to keep the Confucian virtue of preserving one's family, one's society and the state's integrity through the success by the original wife's children.³⁵⁴ She claims that patriarchy was one of the inevitable choices for keeping their lives honorable in the context of human conditions.³⁵⁵ However, even Lee asserts that they wanted to protect the status of the wife, since the practical status of wife in the *Goyeo* dynasty was dropped at the time of *Chosun* dynasty. For example, a remarriage of women in *Goyeo* was restricted by rules, but it depended on the reputation of her husband. If the husband's reputation was low, remarriage of women was no problem but it became a problem if her husband's reputation was high. Also, there were other cases in practice, such as: if the second husband's reputation is high, then, the children remain with their father.³⁵⁶ Also, when we compare the *Goyeo* dynasty with the *Chosun* dynasty, *Goyeo* can be defined as monogamous and women can remarry after her husband dies. In contrast, the *Chosun* dynasty was polygamous and women cannot remarry after her husband dies.

³⁵⁴ Eun-Sun Lee, *Hangukyeosungjojiksinhak Tamgu* [*Korea women's systematical Explore*] (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2004), 212.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 215.

³⁵⁶ Jae-Suk Choi, *Goyeosidaewi Honinjedo* [*Marriage System of the Goryeo Dynasty*], Institute for Gender Research, (Seoul : Seoul National University, 1987), 124-126.

The *Bucheoje* in *Goyeo* dynasty,³⁵⁷ the custom of marriage supported women's status and led women to control the family. In the *Bucheoje*, the son in law lived a long time in the wife's house. During the time that he lived in the wife's house, the son in law served mother and father in law as his parents and the mother and father in law also considered the son in law and grandchildren as their son and children. Thus, women had almost equal status with men in the *Goyeo* Dynasty.³⁵⁸ But with the change of the marriage system in which women go to men's house after the wedding, the society experienced a change to the patrilineal clan centered system. It means that women's status had dropped with the *Chosun* dynasty which based the state's principles on Confucianism. Therefore, Lee's protection of the *Chosun* dynasty's prohibition of remarriage is not reasonable.

Ping-cheung Lo described Chu Hsi's understanding of sex and gender in the statement: "preserving the heavenly principle and mortifying human desires."³⁵⁹ Lo concludes that "Chu Hsi's condemnation of the erotic ballads of *the Book of Odes*, his understanding of marriage as undertaken for the survival of the family rather than for companionship, and his general advocacy of eliminating "selfish desire" combine to render romantic love obscene and licentious (even between a married couple), and sex

³⁵⁷ As a *Goyeo* dynasty custom, son in law stay at wife's house long term after marriage until they have babies and the babies grown up. But the *Bucheoje* shortened gradually in *Chosun* dynasty and finally disappeared.

³⁵⁸ Dae-Kun Gwon, "Goyeosidae Yeosungui Jiwie Gwahan Yeosungjuuijeok Gochal" [Feminist Consideration on the Status of Women in Goyeo Dynasty,], *Scent of the literature*, May 9, 2005.

³⁵⁹ Ping-cheung Lo, "Zhu Xi and Confucian Sexual Ethics," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 20, 4 (December, 1993): 465.

acceptable only for procreation.”³⁶⁰ Therefore, there was no room for sexual pleasure for women in A Neo-Confucian society. With the ideology of *yin* and *yang*, the segregation of women and men was strong and it applied within the household. Thus, husbands stayed in a separated space, called *sarangchae* near the front gate and the wife’s separated space was *anchae* where she was hidden behind the middle gate. The husband and wife slept together but only on certain days which were arranged usually by the husband’s mother for procreation. Thus, sex was only a matter of procreation for a wife and wife has no rights for asking sexual pleasure. However, men’s cases were different. Men were allowed to take multiple wives in accord with his official ranking. So, men could enjoy sexual pleasure with secondary wives and also, there were entertainment houses for men. Thus, men could enjoy sex for procreation in a formal home sector and sex for pleasure in many informal sectors.³⁶¹

Moreover, the oppression of women’s sexuality did not end at this level for there was the further, stress on chastity. Chastity or wifely fidelity was the greatest virtue and moral quality of women and they were encouraged to devote themselves to one husband during their entire life. According to the rape law of the *Quing* dynasty (in China, 1646), rape victims could be forced to defend their chastity with their lives.³⁶² Adultery was not allowed in the Confucian social context and it was severely punished during the *Chosun* dynasty. For example, if *yangban* (an aristocratic woman) committed adultery with a

³⁶⁰ Vivian-Lee Nyitray, “The Real Trouble with Confucianism,” *Love, Sex and Gender in the World Religions*, ed. by Jeseoph Runzo and Nancy M. Martin, Vol II (Oneworld, Oxford, 2000), 187.

³⁶¹ Young-Hee Shim, 136.

³⁶² Vivien W. Ng, “Ideology and Sexuality: Rape Laws in Quing China,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 46, 1, (1987): 65.

distant relative, she was decapitated and her partner was exiled.³⁶³ If a *yangban* woman was confronted with a male assault, it was the virtue of women as a “virtuous wife” that would urge them to willingly commit suicide. Thus, most of *yangban* women carried the “silver decorated knife” at all times.

The stressing of chastity was not only at the individual level but it applied to the social and family level as well. The government honored young widows of *yangban* who did not remarry for the rest of their lives by establishing a *yollomun*. The *yollomun* means a gate of the virtuous woman which was located in the front of the village and became a pride of the village. Also, the women’s chastity was encouraged in economic and institutional ways. The widow women who preserved their chastity were provided special economic measures which are called *susinjon*, “land to preserve faithfulness.” However, it was abolished due to economic reasons in 1466. Another restriction to prohibit of remarriage was the legal sanctions. According to *Gyeongguk Daejeon*³⁶⁴ (in 1471), there was a provision that the sons and grandsons of thrice married women could not advance into higher officialdom. Furthermore, King Songong reinforced it to a second marriage and printed it with the name *samgang haengsil yollyodo* (“Conduct of the Three Human Bonds with Illustrations of Virtuous Women.”)³⁶⁵ The *Gyeongguk Daejeon* was revised in 1485, and it prescribed that the sons and grandsons of adulteresses and remarried women would not be able to take civil or military office. Also, a child born of a concubine was not allowed to apply to the lower and higher civil service examinations. Therefore, even

³⁶³ M. Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 259.

³⁶⁴ *Gyeongguk Daejeon* is a complete code of law that had been a basis for the *Chosun* dynasty in politics for over 500 years. It comprises every law, acts, customs, and ordinances.

³⁶⁵ Young-Hee Shim, 136.

though remarriage was not outlawed, it was impossible to consider its practice because of their consequences.³⁶⁶ Therefore, Shim defines that there were no women who held official posts in Confucianism society, and this was the order of the day so that in order of Confucian hierarchical order might be preserved.

3) **The influence of the political culture and family policy institutions on women's position and employment**

The Confucian ideologies deeply influenced women's lives. The *Chosun* dynasty accepted *Sungrighack* and distributed *Jujagayee*³⁶⁷ as an important principle of the dynasty. The *Jujagayee* influenced many parts of the family systems, especially women's positions.

First, it applied *Sang yee* (the etiquette for after a death). One of the important *Gayee* (etiquettes of a family) deepened the reason for preference of son in the family. Shrines were highly recommended by the government during the time from the *Goyeo* dynasty to the *Chosun* dynasty. In the Buddhist tradition (in the *Goyeo* Dynasty), a family kept the *Sangyee* for one hundred days; later it changed to three years. However, the customs of Confucianism strengthened the segregation between women and men and reinforced the male dominated system. When a mother passed away, the *Sangyee* was shortened to one year. Different lengths of days of *Sangyee* were for the husband's side of the family from those for the wife's side.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ *Sungrighack* which is called *Jujagayee* was state ideology in *Chosun* dynasty. *Sungrighack* is also translated as Neo-Confucianism. This is an ethical and metaphysical Chinese philosophy which was influenced by Confucianism. It was originated in the *Dang* dynasty and was prominent during the *Song* and *Ming* dynasty. As main idea of Neo-Confucianism, it rejected superstitious and mystical elements of Daoism and Buddhism and built a more rationalist and secular form of Confucianism. By Wikipedia.org (accessed March 13, 2012).

The second is *Jaeyee* (Memorial service etiquette). Building *Jaeyee* was the most fundamental power of patriarchy during the *Chosun* dynasty. The Neo-Confucianism considered *Jaeyee* of ancestor as one of the basic control principles of the country. *Jaeyee* was strongly recommended but usually it served only elite groups. In the *Chosun* dynasty, *Jaeyee* was performed by the oldest son of one's original wife. Through this, the principle of equal distribution was eliminated and patrilineal kinship organization was strengthened. Gradually, it became a source of power to form *Munjung*.³⁶⁸ The *Jaeyee* was the basic duty of families and social groups. Thus, for the *Jaeyee*, the adoption system expended to the sixth *chon* (the degree of kinship)³⁶⁹ in late *Chosun* dynasty.³⁷⁰ The strengthening of *Jaeyee* which was performed by the oldest son of the original wife led to an even stronger culture that discriminated against women.

The third is an inheritance. Inheritances and memorial inheritances were shared equally between sons and daughters during the *Goyeo* dynasty. The *Chosun* dynasty inherited this without discrimination until the seventeenth century. From the middle of the seventeenth century down to the middle of the eighteenth century, the eldest son was the preferential heir. This issue of inheritance gradually formed gender discrimination which became the dominant inheritance form for the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. According to *Gyeongguk daejeon*, there is a clear path of inheritance to women, and this form of inheritance was based on the principle of equal

³⁶⁸ *Munjug* is a name of group which is a clan group with worshipping same ancestors. There have same a last name and most of them are relatives. *Jaeyee* was the center of the *Munjung* and worked as identifying and rallying of *Munjung*.

³⁶⁹ *Chonsu* is the degree of kinship which expressed the relationship as numbers between blood relatives. For example, the *chonsu* between parent and children is 1 *chon*.

³⁷⁰ Young Hee Song, *Changes in Family System in the Late Period of Chosun Dynasty* (M.A. diss., Injae University, 2005).

distribution to men and women by law. Women who were married did receive some portions of the inheritance. Even though practice of the law was different in diverse areas of the Asian world, there were some women who could take a share in the inheritance after their marriages. Thus, husbands and wives had the same rights and benefits when they inherited their properties after the death of their parents. The slaves of the wife passed into the husband's control whenever the wives did not have an inheritance, but if the husbands remarried, the slaves of wife returned to the first wife's home.³⁷¹ However, women had to have their husband's permission when they tried to manage or dispose of an inheritance even though the inheritances belonged to the wife.

The equal inheritance situation, which took place from the *Goyeo* dynasty to the early *Chosun* dynasty, began to change at the end of the 17th century. In the 17th century, the portions for women were barely considered and the inheritance was male centered in a very strong way. Eventually, the inheritance passed to the sons of the original wife. Therefore, the status of inheritance for women gradually disappeared, and once again there was a severe discrimination between men and women. According to Deuchler, the *Chosun* dynasty decided that they could not divide small sizes lands when the *Chosun* dynasty experienced large population growth during the middle of the 16th century and the late 17th century. The leaders took into account the effect that land-division would have on the food supply for the population. Thus, the dynasty appointed the oldest sons to receive the main inheritance and, as Deuchler infers, the dynasty restricted the inheritance to married daughters which only confirmed the role of patriarchal families.³⁷²

³⁷¹ *Sejong Silrok [Sejong History]* Vol. 97, the year of Sejong 24, July.

³⁷² M. Deuchler, 225.

Confucianism formed the basic principles of the *Chosun* dynasty, and these principles changed the role and status of women. Women were confined like inside persons who are passive and obedient, while men are active and dominant as outsider persons. The legal regulations decided their roles; men are meant to rule the world and family, while women are meant to take care of the family and especially the children. Because of the Confucian mentality, the status of women was worse in the late Chosun dynasty. The images and roles of people that were determined by Confucianism became the ideological basis of North and South Korea and this attitude is still working in those societies.

In this section of chapter three, we have considered how Confucianism affected Korean women during the Goyeo and Chosun dynasties. Let us now consider how Confucianism has affected the lives of North Korean women during the 20th century.

2. The Lives of contemporary North Korean Women and the influence of Confucianism

North Korea has guaranteed women's right in their constitutions in a way similar to the constitutions of East Germany. These constitutions support a maternal system. However, since the Marx –Leninist ideology did not eliminate the gender gap in attitudes about gender, work and family, the North Korean society is a socialist country based on patriarchy. Thus, North Korea has the characteristics of patriarchal socialism. Both the patriarchal ideology and the socialist system of logic work together in the society. Park Hyun-Sun defines the patriarchal socialism as “the system that sexist patriarchy

characteristics are accomplished under the principle of socialism in which equality achieved by revolution.³⁷³ The patriarchal socialism has three level of patriarchy. The first is public patriarchy which is performed at the state level. The second is social patriarchy which is applied to the level of economic, social and culture except the family area. The third is patriarchy in the family in which women are controlled directly and indirectly by patriarchal socialism.³⁷⁴ I will explain in detail how the each level applied to North Korean society in a later part of this dissertation. There are also other problems, namely the right of North Korean women to participate in social regulations. These regulations should not simply be given to them. Thus, the actual rights and positions of women are low in both family and work. The North Korea women's situation will be researched more specifically in the following study on the economic situation of women, the maternity support systems, and the women's position in a family.

1) The economic situation of North Korean women

The North Koreans abolished feudal gender roles and established equal relationship between men and women by law through the 'Democratic Reform' in 1946. The "Men and Women for Equal Rights Law" and the "Socialist Labor Law" were also made part of North Korea's legal structure.³⁷⁵ These laws opened the way for a better social and economic life for women and equal work and equal pay was applied. The defining moment to increase the women's labor force was the Korean War. The lack of a

³⁷³ Hyeon-Sun Park, "Bukhanui Gajokjeongchak [North Korea's Family Policy]," *Bukhanui Yeosunggwa Gajok [Women and Families in North Korea]* (Seoul:Kyungin Munwhatsa, 2006), 12.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Korea National Human Right Commission, "Ingwonbaekseo [Human Rights White Paper], 2005," and Shim Young-Hee, "Bukhanyeosungui Ingwon: Siltaewa Yoin [North Korea Women's Human Rights: Status and Factors]," *Asia Women*, Research Institute of Asia Women, Vol.45. No. 2 (2006): 247-248.

labor force for reconstruction after the war and the thinness of the men's labor force made the situation positive for using the women's labor force.³⁷⁶

Table 8: The increasing trend of woman's labor force in North Korea³⁷⁷

Year	Whole employee (1000)	Male (1000)	Female (1000)	The Rate of Female (%)
1953	628	463	165	26.3
1956	850	680	170	20.0
1957				20.0
1958				29.0
1959	1,459	948	511	35.0
1960	1,506	1,014	492	32.7
1961	1,609	1,073	536	33.3
1962	1,865	1,214	651	34.9
1963	1,924	1,228	696	36.2
1964	2,095	1,287	805	38.5
.				
1976				48.0
.				
1987				57.0
1988				49.0

As we see in Chart 1, the women's labor force between 1956 and 1964, the year of activation for the women's labor politics, increased 3.8 times: a yearly increase rate of 17%. Also, the number of women workers increased 19.4% every year while the male labor force rate increased 1.9 times or 8%. The women's labor force in 1958, the year of the completion of collectivization of agriculture after the war, was 29% of the whole labor force and it increased to 35% in 1959. The rate of the women's labor force dropped to 32.7% in 1960. By 1963, due to the women's revolution movement and labor

³⁷⁶ Duk-Hee Yoon, "Bukhanui Yeosung [Women in North Korea]," *Bukhanui Yihae [The Understanding of North Korea]*, Kim Kwang-Su et al. (Seoul, Gibmunudang, 1996), 340.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 341.

classification policy, the women's labor force increased to 48% in 1976 and 57.1% in 1987. However, it dropped again to 49% in 1988. These rates indicate the speed of the women's labor force growth and how women contributed in the economic construction and the post-war reconstruction process.³⁷⁸ Furthermore, according to the statistics of the United Nations Population Fund, 90% of North Korean women who were age 20 to 54 participated in economic activity in 1993 and women provided 50% of the labor force. The rate of women's participation is very difficult to find in other societies.

One can ask, were there really equal rights and participation in the labor force in North Korea? Even though women's participation in the labor force was high, the form of work and the income of women were different from that of men. We can see that there is clear gender division of labor in the North. In North Korea, taking a job is determined by the government's workforce deployment rather than by personal taste and competition. In the beginning of establishing socialism, every labor force was controlled by the central government, in which the government planned labor distribution and decided on the number of workers needed in each part of the economy in late 1960's. But this system was changed so that local districts arranged the labor on the basis of their local needs, and this was a step to solving the problem of a centralized disposition of labor. Taking a job is not a personal choice for it has been given by the government even though the administrative organization changed from the central government to local

³⁷⁸ Duk-Hee Yoon, 341-342, and Bok-Hee Jun, "Nambukhanui Yeosungjiwiwa Tongilsedaeui Yeosungmunjae [*The position of South and North Korea Women and Women's problems in the time of Reunification*]," Asia-Pacific Peace Foundation, *Policy Study Series*, 99-11 (December, 1992): 16-17.

districts. However, a more serious matter is that women were placed at a low income bracket and a low density occupation in the process of the distribution of labor.³⁷⁹

Table 9: Women professional division of labor rates in 1980³⁸⁰

Agriculture	55.5
Industry	45.5
Mining	20
Heavy Industry	15
Light Industry	70
Forestry	30
The People's School	30
High Middle School	35
Technical Schools	30
Universities	15

North Korea's Socialist Labor Law No.84 reads: "About the women's income in each national economy sector," the government has decided to increase women's jobs to over 60% in education and health areas and over 30% in other areas. Moreover, women have to be posted in jobs which women can do. The *Chosun Central Yearbook* describes the situation as follows: women should be posted by personality in office work and light industry compared to men who are posted in important and heavy industry work like underground digging in mines, logging in forestry, the steel sector, farming, and especially grain production. As we see in Chart 2, women were centered in light industry and agriculture. It looks as if the government considered women's physical condition. However, placement was connected with income and the influence of women's position

³⁷⁹ Duk-Hee Yoon, "Bukhanui Yeosung [Women in North Korea]," *Bukhanui Ihae [The Understanding of North Korea]*, 343-344.

³⁸⁰ Unification Institute, *Bukhanui Yeosung Sanghwal [North Korea Women's Lives]* (Seoul: Unification Training Center, 1986), 17.

in the society. Thus, sexism governed the workforce arrangement, and this shows that in North Korea the recognition of women's work is "light and easy work."

Table 10: Average wage levels by industry type after 2002 Economic reform action³⁸¹

(Unit: Wages in North Korean won)

1. Average wage levels by the industry type	
Type of industry	Wages
Farming, forestry, fisheries	2,161
Light industry*	1,623
Heavy Industry	2,329
Service Industry*	1,676
Total	1,888
2. Average wage by level major sector of light industry	
Type of industry	Wages
Textiles	2,055
Leather*	1,400
Footwear	1,583
Beverages*	1,373
Basic Food	1,548
Total	1,623
3. Average wage level by major sector of service industry	
Type of industry	Wages
Electric	2,388
Shipbuilding	2,370
Rail transport	1,980
Car transport	1,805
Culture	1,515
Business*	1,321
Food*	1,300
Total	1,676

*A high percentage of women sector

There is also discrimination in wages which was revealed in the economic reform action in 2002. The 2002 economic reform action had five kinds of standards: 1) inflation

³⁸¹ Hyeon-Sun Park, "Bukhanui Kyungjaegaehyeokeuiui Gajokgwa Yeosung Sanghwalui Byunhwa" [Changes in Family and women's Lives since North Korea's Economic Reforms], Peace Making Women Meeting, *Geumkangsane Ulrlineun Yeosungdongil Goldenbell* [Women's Unification golden Bell Ringing at Kumgang Mountain], 11.10-12. 2005, 58-61

and increase of wages 2) partial reform of the distribution system 3) rescheduling of the foreign exchange rate 4) autonomy in corporate management 5) The strengthening of incentives. The 2002 economic reform action raised prices and wages 18 to 25 times. However, there was still no equal wage program between men and women and there was still discrimination. North Korea follows the principle of ‘Distribution According to Labor’ as in other socialist countries. This means that the wages of women and men in the work place are still different. As we see in chart 3, the wages of light industry and the service industry are lower than farming, forestry, fisheries and heavy industry. This means that women’s wages are lower than men because women’s employment rate is 70% in the light industry according to Chart 2. Also, work with leather and beverages are listed among light industry, and business and food services industry is the lowest in wages. Women have a high rate of employment concentrated in these sectors.

One of the reasons why women were concentrated in light industry and why there was wage discrimination was due to the North Korea industry policy favoring heavy industry. Heavy industry factories had strict production rules and party rules, compared to light industry and local industry. The factories which produced the necessities of life were not as important as the male centered heavy industries which were focused on production, culture and discipline to achieve the goals of government. The concentration of women in certain industries was due to the government’s concentration on heavy industry while providing few or no management skills in light industries. Also, there was the atmosphere in heavy industries of not accepting women as equal workers among factory executives and workers. Therefore, the factory executives did not control and

provide the necessities of life in the factories where most of the workers were women.³⁸²

Thus, we can see clearly that the division of the labor force was determined by sex, and women were concentrated in light industry, service industry and office work which was regarded as easy and light. This is in contrast to “the principle of equal work and equal pay” which No. 37 of the socialist labor law states: “All workers should receive the same wages when the workers are performing the same labor regardless of sex, age, ethnic group.”³⁸³ Yoon Duk-Hee describes.

In the process(in building a socialist country), most of women experienced social work outside of the home and had chance to be an economic subject with a position that is equal to men. However, even though there is a wide range of economic activities for women, the gender division of labor is working as a fact that advantages men and enslaves women.³⁸⁴

Moreover, North Korea’s economic difficulties become serious after 1990, and women became the first target of unemployment. Thus, women returned to the home. Most of the unemployed were women.³⁸⁵ This was the same situation which happened in East Germany. When Germany reunited, the unemployment rate rose, and women’s unemployment rate was almost double that of men.

2) The political position of North Korean women

The establishment of women’s organizations and the expansion of women’s participation in political activities contributed to the increase of North Korean women’s

³⁸² Young-Ja Park, 319-321.

³⁸³ Young-Hee Shim, “Bukhanyeosung Ingwan: Siltaewa Yoin [North Korea Women’s Human Rights: Status and Factors],” *The Journal of Asian Women*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (2006), 165 and Yoon Duk-Hee, 345.

³⁸⁴ Duk-Hee Yoon, 346.

³⁸⁵ Young-Ran Kim, “Bukhanyeosungui sahoebokgk Jeongchackyeongu [North Korea Women’s Social Welfare Policy Studies],” *Giyukhwak Nongib*, 5 (2001), 53-84.

political position. North Korean officials considered the formation of women's organizations as an important task of government so that there might be solidarity of the people who are organized in social groups. During one of his speeches, Kim Il-Sung asked that public democratic women's groups be organized ". After the speech "The current international and domestic situation and work of women" delivered on October, 15, 1945, the Democratic Women's Union of North Korea" was established in November, 18 1945. Later it was developed as "Korean Democratic Women's Union" on January, 20 1951. Women who are between 18 to 55 years old, especially housewives and women with jobs joined this union. Women who were members of the higher level of the Political Party and those with jobs belonging to other groups did not join. With the participation of women who were the wives of senior executives and fighters against the Japanese colonists, the Korean Democratic Women's Union expanded and the membership reached 2,700,000 people in 1971.³⁸⁶ But after the Kim Jong-Il government's acceleration in 1983, the union was reduced and weakened. The activity of the Korean Democratic Women's Union focused on the abolition of feudalism and on the construction of a socialist country with advocacy of women's rights and an effort to overcome gender discrimination and solve social ills. However, this, too, did not work as a social critical role in practice, for it functioned as a secondary role for the strengthening of the father and son heritage systems and the strengthening the patriarchal order.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ Mi-Ryang Yun, "Bukhanyeosungui Wisanggwa Yeokhal [North Korea Women's Status and Roles]," *Bukhanui Yeosunggwa Gajok [North Korea's Women and Family]* (Seoul: Gyungin Munwhasa, 2006), 78-79.

³⁸⁷ Bok-Hee Jun, 14.

The Workers' Party of North Korea tried to expand women membership with the organization of the Democratic Women's Union. The membership of the Party was 4,530 people on December 12, 1945 but after the proclamation of land reform and gender equality, there were over 36,600 people in August, 1948. Moreover, among the 990 local representatives in The Worker's Party of North Korea - 2nd Congress, women representatives totaled 142 people (14.4%), and Park Jung-Ae and Huh Jung-Sik were selected as members of the Central Committee of the Party in March, 1948. After that, North Korea has kept the rate of women in the central committee at 20% except for 1962.³⁸⁸ Among the Central Committee members (those who can exert direct political influence), the women's rate on the standing committee was low. The average rate was 11%. The 1st (1948) was 3%; the 2nd (1957) and 4th (1967) were 6%; and the 9th (1990) was 13%. Women's political activity was limited to the activity of the Party. Thus the women's committee did not act in a special way for women's rights nor did it represent the voice of women. Also, the women's rate in the Local People's Assembly was 13.1% - 33.1 %, a percentage which was higher than that of the Central Committee. The rate in which women were selected as representatives in the Local People's Assembly election in 1999 was 20-30%.³⁸⁹

In 1998, the Women's Central Committee was 20% of 687 people, while in South Korea the average rate for congresswomen was only 2%.³⁹⁰ The rate of political

³⁸⁸ Kukto Tongilwon, "Josunnodongdangdaehoe Jaryojib [Chosun Worker's Party Competition Kit]" Vol.1 (Seoul; Kukto Tongilwon, 1988), 20.

³⁸⁹ Bok-Hee Jun, 14.

³⁹⁰ South Korea congresswomen was 17 people (6.2%) among 687 people in 2000 (16th National Assembly and 15th was 3.6%)

participation of North Korean women was higher than that of South Korean women, but the numbers of rate of North Korea do not by themselves indicate a women's position in politics and society. Women representatives did not contribute very much for the development of women's rights in society. There are three reasons for this. First, the women's representatives were those who were recognized for heroic efforts by the Party in their job places and sales. This means that their political reputation was concentrated on the ideology of the government and focused on the fidelity for the father -- Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jung-Il. Second, even though the policies claimed the abolition of feudalism and discrimination against women, there were no voluntary commitments of transformation, nor did they come from women's experience and the struggles in their lives. The policies for women given by the government to build up a socialist country, therefore, were not powerful policies and women were generally not powerful politicians. Third, the women politicians as well as most women of North Korea did not recognize their discriminative situation in their mind, life and systems.³⁹¹

There are two the reason of lack of feminist awareness. First, as was mentioned above, the Confucian tradition continued to hold sway: men are the rulers and women are the ruled. Thus, women are inferior to men. Therefore, there was no need to establish strong political positions for women. Second, the education of one's self- consciousness during the leadership of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il was minimal. The Kim governments did work hard to develop consciousness education, but they did this only to maintain their regime. Therefore, North Korean people believed that Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il were correct when they established the goals and meaning of Korean lives.

³⁹¹ Duk-Hee Yoon, 351-354 and Young-Hee Shim, 179-183.

Be royal to the Kims was the order of the day. To be skeptical or critical of the Kim's government was considered as disloyalty to the Kims. All of this shows that North Korea with its communist government is based on Marxist-Leninist ideology. However, the North Korean style communism was also built upon the Confucian and patriarchal tradition.

3) The Policies for North Korean women

A. Maternity Support Systems

North Korean policies for women were based on a Marxist-Leninist theory. Political leaders thought that women's liberation can be achieved by abolishing private ownership of property, eliminating feudal patriarchal family systems, and increasing women's participation in social and economic activity. Thus, North Korea tried to establish the social condition for using the women's labor force. They defined 'the business with working women' as the center of the women's liberation policy. Kim Il-Sung emphasized the socialization of child rearing through nursery and kindergarten establishment.³⁹² Kim's government tried to make women the subject of building socialism. North Korea's constitution enacted equal rights for women and men and a non-discrimination principle. Constitution No.65 states that "Citizens have equal rights in every state and social life." No.77 states that "women have the same status and rights as men." The state guarantees maternity leave, reduction of working time for the mother who has many children, and the expansion of maternity hospitals, day care centers, and

³⁹² Il-Sung Kim, "Yeosungdongmaengui Gumhugwaope Daehayeo," [About Women Alliance's Future Work], *Kim Il-Sung Jeojakjip* 3 (Pyongyang: Chosun Rodongdang Press, 1980), 488-495.

kindergartens. Furthermore, the state protects mothers and children with other policies. The state makes it possible for women's social advance.³⁹³

The North Korean women's policy was changed by the reconstruction of the nature of the socialist system and the economic situation. The North Korean women's policy was influenced by two ideologies: socialistic gender equality ideology and the Confucian patriarchal principle. Thus, the two ideologies co-existed, although at times there were contradictory situations. These can be divided into three steps. First, from the regime establishment down to early 1959 there was a claim that the socialist revolution needed to be completed. Consequently, the political leaders focused on eliminating the feudal patriarchal family system and encouraging women to join the social labor force. However, it was the Korean War itself which gave North Korea a strong national government system. The war also strengthened the power of president Kim Il-Sung. Also, the atrocities and massacres committed by the occupying forces during war time provided legitimacy for North Korea's monitoring and control system. With this situation, North Korea tried to integrate the nation and the family and this led to women's integration in both family and nation either by force or in a voluntary way. Because of this, women experienced a setback. Women were identified not only as mother and wife but also as a nationalistic citizen. Women were asked to be loyal and devoted to the nation which guaranteed their happiness. Their loyalty and devotion were advertised as *Chosun* women's traditional moral and character. "The Labor Newspaper" on March 9, 1951 appealed to women; "All women! Fight bravely for the country and people instead of

³⁹³ Korea National Human Right Commission (2005), 3-4.

husbands, brothers and daughters who go out front of war! Make more brilliant distinguished services with effort.”³⁹⁴

Secondly, from 1960 to 1970, various social welfare policies were promoted for maximizing the women’s labor force. However, the preference for heavy industry by the North Korean government produced a hierarchy of production. North Korea provided first and foremost labor forces, materials, and supplies benefitting the heavy industry. The status of workers in heavy industry was extolled while light industry and local industry workers were treated as inferiors. More serious problems occurred: the hierarchy in the production system deepened the hierarchy of workers between men and women. Women’s role was defined as a male worker’s assistant in a certain field of endeavor. Women who assisted the work of her husband were considered honorable. Women’s love and sacrifice improved production, and this was presented as a correct form of life. This led to a gender hierarchy structure at homes and factories and also it is connected with North Korea’s political society’s hierarchy structure. By the time, feudal patriarchy rose increasingly. In this point, Park defines; North Korea’s equal rights of women experienced a second step back.³⁹⁵

Thirdly, from late 1980 onward, there was a deepening of the economic crisis, and because of this the economic role of women was expanded. However, the women’s policy in North Korea began to turn away from the earlier socialist women policy to move toward the traditional patriarchal role. In a special way, the family law act in 1990

³⁹⁴ Young-Ja Park, “Bukhanui Yangsungpyeongdeung Jeongchackui Hyungsunggwawa Gulgok [North Korea’s Gender Equality Policy Formation and Refraction],” *Bukhanui Yeosunggwawa Gajok [North Korea’s Women and Family]* (Seoul : Kyunginmunhwasa, 2006), 252-254 and Duk-Hee Yoon, “Bukhanui Yeosung [Women in North Korea],” *Bukhanui Ihae [The Understanding of North Korea]*, 328.

³⁹⁵ Young-Ja Park, 256.

emphasized the importance of women as mother and wife. By this time, the women's role in the family was emphasized and there was a downplaying of women liberation ideology.³⁹⁶ Women took over the family's livelihood after the famine in 1990's; in fact, women did about everything they could do during the famine years. The most popular work was selling or peddling. The selling was difficult because there was a limited travel authorization system, requiring bribes to the officer of travel authorization and delays in the transportation systems. With such hardness of life, women did the selling or peddling because men thought that such selling was shameful work. Other women did side jobs or they cultivated the side land of a home for the family's food. Nevertheless, women were not freed from house work even though men stayed at home without work. Consequently, women had a double burden.³⁹⁷

Among the North Korean state policies for equal rights for women is "The Labor Law" of June 24, 1946, and July 30, 1946. "The Labor Laws" were contained 26 sections. These sections guaranteed maternity protection and labor rights, such as "same labor, same pay for men and women" (article 7), a paid leave system, improvement of labor safety and hygiene conditions. There were 35 days of paid leave before childbirth and 42 days after (article 14). Also, these laws established the foundation that men and women should become equal workers by adopting maternity protection laws, such as maternity leave, light labor guarantees during pregnancy (article 15), ensured feeding time, e.g., women who have children under the age of one are guaranteed 30 minutes of feeding time twice a day (Article 16), prohibition of night work while pregnant or breast-

³⁹⁶ Bok-Hee Jun, 10.

³⁹⁷ Young-Hee Shim, 167.

feeding (article 17), and a provision of social insurance. The second clause of this social insurance is that there is a pay subsidy during the period of pregnancy and childbirth (article 18).³⁹⁸ North Korea called it the policy of women's liberation and advertised it in two parts. The first part states that women have to cooperate with the government and have to execute their tasks because the government gave them the condition that they could live a better life. Secondly, women have to compensate to the government by increasing production.³⁹⁹

However, women's participation in production was not easy for two reasons. First, these regulations produced a negative reaction by men and by society at large; secondly, there was some resistance by a certain number of women. North Korea was also based on the ideology of Confucianism and therefore the leaders urged a large family system. Thus, some people expressed a very negative reaction to women's entering society. They said: "these days, women have become crazy" or "it is indecent."⁴⁰⁰ Kim Il-Sung's openly criticized the resistance of women. He said: "Some women think that women could not do anything... Thus, they hesitate to participate in the state founded industries and furthermore, they criticize women who participate in the work. They say that behind their back." Kim thought that the reason for women's resistance was "a remnant of the colonial history of Japan and feudal ideas."⁴⁰¹ Kim saw that the Confucian

³⁹⁸ Hye-Ran Im, "Bukhanui Gender bulpyeungdeunggwa Gukgayeokhal: Nambukhan Bigyoui Gwanjeomeseo [Gender Inequality and the role of North Korea]," *Nambukcheje tonghabgwajaeowa Jeongchack: BukhanYeosunggwa Jeongchi, Bukji, Sahoeui Byunhwa [South and North Inter-System integration Challenges and Politics, North Korea Women and Politics, Welfare, and Social Change]* (Seoul university Tongilhak Research project Committee, 2006.3. 15), 8 and Young-Ja Park., 239.

³⁹⁹ Young-Ja Park, 238.

⁴⁰⁰ *Chosun Yeosung [Chosun Women]*, January, 1947, 33.

⁴⁰¹ Il-Sung Kim, "Hyeon Gukjejeongsewa Yeosungdeului Gwaop [Current International and Domestic

mindset was a barrier to build the Communist country and he tried to join women's labor forces with his government's development.

The second important policy for the equal rights of women was "the legislation for equal rights of men and women" which was established on July 30, 1946. One month after the announcement of "the labor law," the temporary People's Committee of North Korea established a goal that "we clear the remnants of colonial history of Japan and reform the feudal ideas. Thus, women could participate entirely in culture, society, and policy."⁴⁰² The main points of the law were making nuclear families on the one hand and empowering individual women for the socialist modernization on the other.⁴⁰³ If we acknowledge the specific instructions for each section and their main implementations, women would have equal rights with men in the fields of state, economic, cultural, societal and political life (article 1). Women have the same right to vote and be elected in local and national elections (article 2). Women do the same labor for the same pay as men and they have the rights of social insurance and education (article 3). Women have the right of freedom of marriage just as men have. This right prohibited non-freedom and forced marriages without the partner's consent. This right stated clearly that in marriage the women's self-choice has to be honored (article 4). Women have the right of freely divorce like men – the laws even permit women to sue their ex-husband for child support

Situation and Tasks of Women],” *Kim Il-Sung Jeojakjip 3* (Pyongyang: Chosun Rodongdang Press, 1979), 369-372.

⁴⁰² Kim Il-Sung, “Bukjosun Namnyeopyeongdeunggwane Daehan Beopryeong [North Korea's Legislation on Gender Equality],” *Kim Il-Sung Jeojakjip 3* (Pyongyang: Chosun Rodongdang Press, 1979), 327-328.

⁴⁰³ Young-Ja Park, 241.

(article 5).⁴⁰⁴ The minimum age of marriage was at 17 years old for women and 18 years for men. This regulation prevented early marriage which had engendered many evil practices as feudal remnants. Early marriage was the reason for unwanted pregnancy, polygamy and the strengthening of a patriarchal family. Moreover, the government tried to force women to participate in production and construction by encourage late marriage. Polygamy and the sale of a wife or concubine were prohibited. The North government tried to prevent the empowerment of blood groups and tried to eliminate the exclusivity by the blood tie (Article 7). Women have the right to own property and inherit land and when they do divorce, women can share their joint property and land inheritance (article 8). In this presentation of legislation, Japanese imperial laws and regulations about *Chosun* women's "rights" were invalidated. This indicates that women had become socialist and modern subjects.⁴⁰⁵

B. Socialization of childcare and housework

The North Korean government tried to bring about a socialization of housework and childcare to remove the barriers for women's participation in production activities and to encourage the economic independence of women. Thus, North Korea established "The Nursery Rules" on June 13, 1947, "the provisions relating to child care" in 1949 and "the child care act" in 1976, all of which reduced women's burden of child rearing. As a maternity protection policy, "the child care regulation act" in 1993 regulated 150 days for maternity leave, 60 days before the baby's birth and 90 days after the baby's

⁴⁰⁴ It had the detailed instruction because the divorce is big event in family. Agreement divorce was concluded by submitting 'the divorce letter' to the city and nyun People's Committee. But the divorce was not agreed together, they could field the divorce at city and county People's court. Also, the state court controlled 2 or more divorced persons in order to handle carefully. Young -Ja Park.,243.

⁴⁰⁵ Young-Ja Park, 243-245.

birth.⁴⁰⁶ Also, the state and social organizations were instructed to operate nurseries that care for the babies from 1 month to just under 3 years old, but the installation of these nurseries were not mandatory. There were 10 nurseries and 116 kindergartens in 1949 because of the nursery installment movement urged by the Women's Alliance of North Korea and by "The Rules about Nurseries" in 1949. With the duties of the nurseries and kindergartens decreed by cabinet decision in 1958, the number of nurseries was increased dramatically, which brought about an increase of 340 nurseries (1956 to 1960).

The nurseries were divided: a nursery worked from Monday to Saturday. The parents picked up the children at the end of a week. From 1961 on, there were only 2 or 3 "week nurseries" in each province, city and county. The nursery of the month took care of children for a month and was installed in only 2 or 3 places in the main cities from 1965 on. With the increasing number of nurseries and kindergartens, the government needed to strengthen their management so, they raised the standard of the teachers of the nursery and kindergarten from high school graduates to college graduates. Also, they built an education system of nursery and kindergarten care by establishing the kindergarten mapping agency in the ministry.⁴⁰⁷ Thus, North Korea since 1970 has provided nursery and kindergarten schools for 80% of the children in those age groups. When we consider the fact that some children lived with their grandparent or housewives who had stopped working, an 80% of capacity is quite enough to meet the demand. Also,

⁴⁰⁶ Hye-Ran Kim, "Bukhanyeosungui Yeosungmunje Insik Mit Bokjiservice Yokku: Talbukyeosungeul Jungsimeuro [North Korea Women's Recognition Women's issues and Welfare Service Needs: In mainly the North Korean refugee women]," *Nambukcheje Tonghabgwa Jeongchak: Bukhanyeonguwa Jeongchi, Bokji, Sahoeui Byungwa [South and North Inter-System Integration Challenges and Policy: North Korea Women and Policy, Welfare, Social Changes]*, (Seoul University Tongilhak Project Committee, 2006.3.15), 2.

⁴⁰⁷ Mi-Ryang Yun, 77.

the teacher who are hired for these nurseries and kindergartens, were not allowed to take care of own children in order to avoid favoritism. When the teachers take care of other children in addition to their own, it could give the other children a problem in their mental development. We can see how North Korea tried to provide high quality childcare even though they could be criticized for some of their methods.⁴⁰⁸

Later, research about children who were raised in the nursery and kindergarten system in North Korea might consider their emotional, physical and intellectual ability as they grew up. This would be helpful for understanding the socialization of childcare which allows women's greater participation in society. The childcare systems were meaningful arenas for women's social activities and economic independence. Therefore, research about the operation of public childcare systems and the development of children compared with other systems would be excellent. It could be a good alternative for helping women's social advancement.

Also, the socialization of housework was promoted. The North Korean government stated in the *Jeongmuwan decision No.11* in March 1973: "In order to fulfill our great leader Kim Il-Sung's suggestion that the technology revolution task for liberating women from the burden of kitchen work and heavy housework: an increase in the source of soybean paste plants, vegetables, and meat as well as an increase in Tofu processing plants which needed to be modernized; and further production of rice plants, as also noodle processing plants to be built in each area. However, the government's effort did not contribute to reducing women's housework. The rice plants and side dish factory were for women's liberation from the kitchen but the women avoided the rice

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 99-100.

plants and the side dish factory established in Pyongyang in the beginning 1980 quickly disappeared. The reason why women disliked the rice plants is that they did not want to waste the rice in the process of cooking. It shows how the North Korean society has struggled with food supply. Also, the policy for reducing housework was not helpful for women as we saw above since these plants operation did not work. Thus, the duty of housework turned back to women again and they had to do outside work as well; it was a double burden for women.

4) North Korean women's position in the family

A. Women have the primary education responsibility for children and should be a “revolutionary mother.”

“*Chosun Women*” is the only women's magazine which is a bulletin of “*Korea Democratic Women's Union*.”⁴⁰⁹ If we make an analysis of “*Chosun Women*,” we can see that North Korea is redefining the traditional roles of a mother, a wife, and a daughter. The new gender roles follow the principles of socialism. Among them is the role of an ideological mother who is called the “revolutionary mother.” North Korea has asked all women to be “revolutionary mothers.” Motherhood is emphasized to women as a mission and honorable work. Thus, Kim Il-Sung says that “mothers have the heavy duty of educating children to be great communists, and for this goal the mother's role is more important than the father's as regards the education and character development of children.” Also, according to *Chosun*, even though a father affects the children's

⁴⁰⁹ “*Chosun Women*” is launched in July 1946 in monthly until August 1982 and published 6 times a year. This magazine has two functions; first is describing party policies and advertising party's policy and business. Second is a function as a media which work as educating and propagating communist ideology though magazine in a logical way.

education, a mother has more responsibility because the mother gives birth and takes care of them.⁴¹⁰ According to *Chosun*, the revolutionary mother is described as one who every day cleans the street with her children so as to improve their education, and she provides an example of motherly etiquette. She should make any of her children who are poor learners study hard and let them do their work by themselves. A common value for mothers is that they not only correct children's bad habits and tendencies but they also lead children toward developing one's role in the community and country.

Moreover, loving all children as well as one's own is emphasized. For example, a story was introduced in '*Chosun*' about women who took care of children who did not have parents at home.⁴¹¹ Her name was Cho Go-Bun and she lived in Danchon city Kwangchondong at the 15 neighborhood unit. She took care of seven brothers and sisters who did not have a mother and she raised them as great workers for the state.⁴¹² Kim Sun-Kum who lived in Hamkungbukdo Hwasunggun, nourished thirteen war orphans.⁴¹³

The revolutionary mother's most important role in 1990 was to raise their children as 'loyal communists.'⁴¹⁴ The role of women is explained in some detail in an article in "*Chosun Women*."

⁴¹⁰ *Choson Womem*, Jun, 15, 1991.

⁴¹¹ *Choson Womem*, June, 1989.

⁴¹² *Choson Womem*, June, 1991.

⁴¹³ *Ibid*.

⁴¹⁴ According to Song Du-Yul, what subjective loyal communist is first, a human being who loves labor and participates in work voluntarily. Second is 'Juche' an ideological human who reject Capitalist ideology and embodies the Juche ideology. Third is collectivism human, a human who pursues the group's common interests more than personal benefits. Fourth is optimistic human who devoted to the communist's victory. See Song Du-Yul, "Bukhansahoereul Eoddeohge Bol Geotinga? [How could we see the North Korean society?]," *Sahoewa Sasang [Society and Thought]*, (December, 1988).

A woman is a wife of a husband and she is a flower which makes for a harmonious atmosphere. A woman's role is to help old parents for what is left of their lives and to help her husband for his role as a revolutionary comrade. All of this is also a woman's role. Also, women who give birth and nourish children are the first educators to daughters and sons, and women must prepare the children to become faithful successors of the revolution.⁴¹⁵

Even though North Korea defines revolutionary mother as their ideological mothers, the specific role of women is to support husbands and be caretakers of children and older parents. Women are assistants to their husbands, and this role has been emphasized in the North Korean society.

B. Women as assistants for their husbands

The role of North Korean women was said to be as an assistant for her husband who is a revolutionist and she is also meant to be a trainer of next generation of revolutionists, namely her children. She is a key person who makes the family a revolutionary family by her own embodiment of socialist culture.⁴¹⁶ Kim Il-Sung established absolute power in 1967. Kang Ban-Suk, who is Kim's mother, became a model for women. According to the North Korea Labor Organization '*Rodong Sinmun*', on July 31, 1967, the leaders of this organization introduced her as "she is a mother of all of us." From that time on, all women, especially married women, had to learn from Kang Ban-Suk. The *Korea Democratic Women's Union* made all members read 100 times the

⁴¹⁵ *Chosun Women*, March, 15, 1993.

⁴¹⁶ Young-Ja Park, "Bukhanui Namyepyongdung jeongchankui Hyungsunggwaa Guljeol (1945-1970): Bukhanyeosungui Jeongchi Sahoiyeok Jiyui Byunhwareul Jungshimeuro" [North Korea's Gender Equality Policy Formation and Refraction (1945-1970)], *Asia Yeosung Yungu [Asia Women's Studies]*, Vol. 43. 2 (2004) : 323.

book of “*Let’s learn from Mrs. Kang Ban-Suk*” and they made them memorize it in 1970.

They advertise her such as;

Kang Ban-Suk was a good supporter and sacrificed for her husband, Kim Hyung-Gik, who fought for the independence of the country. She was a comrade in war and a great mother of Kim Il-Sung who was elected as a great leader of the Chosun nation. Also, she was a great revolutionist who organized directly fighting for independence of the country and liberation of women and evokes all women to be revolutionist. .. She is a model of women who teach how to support a revolutionist husband, how to nourish children, how to serve parents in law and how to be a revolutionist in family to all members of the Korea Democratic Women’s Union.⁴¹⁷

However, this model of women in North Korea, Kang Ban-Suk, is not different from traditional women except for her revolutionary ideology. When she was young, she obeyed her father, and after her marriage, she obeyed her husband’s will, and after her husband’s death, she obeyed her son. With Kim Jeong-Il’s succession in late 1970, both Kim Jeong-Suk, who was Kim Il-Sung’s wife, and Kim Jeong-Il’s mother, who was known as “a subjective revolutionary fighter” faithfully obeyed the great leader. Kim Jeong-Il’s life was dramatized by Juche ideology and this helped to reinforce all women to follow her⁴¹⁸

The emphasis on Kim Il-Sung’s wife and Kim Jung-Il’s mother does not mean the strengthening of maternal rights. Instead, they tried to justify that a mother’s good discipline had brought her child to his succession as supreme leader. In emphasizing Kang Ban-Suk and Kim Jung-Suk as models of mother and wife, they tried to stabilize

⁴¹⁷ Chosun Minjueosung Jungangwiwonhoe [Chosun Democratic Women’s Central Committee] (1967, 1-2), See Pak Young-Ja, 324.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 324.

the role of mother and wife in a North Korean family. They were not models for men or for fatherhood. Kang Ban-Suk and Kim Jung-Suk became models of women as a wise mothers and wives. Kim Il-Sung's father, Kim Hyong Jik, is not described as a model father but as a fighter against Japan. This means that they politicians tried to make the image of Kim Il-Sung the only father of the people of North Korea and thereby he became a man of eternal existence.⁴¹⁹

North Korean women are required to be “revolutionary mothers” who are revolutionists ready for sacrifice. They also have to be models of morality and raise their children to follow their mothers' example and be good communists without selfishness and with a collective spirit. The model of a “revolutionary mother” and the advertisements about Kang Ban-Suk and Kim Jeong-Suk show what type of women the North Korean government is looking for. The government officials are asking North Korean women to be revolutionists for the country, but if one analyzes model for women, it is no different from the traditional model for women which was based on Confucian ideology. Even though women are revolutionary in character, North Korean women are required to be mothers who have to provide primary education for their children and to do this with unconditional sacrifice. In the concept of “revolutionary mother” there are two factors; socialist, communist women and traditional, sacrificing women.

C. The position of women in family and division of the role of husband and wife

⁴¹⁹ Hyeon-Sun Park, 32-34.

The family law which was enacted in 1990 (No. 18) prescribes that ‘husband and wife in a family have the same rights.’ A book which was published in 1994 describes this position and role.

Husbands in our society are not the head of family but the householder who represent the family and who has the duty and responsibility to support and educate the family group. Also, wives are not under the oppression of their husbands and his family as in feudal time. All family members have the same rights and the wife organizes and operates the household. Legal equivalent rights and the chance to attend social and political events are open to all by the gender equality legislation after liberation and the implementation of democratic reforms. Thus, the position and role of the wife was upgraded as she operated the household and raised the children.⁴²⁰

In spite of this family law, can one argue that in North Korea there are equal rights between husband and wife? According to the testimony of a person who escaped from North Korea and also according to North Korean literature, North Korea family life is centered by the husband. The husband is called head of household and has absolute authority for decision making in the family. Even though North Korea abolished the Family Register system in which paternal lineage was inherited, the Family Law act No.26 which was established in 1990, states that “children take the father’s last name.” Thus, the relationship of relatives is centered by the husband’s side. In dialogue between the couple, husbands can use crude language to his wife but the wife has to talk using terms of respect. Wives call their husbands ‘the head of the household’ or ‘the host.’ There can be no disputes, and wives are meant to be obedient and dedicated to their

⁴²⁰ Jutae-gwa Gajoksaenghwal Peungseup [House and Family life Custom], *Josunui Minjokjeontong 3* [Chosun’s Ethnic Tradition 3], (Seoul : Gwahakbaegwasajeonjonghab chulpansa, 1994), .308.

husbands. A husband's cheating is not a major problem considering it is a common happening. Moreover, he is allowed to beat his wife.⁴²¹

In the short story, "The Weight of Happiness," one woman who is a doctor and has experienced family's disagreement, is talking to her friend who has a job as a researcher.

Yu-Gyeng, I cannot see you. Of course, I know that the work of research is a noble and good job. Thus, I do not want to say that you should quit the job. But we are mother, wife and housewife in a family. What will be left if women lost family... Do not be angry. I do not want your family to be like my family that did not feel comfortable with a lot of discord... Women have families, but it is women's ideal to raise children well, make husbands successful, and want to be successful by herself. But that is not easy. The family which supports a woman's success in business has already destroyed the balance and the family is in a mess.⁴²²

Also, in the short story, "Flavor of Life," a college professor is talking about the role of wife in a family.

How women can have ambitions... Women have to know that raising children well and maintaining family harmony and frugal housekeeping is the major parts of a woman's hope... Why has a wife's listening to her husband's words become weakness? Helping husbands is a duty and a virtue.⁴²³

These two stories show how North Korean women identify themselves as a mother and assistant husband and how hard it is to do housewife's work when one is also working outside the home. All of this indicates that North Korea is based on the ideology

⁴²¹ Sun-Hee Im, "Soseoleul Tonghae bon Bukhan Yeosungui sam" [The North Korea Women's Lives through Novels], *Bukhanui Yeosungwa Gajok* [North Korea Women and Family], Bulhanyounguhakheo, (Seoul: Yunginmunhwasa, 2006), 187.

⁴²² Ra-Sun Ri, "Haengbokui Muge" [The Weight of Happiness], *Chosunmunhak* (March, 2001), 31-33.

⁴²³ Hyeon-Cheol Jeong, "Samui Hyanggi" [Scent of Life] *Chosunmunhak* (November, 1991), 42-43.

of subjection of women in accordance with Confucianism. Even though the law of North Korea prohibits the ideology of subjection of women and contempt of women, the practical life is different. There are strong aspects of the ideology of the subjection of women in the North Korean society in contrast to the legal equal rights between women and men.

There are two testimonies about the position of women in family and society by persons who have escaped from North Korea.

North Korea women until now did not feel free from the ideology of the subjection of women... Men say easily “men and women cannot have same situation after they have reached seven years old.” Men hate women who pass in front of men. For example, when my school became a coeducational school, school girls could not enter the class room because there was a school boy in it....More pathetic was that school girls could not go to bathrooms during the break time because they had to pass in front of school boys and they had to avoid passing in front of school boys... I thought that men were great and women had to act in that way as a correct manner of women at that time.⁴²⁴

Another testimony considered the situation after the crisis of food shortage in North Korea.

There is still a strong ideology of the subjection of women. The major way of living as men and women at that time was that women could feed men. It was the way of making family. Women have to work hard to be a bread winner for their husbands. The view that husbands have to be a bread winner is less than 20-30 %. Women go to work and they have to do house work after coming back home. Almost half of Korean men ask women to feed them even if the woman has to sell her body. I saw that when wives did not make money, husbands beat them physically.... They just hit their wives and then go outside...”⁴²⁵

⁴²⁴ Man-Cheol Yeo and others, “*Huin Geotdo Geomda*,” [*White is also black*] (Seoul: Danachulpan, 1996), 230-231.

⁴²⁵ Dongguk University North Korea Institute, *Talbukja Jeungeoneul Tonghaese Bon Bukhaningwon Siltaejosa* [*The North Korea human rights survey through North Korean refugees’ testimonies*], (Seoul:

The North Korea society has experienced major changes in family life due to the economic crisis and food shortage. Most husbands did earn enough so wives had to start earning a salary. By doing this they tried to solve the problem of food. However, this caused the authority of husbands to become weak.

Nevertheless, according to the testimony of persons who escaped from North Korea, women think that by admitting the husband to be head of house there is a way of keeping peace in family. This results in the tendency for women not to resist the husband's unequal treatment to them. There are cases that women escaped from North Korea because they could not endure their husbands' abuse.⁴²⁶ Lim Sun-Hee argues that these cases show that the patriarchal culture is deepening in many North Korea families who suffer from the food crisis.⁴²⁷ After the food crisis, the role of a housewife became more emphasized. The family law amendment of 1990 was meant to strengthen family life in this situation.

In practical life, we see that the house decision making was determined by husbands and mothers-in-law rather than by the women who actually take care of the children and do household chores. There were clear divisions of the role of husband and wife. The husband represented the family and had the responsibility and duty to support and educate the family; the wife had the role and position of maintaining the household

Dongguk University Bukhanhak Institute, 2005), 107-198.

⁴²⁶ Tongil Institute, *Bukhan Ingwon Baekseo [Human Rights with Paper in North Korea]*, (Seoul: Tongil Insitute, 2004), 178.

⁴²⁷ Sun-Hee Im, 192.

and nourishing the children. In general, a woman's obedient attitude to her husband became the basic marriage relationship. Another woman who had escaped from North Korea felt that her husband had treated her as a servant rather than as a wife. He supervised all her activities. She said that her husband inspired fear in her, that she had to live in a way which always respected her husband and that there was no equality between husband and wife even though law requires it.⁴²⁸ Another woman testified that before she got married, her mother had taught her that women have to obey their husbands unconditionally and she had to be patient, acting like a dumb, deaf and blind person. During her married life, she had to prepare her husband's dinner every day when he returned on time from his office. She could not visit even her parent's home which was near her house. Until she left North Korea, she had not skipped any single dinner for her husband.⁴²⁹

With this kind of treatment, North Korean women did not raise questions. Women had to prepare food, to purchase groceries, and provide fuel for cooking, such as coal or wood. Often, there was not enough electric power and water. Husbands did not help in meeting these problems. North Korean women simply accepted their role: "of course, women had to take on these responsibilities;" of course "there are differences between women's jobs and men's jobs;" of course "women were born to be destined to be a very obedient girl." Thus, women think that women should handle all the housework even if

⁴²⁸ Jeong-Mi Kim, "Bukhanyeosungui Jeongchesung Byunhwaee Gwanhan Yeongu [Research on North Korean Refugee Women's Identity Change]" (M.A. diss., Ehwa Women's University Graduate school, 1999), 21-22.

⁴²⁹ Seok-Hyang Kim, "Ilsangsaenghwaeseo Bon Bukhanui Sungpyungdung Siltaewa Yeosungingwan Munje [North Korea Women's Gender Equality Status in Everyday life and problems of Human Rights]," *Bukhanui Yeosungwa Gajok [North Korea's Women and Family]*, Bukhanyounguhakheo, (Seoul: Kyunginmunhwasa, 2006), 288.

is hard, and they should consider a husband's help when offered as a thankful kindness, but should also handle the house work by herself if husbands refuse to help. After the food crisis, to be a bread winner by peddling became a women's duty. These women described their husbands as "Dogs," who do not do anything at home.

Men are called as 'Dogs' in our area, because they do not have any willingness to help. They are called 'Dogs' because they simply live in the house. Women at times have to leave the house with their children because they cannot care for the stupid 'Dogs.' Thus, the women and children who leave the house can live, but the 'Dogs' die from starvation not long after. There were many 'Dogs' in our area.⁴³⁰

Nevertheless, some feminist scholars see that in the 1990's the role and position of women was changing when compared to the 1980's. The first change was the division of housework. Housework had been the women's responsibility in 1980's but there was a gradual increase of husband's sharing in the housework from 1990 onward. In the 1980's, husbands after coming back to work simply waited while the wife prepared his meal. In the 1990's, husbands began to help the wife prepare the meal. Decision making in a family also changed. Husbands and wives made decisions together. However, these changes occurred not because of social and legal recognition but because of the food crisis. The food crisis forced women that did not have a regular job and to go outside for food. Men began to help with the housework even though there are many testimonies that husbands did not do housework. The decrease in population promoted a situation in

⁴³⁰ Hyeon-Sun Park, "HyundaebukhanuiGajokjeadoe Gwanhan yeongu [Research on the family System of Modern North Korea]" (Ph.D. diss., Ewha Women's University, 1998), 178.

which women had to join farm labor. Even though the change was not a change of recognition, the change did have some positive influence on the future.⁴³¹

The magazine “The Nation” had an interesting article by Kang Yi-Reuk, entitled: ‘March 8, the day of the woman is the day when husbands cook.’

Husbands prepare meals for their wives on the “Day of the Woman.” This was not decided by anyone nor was it regulated by law. Nonetheless, the custom spread out widely. So, on the day of March 8th, the husbands of this house and of that house did the cooking and this makes the flowers laugh. This occurs in the area of North Korean society where there is a breaking with the old custom which treated women as inferior to men.⁴³²

The food shortage of North Korea brought about two effects on the lives of women. It gave women the burden of being a breadwinner on top of her housework. Nevertheless, it started to enhance women’s authority in families regard to economic decisions and at the same time it brought about a husband’s participation in housework. Even though these are small changes, they are still changes for the better.

5) North Korean Women and Confucianism

A. North Korean Women have a dual burden

Some North Korean women are considered valuable in a way similar to men for they are active, aggressive, and dedicated workers in the economic world. However, they are also required to shoulder another role within the family, for they should be wise mothers and good wives, respecting their husbands, their children and their parents in law. A contradiction and strain between the public women model and the family

⁴³¹ Sun –Hee Kim, 105- 106.

⁴³² Gwi-Ok Kim, Sun-Im Kim, kyung-Ha Lee, and Eun-Ju Hwang, *Bukhanui Yeosungdeuleun Eoddeoge Salgo Iteulgga [How Do Women Live in North Korea]* (Seoul: Dangdae, 2000).

relationship model cannot help but occur. Women are asked to take on a dual model: she is required to be a revolutionary woman and at the same time to be a traditional wife. Therefore, women are not removed from housework simply because they participate in social work. Rather, women end up doing more work for they are in the economic work place and in the home. Women have a dual burden with housework and social work.⁴³³

Even though North Korean women are living in a dual burden situation, they think that they are living in a system of equal rights between women and men. According to Kim Suk-Hyang, this judgment is the result of North Korean government education. North Korean women are the people who live as subjects in society and are ‘one wheel of the revolution.’ South Korean women are in the plight of capitalism. The North Korean newspaper, ‘*The Rodong Newspaper*,’ and other North Korean broadcastings emphasized that “South Korean women are under exploitation and oppression and are under the situation of being frisked by U.S. troops.”⁴³⁴ ‘*The Rodong News Paper*’ describes this.

Let’s view the picture! Two south women who were on the way are frisked by U.S. troops commanding the women to lift their arms above their head. What kind of rights do the U.S.A. Invaders have? They are not in their land but in another country. Yet the put their hand on the women’s bodies without a second thought. This is the culmination of human rights abuse... The humiliation of these women is the humiliation of all South women and the misery is the misery of South Korea.⁴³⁵

In contrast, the article in the newspaper states that North Korea is the only place where women can enjoy a dignified life and women can live proudly like men escape

⁴³³ Suk-Ja Jun, 27, and Young –Hee Shim, 178.

⁴³⁴ “Deo Isang Moyok Danghal Su Eobda [There could be no more Insulting],” *Rodong Shinmun [Rodong Newspaper]*, March 8, 1999.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

from the old, the capitalist and feudal society in which women were considered as slaves.⁴³⁶

B. North Korean women and Confucianism

Even though a new ideology has emerged in North Korea and has become a dominant ideology, the dominant older tradition and culture continues to affect people's mind and life. It may seem correct to say that a new socialism has defeated the feudal and old Confucian tradition. In actually, the North Korea's new systems and law have given major changes to women's positions and roles. However, as we have seen above, the roles and positions of North Korean women have not changed in actual life. The ideology of subjection of women to men is still evident, and a woman's role is still defined as mother and supporter for her husband. Gender equality was established in the legal system and the tradition that the father is head of a family may have been legally abolished, but women are still forced to be obedient to their husband and parents in law. The role models for North Korean women are Kang Ban-Suk and Kim Jung-Suk. These women never talked back to their husbands and parents in law. They remained obedient to their husbands, supporting them as much as possible. They were great trainers of their children. According to Kim Il-Sung, Korean women have to sound wise mothers and good wives. Women need to show gentle manners and absolute obedience to husbands.⁴³⁷

Yun Mi-Ryang remarks that the new policy which was based on socialism did not eliminate the feudal tradition; rather the new legal policies and the older Confucian qualities were fused together. Thus, the North Korea society is neither a totally socialist

⁴³⁶ Seok-Hyang Kim, 296-298.

⁴³⁷ Il-Sung Kim, "Yeosungeun Yeosungdawoya Hao [Woman should be like a Woman]," *Chosun Yeosung*, Vol.4. (1989): 5.

country nor is it totally a Confucianism country. Yun argues that the North Korea society has a mixture of the both ideologies and practices. The North Korean socialism could be called “Confucian socialism.”

To understand North Korea’s “Confucian socialism,” we can see that the North Korea ideology and system is not just ideology and system but it is a kind of religion. Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jung-Il have not been just the country’s leaders but they have also become fathers and Gods. North Koreans confess that everything they have achieved and enjoyed comes from the leader’s grace and benevolence. The goal of their life is, consequently, allegiance and dedication to the great leaders. A woman who is Japanese but lives in North Korea confessed this stance to an author.

She feels strongly that during the 50 years of her life she enjoyed a good and real life in the arms of the republic. This arm was the arm of our father and great leader. The arm of socialism country is the real warm arm in which life bears flowers meaningfully... The lady, Su Song-Man, says that “I found a home of real life in the arms of the republic. During the war time, I became a soldier in the army of great leaders and I grew up as a member of a party. I cannot imagine my happy family life without the grace and love of the great leader. Fatherland is not the place where I was born but it is the place where I was taken care and my fate and future blossomed. Really, the socialism *Juche* country is the home of real life of all of us.”⁴³⁸

Her testimony shows well how the North Koreans feel as regards their system and leaders. The North Korean ‘Confucian socialism’ did not function as a system in their life; rather, it was a belief and a form of worship. Therefore, the worship of the leaders became a religion which is mixed into their patriarchal tradition and culture. Without the change of religion and consciousness, there would have been no foundation for

⁴³⁸ “Chamdoen Sami Kkotpyeonan Boggeum Jari [Real Life Home in which is the True Flowers of life], “*Rodong Shinmun*, June 11, 1999.

overcoming the reality of discrimination against women. These testimonies and other phenomena raise questions: is it possible for North Korean women to stand as co-fighter with South Korean women in order to change inequality for a future society? Do North Korean Women see themselves as subjects in 'the Confucian socialism' situation even though they have lived their life in a governmental structure which has provided them with benefits?

The analysis of the unequal rights and positions of women in Germany might provide a better format as we prepare a reunified Korea. The analysis could also serve as a guide to protect North Korean women during the process of reunification in employment and rights.

3. The influence of Confucianism on the Lives of South Korean Women: Their Status and Roles

South Korea's Constitution guaranteed legal equality between men and women in 1948 and Article 8 prohibited any political, economic, and social discrimination by gender, religion, or social status. However, the Constitution's guarantee for equality did not improve South Korean women's status very much. According to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in South Korea, South Korea's National Equality Index Value was 62.6 in 2010 compared to 2009, it increased 0.8 percentage.⁴³⁹ The National Equality Index Value was categorized into eight parts; family, welfare, health, economic activities, decision-making, education and vocational training, culture and information

⁴³⁹ Tae-Hong Kim, Ki-Tae Jun and Jae-Sun Ju, *2011 National Gender Equality Report, The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in South Korea* (2011), iii.
South Korea's National Equality Index Value was 58.5 in 2005, 62.1 in 2008 and 61.8 in 2009.

and safety. Among them, the decision making part was the lowest part in the level of gender equality.⁴⁴⁰

Also, 2010 EIU (Economist Intelligence Unit) reported the WEOI (Women's Economic Opportunity Index). They measured the economic environment of women workers and employees of 113 countries and they defined whether women are allowed the same conditions of economic participation in law, system, customs and attitudes.⁴⁴¹ The ranking of South Korea of WEOI was number 35 of 113 countries. By looking for each area, the financial area was number 21 which was the best part while legal and social status was number 66 and lowest. Even though South Korea's ranking was in the middle among the entire measuring nations, South Korea is at a very low level in OECD countries; number 30 of 34 OECD countries. Also, the score of South Korea was below average of OECD countries. The women's legal and social status got the highest score, 78.3 compared to other areas but the ranking is number 66 of 113 and number 33 of 34 among OECD countries (number 34 is U.S. of America). Especially, discrimination against women is low (38.8%) compared to developed countries.⁴⁴²

In order to research South Korean women's status, South Korea women's economic and political position, family policy and social support systems and women's position in the family will be investigated.

1) The Economic position of South Korean Women

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, p.vii.

⁴⁴¹ Tae-Hong Kim, Ki-Tae Jun and Jae-Sun Ju, 85.

⁴⁴² Ibid., 89-92.

South Korea has had rapid economic development since the 1960s and the economic development strategy was labor intensive, and export- oriented industrialization. Thus, exports increased from \$41 million in 1961 to \$65 billion in 1990 and the most part was manufacturing industries. The manufacturing industries took 83% of South Korean exports and were a crucial reason for the economic development at the time. It was concentrated in low wage and unskilled labor jobs to raise revenue in such industries as textile, clothing manufacturing, rubber and plastic, electronic goods, shoes and china and pottery manufacturing.⁴⁴³ Also, the female labor force participation rate has increased since 1963⁴⁴⁴ and female workers were more than half of all workers in the manufacturing industries. This fact shows that women took a leading role in the South Korean economic development.⁴⁴⁵

The South Korean government has been the authority in economic development and has controlled industry with the slogan, “development first, distribution later.”⁴⁴⁶ In this structure, women’s labors were sold cheaply. People believed that the Korean economic development would lead to equal distribution but the economic development made the rich richer and did not make for equal work and equal wages. This phenomenon caused starts the labor movement along with the democratic movement for human rights

⁴⁴³ Kyung Ae Park, “Women and Revolution in South and North Korea,” in *Women and Revolution in Africa, Asia, and the New World*, ed. Mary Ann Tetreault, (University of South Caroline Press, 1994), 165.

⁴⁴⁴ The most increased time of female participation was from late 1980 to 1990s.

⁴⁴⁵ Kyung Ae Park, 166 .

⁴⁴⁶ Bong-Scuk Sohn, “Women’s Political Engagement and Participation in the Republic of Korea,” in *Women and Politics Worldwide*, ed. Barbara J. Nelson and Najma Chowdhury (Yale University Press, 1994), 438.

and political change. Also, the women's movement in South Korea rose actively with the labor and democracy movements.⁴⁴⁷

A. Women's labor force participation

The table 11 below shows South Korea's labor market participation rate and the female labor force participation. These rates have gradually increased but decreased in 1998 and 1999 with the IMF economic crisis. With the economic recovery, the female labor force participation rate increased from 50.1% in 2005, 50.3% in 2006. However, it decreased again due to the financial crisis of South Korea in 2009 (49.2%) in 2009 and in 2010 (49.9%).⁴⁴⁸

Table 11: South Korea's labor market participation rate and the female labor force participation

	The labor market participation rate	The female labor force participation rate
1963	56.6%	37.0%
1970	57.6%	39.3%
1980	59.0%	42.8%
1990	60.6%	47.0%
1997	62.2%	49.5%
1998	60.7%	47.0%
1999	60.5%	47.4%

Source: Tae-Hong Kim⁴⁴⁹

Another of South Korea's development strategies that increased the rate of the female labor force were the changes in the labor supply: namely, women's high education

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Tae-Hong Kim, Ki-Tae Jun and Jae-Sun Ju, *2011 National Gender Equality Report, The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family* in South Korea, 63.

⁴⁴⁹ Tae-Hong Kim, "An Analysis of Determinants in Female Labor Market participation," KWDI Research Reports, *Women's Studies Forum*, Vol.17 (December 2001), 1-2.

levels, women's conscious change about working, and a better child care system. Also, some scholars think that the small electric appliances for the home contributed to women's participation in working.⁴⁵⁰

However, women's employment structure is different because of the number of workers in the establishments and their working status. Sixty- nine percentages of women were employed in small businesses: 18.8% of women in places with 5to 49 workers, 8.9% of women in business with 50 to 299 workers and only 3.3 % of women were employed with more than 300 workers. Thus, 54.4% of women were employed in small establishments with fewer than 4 workers and they were not protected by the Labor Standard Act as temporary or daily workers. Also, in the women's employment structure, 55.3% of all employed women were non-wage workers; employers were 1.2%, self-employed were 17.1%, and unpaid family workers were 37.0%. Among wage workers (44.7%), regular employees were 53.1% and temporary and daily workers were 46.9%.⁴⁵¹

According to the labor participation rate by marital status, the married women's participation in the labor force is the same pattern with the increasing women's participation which had dramatically increased in the late 1980s.⁴⁵² It means that marital status did not affect the participation in the labor forces and furthermore married women were a bigger part in increasing the labor force participation. Nevertheless, by marital status, the employment rate was different; 23.9% were underemployment worker

⁴⁵⁰Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Tae- Hong Kim, "Women's Employment Structure in Korea KWDI," Women's Studies Forum, Vol. 9 (December ,1993), 6-7.

⁴⁵² 41.0% in 1985 to 47.0% in 1992 and 49.5 in 1997 by National Statistical Office.

(incomplete employment) among married women while only 4.7% of unmarried women were underemployment workers.⁴⁵³ Also, the married women's labor force participation has a characteristic. Married women who have children less than 6 years old influenced negatively in their participation. For example, women who have children under 6 years old showed a 13% lower participation in labor force than women who do not have under 6 years old children in 1985. The difference was 10.9% in 1992 and 20.6% in 1997. It means that taking care of young children make it most difficult to participate in the labor force for married women.⁴⁵⁴ Thus, South Korean women's employment activity rate is like a capital M (twin peak type). According to the National Statistical Office's Annual Report on The Economical Population Survey in 2000, the female labor force participation rate increased in the age group from 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 and over 60. The curve of M means that women exit the labor market because of marriage and child rearing but they return to the work places after children have sufficiently grown.⁴⁵⁵ Especially, the age group from 25 to 29 years old engaged in productive related jobs, technical and related jobs and especially clerical jobs were about 20%. It peaked at the shape of the M as the age group of those who are between 30 to 39 years old reentered the job market⁴⁵⁶ However, females who were engaged in professional, technical, and administrative jobs remained regardless of age.⁴⁵⁷ Also, the husband's attitude toward

⁴⁵³ Tae-Hong Kim, "Women's Employment Structure in Korea KWDI," 12.

⁴⁵⁴ Tae-Hong Kim, "An Analysis of Determinants in Female Labor Market Participation," 6-14.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁵⁶ Such as jobs; sale (26.7%), production related jobs (26.5%), agriculture, forestry, and fishing (19.1%), service jobs (16.7%)

⁴⁵⁷ Tae-Hong Kim, "Women's Employment Structure in Korea KWDI," 5.

female labor participation is an important factor. According to the Female Employment Status Survey, husbands who live with employed women have a more positive attitude to their wives than unemployed wives' husbands. Working women's husbands answered 53.7% at "welcome and agree" and 22.1% at "object" while non-working with hope to work husbands answered 49.4% at "welcome and agree" and 30.9% at "objection."⁴⁵⁸

Another characteristic of female labor force participation was that the more educated women's labor force participation rate is high; college and university graduates - 90%, high school graduates - 80% and middle school graduates - 60%.⁴⁵⁹ The age of 15 to 19 group's labor force participation rate decreased from 1980.⁴⁶⁰ It indicates the increasing of female education in university or college. Moreover, female college enrollment was 80.5% compared to male college enrollment at 77.6% in 2011: the rate of female college enrollment beat males for two years.⁴⁶¹ Even though the high female college enrollment produced many professional female workers⁴⁶², the female labor force participation graph still shapes a capital M.⁴⁶³ It means that the South Korean social

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 14-15.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 7-9.

⁴⁶⁰ The rate of female labor participation of age 15 to 19; 1963 - 37.4, 1970- 44.1, 1980- 34.4, 1985-21.1, 1990-18.7, 1995-14.5, 1997-13.0, 1998-12.0 (November, 8. 1999.)

⁴⁶¹ South Korea Bureau of Statistics data in 2011. Women employment trend who graduated more than college; 1980-2.5%, 1990-8.2%, 2000-19.2%, 2005-27.6%, 2009-33.5%, 2010-34.5%.

⁴⁶² According to *Donga daily* newspaper report in June 28, 2010, women are dentists one out of four in 2009. women acupuncturist was 2.4% in 1980 compare 16.4% in 2009. Women principle in junior high school was 3.8% in 1980 compare 17.6% in 2010. In the official adopted test in 2010, women's percentage of successful applicants was 47.7% in the administrative examination, 41.5% in the administration of justice, and 55.2% in foreign examination.

⁴⁶³ The first peak was in 20 to 24 and the second peak was in 40 to 44. Comparing in 1980 and 1997, the biggest increase in participation rate is 25 to 29 (27.0% in 1980, 53.9% in 1997). It was due to the delayed marriage and delivery.

systems and society do not support women's pregnancy and child rearing. Also, women's labor force participation rate passed male (women- 72.9% and male-70.0%) but women's regular worker rate is 34.5% compare to males 47.9%: the other women are non- regular workers. There are still lot of gaps in the quality of employment between women and men.⁴⁶⁴

B. Women worker's wage

Even though women workers have contributed to the South Korea economic development, the status of women in the economic area is low. The average women workers' wage was less than half of the wage of male workers until 1987 and women workers began to receive at least half of male wages from 1988. The majority of women were employed in the manufacturing industries where were the lowest.⁴⁶⁵ Also, women workers average salary was 1,396,000 won in 2005, 1,693,000 won in 2009, 1,772,000 won in 2010 while men averaged 2,109,000 won in 2008, 2,546,000 won in 2009, 2,648,000 won in 2010. Even though women's wage growth was higher than men (women- 4.7%, men – 4.0%), still women's wages are lower than men: the gender gap of gross monthly salary was 66.2% in 2005, 66.5% in 2006, 66.5% in 2009 and 66.9% in 2010.⁴⁶⁶

The principle of equal pay for equal work was introduced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act acted as the Labor Standard Act in 1953. The Labor Standard Act in article 5 indicates that “an employer shall not discriminate against the

⁴⁶⁴ “Bureau of Statistics data ‘Women’s lives,’” *Donga daily* newspaper report, June 28 2011.

⁴⁶⁵ Kyung Ae Park, 166.

⁴⁶⁶ Tae-Hong Kim, Ki-Tae Jun and Jae-Sun Ju, 64-65.

labor conditions of workers by the reasons of gender, nationality, religion or social status, etc.”⁴⁶⁷ However, Article 5 could not work in South Korea because discrimination was a common habit in companies. Accordingly, women’s organizations requested a new special law for the Equal Employment Opportunity Act which was from 1988.⁴⁶⁸

For example, salary discrimination, according to the research of Kim Tae-Hong and Yang Seung-Joo, there were 33 companies in which female college graduates were recruited. The companies set starting rank and grade by educational attainment and sex. Twenty-three companies answered, and only 7 companies provided equal starting salaries by gender, but 16 companies had different starting grades (10 companies) or different grades (6 companies) by gender. Also, the case of high –school graduates, among 31 companies in the job of clerks and production workers, only 4 companies assigned equal grades while 27 companies had different grades. Twenty companies out of 27 companies had different starting grades and ranks by gender. Especially, in production workers, only 3 companies out of 31 companies assigned equal ranks even though both the males and females graduated high-school. When the representatives of labor unions or managers were asked a question why they assigned different ranks and grades to workers with equal education, they responded that male and female’s job duties are different. However, even the production workers were engaged in different job duties by gender, the clerks had almost same job duties. It proves that the salaries are not decided by their duties, education attainment but by gender.⁴⁶⁹ Another example, in the case of *Doosan* company

⁴⁶⁷ Tae –Hong Kim, Seung-Joo Yang, “The Equal Pay Principles and Related Policy Issues in Korea KWDI,” KWDI Reserch Reports, *Women’s Studies Forum*, Vol. 10 (December, 1994), 1.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, 1-2.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 7-8. Kim and Yang suggest the way of eliminate wage disparities by gender. “1) through the rational implementation of minimum level wages, 2) through the principle of more rewards for class

(one of the biggest companies in South Korea), a female worker who graduated from college and worked continually for more than 10 years received much lower wages than a male worker who starts work with a college degree. Nevertheless, a more serious problem is that wage discrimination is not the only problem, for it further effects discrimination in the wage management system and in placement or promotion.⁴⁷⁰

However, the principle of equal pay for equal work brought a side effect caused by the implementation of the principle. When companies try the equal pay principle, they may experience that the cost would be raised by female worker's maternal expenses. It could lead to their avoiding hiring female workers and reducing the number of female workers. Therefore, Kim and Yang suggest that the government should try to solve and minimize the side effects by the implementation of the equal pay principle and by supporting the maternal costs. Furthermore, society's custom and consciousness needs to be challenged and the employers mind about women's employment and wages have to be changed.⁴⁷¹

C. Women worker's working hour

Another problem for women is their working hours. Women workers are working more hours than men. South Korea was the only country in which women worked more than men among seventeen countries in 1983 and among fifteen countries in 1988. For example, in the manufacturing industries, women workers worked an average of 245

workers than those higher class workers to eliminate wage disparities which are caused by different educational attainments and starting ranks, 3) through the elimination of the gender segregation in the job market, 4) through the recruitment and placement in companies by placing more females in male dominated jobs." See page 20.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 14 -15.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 20-21.

hours per month in 1984 which was four hours more than men. This problem decreased from 1989 but this pattern is still continuing in South Korea.⁴⁷² Also, gender division in labor has not changed. For example, women administrators and managers were only 1.9% of the total in 1989 compared to clerical workers who were predominantly female.⁴⁷³

In South Korea, the rate of female part time workers is increasing. One of the reasons for the increase female part-time workers is that companies' growth is stagnant and sluggish which leads to female worker's being cut back first. With this result, women have to reenter the job market as contingent workers. Also, the transition of female workers' jobs place from the manufacturing industry to the service industry. For example, in 1986 male part-time workers peaked at 6.0%, but 10 years later it was at 3%, while female part-time workers peaked at 20.2% in 1985, but the ratio was 17.7% in 1988, 26.1% in 1989 and 21.4% in 1994. It shows that the rate of male part-time workers was reduced over this time, but the rate of female part-time workers increased. Accordingly female full time workers were decreased in companies which had more than 10 workers: 38% in 1981 and 29% in 1994. Another example, companies with less than 10 female employees increased 26.0% in 1983 to 34.4% in 1993, while companies with more than 100 female employs decreased 41.8% to 28.0% during the same time. However, male employment rate was not much different regardless of the size of the company.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷² Kyung Ae Park, 167-168.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Young- Ock Kim, "The Unstable Transition of Female Employment and Related Policy Tasks KWDI," KWDI Research Repoerts, Women's Studies Forum, Vol. 12 (December, 1996), 2- 4.

The minimum wage raising campaign from 4,320 Korean won (\$ 4) to 5,410 Korean won (\$ 5) was sponsored by the Korean Women Worker's Association (KWWA) in 2010. South Korea became one of the lowest countries in the OECD in the rate of low paid workers and inequality in wages. 198 million workers were paid less than the minimum wage. A more interesting fact was that 61.5% of them were female workers and they were not-regular workers; regular workers were only 5.7%. This indicates that women workers are not only minimum wage workers but also not- regular workers.⁴⁷⁵

Thus, the unstable female employment structure has appeared to be another trend since the late 1980s much as part time and leased work.⁴⁷⁶ The South Korean companies wanted the labor flexibility strategies in order to respond quickly to their economic internal and external changes. The most significant impact by the economic environment changes was toward female employment. In South Korean industry, the decrease in the female employment rate has a characteristic which is shown in the manufacturing industry. According to the Ministry of Labor's Monthly Labor Statistics, the decreasing rate of female employment in large company manufacturing plummeted from 53.2% in 1982 to 33.6% in 1994, while the S&M firm's decrease rate was 7%. Then, what is the difference between the two types of companies? According to Kim Youngock, the manufacturing companies, in which most females were employed such as the large textile

⁴⁷⁵ KWWA website, "*Raise the minimum wage from 4,320 won to 5,410 won.*" - The Minimum Wage Raising Campaign by KWWA, June 1 2010. A Proclamation by "Minimum Wage 5410 Won": I, the minimum wage, came into the world in order to carry out the mission for a more human life for low-paid workers. I, the minimum wage, never a surreal entity. The systems before me were not capable of completing their missions. Consequently, the workers' life on this earth has never been satisfying. Through 24 years of the dissatisfaction, I exist in reality as the fruit of the struggle of 450 million low-paid workers. I, the minimum wage, will sincerely my domestic mission by devoting myself to the guarantee of every single person's basic quality of life, and generally, to a higher quality of life. I hope that on account of me, the numerous non-regular employees and women workers will be able to have what they deserve.

⁴⁷⁶ Young-Ock Kim, 1.

and shoe firms, went bankrupt and this brought most of the layoffs to female employees. In contrast, the reason of slow rate of decrease of female workers of S&M firms was that they usually hired middle aged women as part-time workers. Married women, who do not need to be paid as much as part-time workers replaced the young women workers.⁴⁷⁷ Also, part time worker's salaries are not based on an hourly payment system even they do the work of full-time workers under the company system. The part-time worker's salary is 60% of full-time workers. In addition, the part-time workers have to renew labor contracts every year.⁴⁷⁸ Therefore, Kim Young- Ock claims that "the unstable trend of female employment is becoming more visible and the prospect is expected to become worse. Therefore, it is very urgent to take steps to establish a stable employment structure for female workers."⁴⁷⁹ Also, it means that when the country and its economic environment change, the worst impact may be on women.

2) The Political position of South Korean Women

South Korean women's participation in politics started from the resistance movement against Japanese colonization. Women actively participated in the independence movement. One of the examples is the March First Movement in 1919 in which many women devoted their lives to the nation's independence as fighters, financial supporters and contactors. However, these female independent activists⁴⁸⁰ were unknown and were hidden in history until they started to be introduced recently by feminist scholars. Among

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 6-7.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁴⁸⁰ Such as Yu Guwan-Sun, Lee Sin-Ae, and Na Hye-Seok...

the women's resistance leaders, three women became active politicians in the newly established South Korean government namely Yim Young-Shin, Park Soon-Chon, and Park Hyun Sook. After the liberation from Japan, the populace formed political parties for women. Yim formed the first political party, called *Taehan Yoja Kukmin-dang* (Korean Women's National Party) in 1945, and Park Soon-Chon organized *Konguk Bunyo Dongmaeng* (Women's Alliance for Nation Building) which tried to promote women's participation in South Korean government building projects in 1948, and Park Hyun-Sook organized *Ibuk Yosong Tongi-hoe* (Northern Women's Fellowship Association).⁴⁸¹

A. Women's political participation

The South Korean women's political participation can be divided into three phases; first, there was the national period from 1948 to 1961; second, there was the modernization period in the 1960s to the 1970s under the Park regime; and third, there was the democratic transition from the mid-1980s on.⁴⁸² According to the observation of Bong-Scuk Sohn, women's participation in politics during the first period was by a few women pioneers. Moreover, they were not aware that they were representing women and were passive on women's issues. For example, there were only two assembly women in 1963, and the number was only twelve in 1973. Also, women assembly members were not elected by the people but were appointed by indirect elections by the party under the national constituency system which was enacted in 1963. With the Confucian tradition, women's participation in politics was very limited in contrast to men who were

⁴⁸¹ Kyung Ae Park, 174.

⁴⁸² Bong-Scuk Sohn, 439.

encouraged to succeed as scholar–bureaucrats with Confucian teachings. Thus, only a few elite women who were in well known, privileged families and had social background were appointed to public positions by the government.

In the second period, some notable women participated in supporting the authoritative government, but also there were changes which were influenced by two things. First, there was the democratic movement in South Korea from 1982 to 1997. This movement strengthened the awareness for the need of women’s political participation. During this period, there were rapid social changes; both low- wage earning women and educated professional women participated in social and economic activities. Second, the women’s movement was influenced by the global tide of women organizing such as the United Nations Proclamation of International Women’s Year in 1975, and women’s movements became more active from this time on. Also, with the implementation of local autonomy, the change to a democratic political government and the rapid economic development in the 1980s stimulated women’s political participations, and this became one of the important parts of the women’s movement. Assembly women brought a lot of attention to women’s issues. However, even though their political part had grown with democracy from the former authoritarian regime, women’s participation in politics is still slight.⁴⁸³

According to recent statistics, the number of women in congress in South Korea in 2004 was 39 out of 299, and only 41 congresswomen in 2008. This shows that the rate of congresswomen increased slightly. Also, the rate of women who were elected to congress was 10.3 % lower than the OECD average and 25.4% lower than the

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 439 -441.

Netherlands which ranked first. Those in positions of administrative decision-making, such as women civil servants who were in grade five and above, increased slightly.

According to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family research, the status of women on the director at level or above in private and public companies increased continually but currently the level seems to be deteriorating.⁴⁸⁴

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Congressman	14.6	14.6	14.6	15.5	15.5	15.6
Civil servants grade of 5 above	11.0	11.9	12.6	11.1	13.1	13.8
Manager (at least director)	22.6	23.1	25.0	34.5	30.3	28.3

Source: 2011 National Gender Equality Report, The Ministry of Gender Equality and

Family in South Korea.

B. A need for women political representatives and CEO

Then, why is there a need for women political representatives to expand in society? According to sociological research, women's political participation can expect to bring about a reduction of corruption in society.⁴⁸⁵ There is a strong indication that a higher rate of women representatives in countries has the tendency to lower the rate of corruption in political and economic life. According to Bernhard Goetz, the reason for a lower possibility of corruption is that women are excluded from the back-door network. Thus, being excluded from the back-door network of men, women can limit the men from the corrupt conduct. Women are not as familiar with illegal actions for their benefit but are committed to keeping their actions honest and trusted.⁴⁸⁶ Also, many scholars have

⁴⁸⁴ It shows gender equality in decision making. Women director level or above whom are working in private company, over 500 employers, and in public company. Kim Tae-Hong, Jun Ki-Tae and Ju Jae-Sun, 2011 National Gender Equality Report, The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in South Korea, 65-67.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 18-19.

⁴⁸⁶ Bernhard Goetz, *Toward an Understanding of Gendered Networks and Corruption: the distinction*

stressed that women are less selfish and have higher ethical standards. All of this means that women have more possibilities for less selfish conduct and more influence over moral conduct. Therefore, increasing women's participation in the economic and political parts can produce not only social equality but also a reduction of corruption.⁴⁸⁷

Moreover, according to the Governance Metrics International Research, gender equality is positive in economic life because women's participation in the labor market increases economic growth. Also, women's participation on boards of directors has a positive impact on business accomplishments with the promotion of creativity and innovation. A company could employ people who want compatible work and a family through women -friendly culture. Thus, they can hire talented persons and can make a positive image for business. According to the Finnish Business and Policy Forum, EVA, comparable companies which have women CEO and more than half of the board of directors are women raised more revenue than companies which have more male directors. The companies with women CEO's revenue was 14.0% compared to companies with male CEO's which was 12, 2%. The companies which have more than half women board of directors had 14.7% revenue, compared to male dominant board of directors' company which was only 11.5%.⁴⁸⁸ The research shows the need for women's participation in the company's decision making processes. Norway is a representative country which adopted a women's quota system. Norway adopted the system for its Joint

between process during recruitment and representation, QoG Working Paper Series 2011, 9, The Quality of Government Institute, University of Gothenburg, Aksel Sundstrom.

⁴⁸⁷ Op.cit. 18-19.

⁴⁸⁸ Annu Kotiranta, Anne Kovalainen and Peti Rourinen, "Female Leadership and Firm Profitability," *EVA Analysis*, No.3 (September 24, 2007) : 4.

Stock Companies and they adopted it to private, state enterprises and local public corporations from 2003 on, and they had a goal to reach: a board of directors which has at least 40% women. Also, Spain, Iceland, France, and the Netherlands adopted a quota system in 2010. Therefore, improving women's political participation is not only for women's rights, but it also helps build an ethical and productive society.

3) The family Policy and Social Support Systems of South Korea

For the social roles and gender equality for women, international organizations⁴⁸⁹ created international treaties from 1975 on. The UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979 is representative.⁴⁹⁰ South Korea ensured gender equality and labor rights in the Constitution and prohibited discrimination by employers against women workers by the Labor Standards Act of 1953. Also, the South Korean Congress ratified the elimination of all forms of discrimination in accordance with the UN's Convention and Women's Policy Review Committee which adopted affirmative action policies related to women's employment in 1985. Even though South Korea has guaranteed gender equality in work and life, discriminatory provisions still exist in both in law and in the work place.

A. The Family Head provision

In family related laws,⁴⁹¹ the most discriminative law was the family head provision which was built on the Confucian family head system. The law enacted in 1960 worked

⁴⁸⁹ Such as United Nations (UN), International Labor Organization (ILO), and European Communities (EC).

⁴⁹⁰ EI-lm Kim, "The Current Laws on Women in Korea," *Women's Studies Forum*, Vol.12 (December, 1996), 2.

⁴⁹¹ The family law contained male dominant provisions in regard of marriage, divorce, and inheritance.

until 2007.⁴⁹² The family head provision allowed that only a male can have the head position in a family and lead family members as a representative called the *hoju*. When the family head, usually the father, died, there is a succession order: first son, the other sons, daughter who did not married, wife and mother of the family. Because oldest son becomes the head of the family, even two year old boys could become head. Women can be a head of family only when there are no males in the family or male members refuse to be the head. But the female head loses the position when she gets married. The law defines that “if female family members want to maintain the family head position even after they get married, they ought to register their husband into their own family register.” (Family Law, Article 980)⁴⁹³ Also, according to Family Law article 862, clause 3, the bride has to register her name in her husband’s family and have her name removed from her original family register. It means that a female loses the possibility to be a head of family by marrying. If there is no one eligible to be head of the family, the register of the family will expire and this has an important meaning to Koreans. They think that if the family register expires is the extinction of the family. Thus, the male centered family succession encourages automatically the preference for a son. Another male oriented family system is following the father’s surname but a more interesting aspect is that the father can register children by another woman without the wife’s approval while wife cannot register other children without husband’s approval. Also, wife and children have to follow the father’s status when he changes his nationality (article 3, clause 8).⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹² The family head provision was abolished from January 1st in 2008.

⁴⁹³ El-Im Kim, 6.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

With the struggles of sixty-one women's organizations from 1973 through the revisions in the family law, the provision of head of family was abolished in 2008. Also, there were three changes in the law in 1991. Women's obtaining a divorce was revised. Women had no rights previously to the assets when she is divorce but the amended law allowed that women can seek the proportion of their accumulation by the corresponding amount of a women's contribution.⁴⁹⁵ Prior to this, women had felt little freedom when they wanted to obtain a divorce due to their worry about their livelihood even if they had been abused by their husband. A second worry was the issue of child custody. When couples divorced, the father had child custody automatically. But according to the revised law, the right of custody is determined by their mutual agreement or by the Family Court itself. Thus, women could participate in the decision making process regarding child custody.⁴⁹⁶ This change in the law should help women who were in an abusive marriage but could not divorce because of the fear of losing her children.⁴⁹⁷ A third worry focused on, succession law. Daughters could have only one quarter of a son's inheritance, but the

⁴⁹⁵ Family Law, Sypra note 31, at art 839(2); 1) One of (the) parties who has been divorced by agreement, may claim a division of property against the (other) party. 2), if no agreement is made for a division of property as referred to in Paragraph (1), or if it is impossible to reach an agreement, the Family Court shall, upon request of the parties, determine the amount and method of division taking into consideration the amount of property realized by cooperation of both parties and other circumstances. 3) The claim for division of property as referred in Paragraph (1) shall be extinguished at the expiration of two years from the day of divorce. Translated by Rosa Kim in *The Legacy of Institutionalized Gender Inequality in South Korea: The Family Law*, *Boston College Third World Law Journal*, Vol. 14:145 (1994):152.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. The divorce rate in South Korea increased rapidly; the number of divorce was 17,000 in 1975 but annual number of divorce was between 23,000 to 26,000 in the mid- 1980s and 45,000 divorces in 1987. Source: The Library of Congress Country Studies; CIA World Fact book.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 153.

revised law eliminated the discriminative law with the result that daughters can receive the same proportion as the sons.⁴⁹⁸

B. The Military Additional System

The Military Additional System, which gave extra points to males who completed military service, became an issue for organizations which focused on the rights of both women and the disabled. According to the “Act a Person of Merit for the Nation”, article 70, males who complete military service can get extra points – from 3 to 5 % -- on entrance examinations of public companies. This law was established for the purpose of guaranteeing employment to war veterans and males who had completed military service. However, this law worked as an unfair opportunity for women and disabled persons vis-à-vis entrance examinations in applying for a government positions also the eligibility of later promotions. Some people argued that it is not a gender discrimination law because it gives benefits to the people who fulfilled military service. But the women’s organizations and disabled organizations pointed out that the law stipulates the military service of males only since the service is compulsory. A woman enters the military only by way of a voluntary application. Finally, the Constitutional Court decided that the Military Additional System was unconstitutional in discussing this problem and the benefit points were reduced from 3 to 5% to 1.5 to 4% in 1999. Nevertheless, the indirect sexual discrimination is still at work in the entrance examinations and in the public servant training institutions.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁸ Bong-Scuk Sohn, 442-443.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid. 6-7.

The Military Additional System was submitted again to Parliament by some conservative legislators in 2008 which aroused opposition by the civil society. The women's and disabled organizations warned about their intervention. They argued: "if women and disabled persons do not have the opportunity even in the civil service examination which is the only fair competition career test in South Korea, then the equal rights of women and the disabled are seriously violated as regards the freedom of career choice."⁵⁰⁰ The main point of the criticism of these organizations was that the reinstatement of the Military Additional System would significantly affect the employment of both women and the disabled. When one considers the current situation, they argued, in which part time workers are expanding among women and the disabled in South Korean society, and then a reinstatement of the Military Additional System would only increase discrimination.⁵⁰¹

C. The Child Care Act

Korean law guarantees maternity leave and child-care leave which are based on the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (article 11). The Child Care Act which called for the installation and management of child care facilities was institutionalized on April 1, 1989 and was enacted in January, 1991. Women's expanded education opportunities and the reduction of house chores and the low birth rate promoted women's labor participation. The South Korean government had already tried to utilize the women's labor force for economic development in the 1980s. As we have seen above, the biggest barrier to working women who wanted to marry was child rearing. Child-care-leave

⁵⁰⁰ *Journal of Feminist, ILDA*, February, 15, 2008.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

systems guaranteed that the female worker's request for leave would be granted that their salary would continue up to the child's first year of birth when they have a child under one year old. The length of leave is one year which includes paid maternity leave before and after childbirth. If employers reject the request, they should be punished and the period of leave should be counted as part of time served.⁵⁰² However, this situation was not always followed in practice, because employees considered pregnant employees as surplus. For example, the following is an office worker's testimony that lived in Massan-Changwon, "I got forced to resign the moment I told my boss that I would like to have a maternity leave." Another testimony by an English tutor in Seoul, "the company insisted that they will not offer a new contract to employees who will possibly request a maternity leave."⁵⁰³ A more serious problem is that about half of the women workers are in part time jobs. This means that the Child Care Act does not apply to them. It can be said that both the government and the company's need the women's labor forces and abilities when women can work, but when women need support for child care, they say that the child care is your personal matter.

Thus, when the South Korean Equal Employment Opportunity Act is compared with the UN Agreement on the Equality of the Sexes, one sees a difference in doing away with gender discrimination. The interesting factor is that the South Korean Equal Employment Opportunity Act includes an assumption that child care is the responsibility of women. Article 1 states: "Besides guaranteeing equal opportunity and treatment

⁵⁰² El-Im Kim, "Child Care Leave Systems: Setting a Research and Policy Agenda," KWDI Research Reports, *Women's Studies Forum*, Vol. 10 (December, 1994), 2-3.

⁵⁰³ KWWA Website, "Working environment improvement campaign to find a balance between work and family," October 12, 2011.

between man and women according to the Equality Act, it aims to improve the welfare of the female worker and promote her status by protecting maternity and developing her career.” And also, article 3 defines that woman workers contribute to the nation’s economic and social development and also contribute by rearing the next generation.⁵⁰⁴ Both articles define that women have the responsibility to take care of children; no mention is made regarding the father’s responsibilities. Thus the government guarantees the systems which help women workers during pregnancy, childbirth, and childrearing, and in doing so the law looks like it helps women workers. But this is only a surface view. In actuality, women are under dual burdens, one in employment and the other in child care and housework. Kim points out that the Equal Employment Opportunity Act is similar to the Japanese enactment, ‘Women Workers Welfare Act.’ However, compared with other international agreements of this nature, the laws of South Korea apply only to women while other international agreements apply to both males and females.⁵⁰⁵

Thus, the first action of the working environment improvement campaign was this: “Demand your maternity leave when you need it.” This position was started by KWWA on the 4th of May, 2011. The campaign involved ten women’s associations, and they asserted that “In 2012, the movement for the reduction of working hours and men’s responsibility regarding child-care are scheduled to be enacted. We expect a working environment that respects both maternal and paternal rights without any sort of sexual discrimination, for a higher quality of life.”⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁴ El-Im Kim, “Child Care Leave Systems: Setting A Research and Policy Agenda,” 3.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁰⁶ KWWA website, “Working environment improvement campaign to find a balance between work and

Men's right and responsibility to child-care is an important issue in improving the child care leave system. The Korean tradition has implied that the child care responsibility is a responsibility of women and this emphasizes the sexual division of roles. Therefore, when South Korea designed the Child Leave System, it was meant to protect mothers but it was based on the idea that women are the primary child caretakers. We need to recognize that child care is a communal responsibility of both mother and father, but child care is the responsibility of the nation and society. Furthermore, the nation needs to acknowledge that child care leave is not only for maternal protection but also for equal rights for men and women.⁵⁰⁷ Therefore, the Child Care Leave system has to include male workers. If this occurs, it would allow men to share child care duties. However, even though many countries have already adopted systems which include male workers, the transition from law to practice is difficult. Sweden guaranteed a paid leave system for child rearing, but only a small percentage of men stay at home in order to share child-rearing duties.⁵⁰⁸

In the actual carrying out of the Child Care Act, one sees that it is both a positive and a negative phenomenon in South Korea. As a positive phenomenon, the South Korean government enacted the policy that companies with more than 300 female employees should establish daycare centers. However, only 5.4% of the 329 companies had daycare facilities in 1996. In response to this disregard of the Child Care Act vis-à-vis the companies which established the daycare centers, statistics indicate that the effect

family," Hot issues and notice October 12, 2011.

⁵⁰⁷ El-Im Kim, "Child Care Leave Systems: Setting A Research and Policy Agenda," 9 - 10.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 14.

of the daycare centers was very positive and they helped promote productivity. The direct effect was an enhancement in recruitment, and a decreased turnover of workers as well as a decreased absenteeism of workers. The more effective results were increased motivation for workers and improved cooperation.⁵⁰⁹ Even though a small percentage of companies followed the daycare center rule, the result was a boon for the company's productivity and a guarantee of a viable work environment for women workers. A negative fact was the burden that the companies had to provide the costs of full wages because of the Child Care Act. It is also true that many companies would experience a financial burden if they applied the positions of the Child Care Act. Oddly enough, some women workers have tended to avoid these benefits. For example, among 520 companies with at least 300 employees, 317 companies (61%) were implementing the child care leave system in 1994. However, only 88 companies (27.1%) utilized the systems during the past 5 years. According to the Ministry of Labor, even though the companies which implemented the Child Care System are improving, 39% of companies have not implemented the system. Some women workers have tended to avoid using these benefits because of fear of dismissal, discrimination and other forms of disadvantages. When women workers take child care leave, they cannot be assured their job is secure and that they would have the same position when returning from leave. Moreover, there are no legally binding measures in the Child Care Act, and there are no regulations for labor

⁵⁰⁹ Seung-Ju Yang, "A Proposal to Diversify the Daycare Service Supported by Employers KWDI," KEDI Reserch Reports, *Women's Studies Forum*, Vol. 13 (December, 1997), 1-4.

supervisory boards. Thus, the employers avoid the system because of the burden of finding substitute workers and also the burden of increased financial need.⁵¹⁰

In actual practice, under the Child Care Leave system, companies provide all the costs of full wages for maternity leave, menstruation leaves, and paid nursing leaves. The companies are also legally unable to ban pregnant women from overtime and other maternity protection policies. However, companies may experience financial burdens and this continues to discourage the companies from hiring women workers. Therefore, this system cannot be accomplished without some regulatory forms of national and local government. For this involvement, Elim Kim suggests that the government should help the companies by providing administrative guidance and giving economic support through subsidies for those workers who are on leave. The government can accomplish this by a series of tax breaks. In fact, South Korea has been providing tax breaks for businesses which have child care facilities since 1994.⁵¹¹

4) South Korean Women's Position in the Family

A. Housework

According to the National Gender Quality Report of South Korea, women do most of the housework regardless of whether they are employed or unemployed. Even though male participation in housework has increased, there is still a severely unequal situation.⁵¹²

		2005	2009
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⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 6-7.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 13-15.

⁵¹² Tae-Hong Kim, Ki-Tae Jun and Jae-Sun Ju, 58.

Male	Employed	31 minutes	36 minutes
	Unemployed	55 minutes	1 hour 4 minutes
Female	Employed	2 hours 36 minutes	2 hours 36 minutes
	Unemployed	4 hours 53 minutes	4 hours 41 minutes

Source: *2011 National Gender Equality Report, The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family* in South Korea

In this table, we can see that employed males engaged in house work for 31 minutes in 2005, while and females for 2 hours and 36 minutes. It is clear that the difference in house work activity makes a big difference. It gives us a picture of a family: both husband and wife come back from their work places, but women are simply coming to another work place -- the house. Also, a more interesting comparison focuses on the unemployed; Male unemployed house work time was 55 minutes in 2005 while female unemployed time was 4 hours and 53 minutes. Both cases show that Koreans consider housework a woman's responsibility. By and large, South Korean society considers house works as primarily a woman's responsibility, and therefore when husband share household chores, they think that it is not "sharing in a duty" but only "helping the wife". A laid-off husband often comments on what it means for him to be engaged in house work. He is taking care of his children; he is bathing them and preparing breakfast for them. He is driving them to kindergarten. However, he expresses his feelings about doing house work and taking care of the children when he says: "I am doing something that I don't have to do. Before, I would have gladly helped out and I would have been thanked

for helping out. Now, my wife takes it for granted that I will do housework but there are times when I don't feel like doing it.”⁵¹³

Hyekyung Chang and Youngran Kim have analyzed the situation of men when their work role changed. After a husband's lay off, Chang and Kim found no change in the men's viewpoint.⁵¹⁴ The same judgment remained: housework for the male is only helping out, for the primary responsibility to do the housework lies with the woman. When doing housework, the husband feels uncomfortable and at times he feels his self-pride is diminished. A more interesting part in their research is this: if the husband's lay-off period is prolonged, the leadership of the household shifts from the husband to the wife. This change seems to be a switch from a patriarchal family to a matriarchal family.⁵¹⁵ It shows how economic power influences the position of head of the household, and also it indicates that women have to participate in the labor force in order to have equality in the family. Nevertheless, the lack of outside support, such as governmental support, for childcare systems and the lack of husband's doing their responsible share in household duties make it harder for women to participate in the labor force.

B. Women's position in the family

As to the status of women in the family, Korean women leave their father's house permanently upon marriage in the Confucian custom. The woman then had the lowest

⁵¹³ Hyekyung Chang and Youngran Kim, "A Study of the Impact of Unemployment on the Family and the Role of Women," KWDI Research Reports, *Women's Studies Forum*, Vol.16, 15.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., 15.

position in her husband's family. She had to show respect to all members of her husband's family, even to younger brothers and sisters in law. Also, she was openly abused and mistreated by her mother in law and her husband's family members in general. This was especially true if she had not yet given birth to a son. The birth of a son gave her some status in the husband's family. Also, men should have final authority in Korean families. An old Korean saying puts it this way: "If the hen cries, the house is ruined." Men as the head of the household have every right for decision making. Thus, after marriage, women have to live in unquestioning obedience to their husbands.⁵¹⁶ The Korean Women's Improvement Center poll in 1985 showed what the status of women in the husband's family was. 89.1% of urban males and 76.3% of urban females supported the following statement, "The wife should follow her husband." Only 9.7% of males and 21.9% of females disagreed with this opinion.⁵¹⁷

However, women's status has improved with modernization, economic development, the improvement in women's education level and the growth of women's percentage of labor participation. Today, the status of women is different. Older generations still keep to the old order between husband and wife. However, today the divorce rate has rapidly increased. The younger generation's sees the relationship between wife and husband in a much different way than that of the older generation. They are beginning to consider each other as partners or friends, so that there is no more insistence on obedience or on a relationship of inferiority. In colleges, the number of

⁵¹⁶ Connie Chung, "Korean Society and Women: Focusing on the Family, 1997, www.harvard.edu (accessed July 13, 2011): 3.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

women today has risen to almost 50% of the student body. In young families, the preference for a daughter rather than a son has also increased.

Obviously, changes have occurred in South Korean society. Does this mean that the relationship between women and men in South Korean society is more equal today? Even though there is reduction in the abuse and mistreatment of women, South Korean society still discriminates against women. Connie Chung points out that women's situation has in many ways worsened even though rapid industrialization gave some degree of participation and recognition to women. Economic development did not bring about a major improvement to the status of women. Rather, women in the work force gave women a double burden: women have to do work both as an employee and as a housewife. Without social support and lack of recognition by their family members, especially their husband, women still struggle with their double burden.⁵¹⁸ Forms of subjugation of women are still present in general life.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 3-4.

CHAPTER FIVE

A FEMINIST REUNIFICATION THEOLOGY

The culture of North Korea and South Korea is strongly Confucian. During the *Chosun* Dynasty, Korean Confucianism maintained male supremacy over Korean life in general so that there was a male dominance in politics, in female and male relationships, and in the way Korean families lived. The influence of Confucianism is still operative in the lives of women in both North and South Korea.

Even though North Korea declared that the Korean people should no longer be governed by Confucian ideology in their law, the role and position of women in North Korea have not changed in actual life. For example, North Korea socialism tried to give equal rights and participations to women and men in the labor force. However, there remains a gender division of labor, for women are placed at a low-income-bracket position, and women are low as regards the density and importance of their occupation. Also, the role of North Korean women has remained in its Confucian-influenced situation, for women should be an assistant to their husbands and they should also be obedient and dedicated to their husbands. Thus, North Korea's socialism could be called "Confucian socialism" because this is the way it is in the practical lives of North Korean women.

In South Korea, Confucianism influenced is still maintained for the government remains dominantly male and family life also remains male-dominated. This dominance affects the lives of Korean women in their married status and in their work-force status, and in the way women are educated. . For example, even though South Korea was the

economic miracle of Asia and hosted the G20 meeting in 2010, women's rights ranked 61st among 109 countries according to UNDP in 2009, and Korean women in the sex gap index, issued by the World Economic Forum in 2010, ranked 104th among 134 countries. Moreover, women's average annual wage in South Korea is about \$16,931 compared to the average wage of men which is about \$32,668.⁵¹⁹ The wage of a woman is just a little more than half the wage of a man. In this regard, South Korea had the biggest wage-gap between women and men among all advanced countries.

Furthermore, the patriarchal Christianity was mixed with Confucianism, and this helped to produce a conservative Korean Christianity. Korean Christianity has indeed contributed to the betterment of women's awareness and participation in society, but at the same time, Korean Christianity has reinforced the view that women are in a second-position status and that women should continue to exhibit a passive image in church, family and society.

We analyzed the German reunification case which caused a major loss of status and economic opportunities for German women. The process of German reunification also gave us a lesson that unequal situations and systems in society are not only political but also have a strong religious base. The ideology of religion has influenced the culture and politics of German society. In the process of the reunification of Germany, there was no essential participation of women and the German Christian religion gave no support for the establishment of an equalitarian community in the newly-formed Reunified Germany.

⁵¹⁹ "Korea Ended an Economic Miracle," Korea Times, November 8, 2010,

North and South Korea are currently in the initial stages of a process for their reunification. If the process does not include a major participation by women as also a major participation by the religious community, Korea will simply repeat the failures of the German process that did nothing to improve the lives of German women. For the Korean process of reunification, the involvement of women and the Christian Church are essential.

In chapter five, I will investigate how the South Korean Christian Churches have influenced women's lives and these same churches can contribute positively to the reunification process. I will also try to uncover the reasons which brought about the negative influences on the status of women in South Korea, and I will also offer some remedial situations which will counteract these negative influences. Furthermore, I will try to present some basic theological principles that will help build an egalitarian community.

1. How has Korean Christianity influenced Women's Lives?

Christian traditional ideologies of women and Confucianism have many things in common. These ideologies have built a political culture which was against women. Also, they have also brought about the labor division between men and women, and they have strengthened women's role as mothers in both Korean societies.

How did Korean Christianity influence women's lives? In 1886, a modern women's education institute was established by missionaries, and later many more schools were established. In Korea, women's education was developed by churches and church institutes. Attending church meant that women could escape from the old custom

that locked women inside their house. Moreover, it gave them the opportunity to escape from the ideology of predominance of men over women since they listened to the same sermons in the same churches. According to Lee Man-Yul, churches were the centers for improving women's rights and status, and they played a major role of pioneering for women's education that furthered the equality of women and men.⁵²⁰ In 1901, the newspaper, "Christ", strongly asserted the churches' role in women's education:

Now in a civilized country, the countries prosper and fail depending on education of wives. Therefore, the education of wives is the first job of a country. However Korea does not do it. So, the Christian, who knows about the importance, has to work diligently for the education of women.⁵²¹

Many other church articles asserted that the prosperity or failure of a family and even of countries is dependent on women's education. Christianity in Korea influenced women's life and status, for it improved the opportunities for women's education through the founding of many women's institutes. The opportunity for education improved women's self-identities and opened the way to move from the hidden life of the house into the wider society.

Nevertheless, even though Christianity gave Korean women liberation from oppression, there were also negative influences on women's lives which are still working in women's minds and in various social and church systems. Even though Christianity contributed to women's life in many positive ways and even though women contributed

⁵²⁰ Man-Yeol Lee, *Hanmal Gidokgyowa Minjokundong [Christian and Nationalist Movement s in the late Josun Korea]* (Seoul : Pyeongminsa, 1980), 20.

⁵²¹ *Geuriseudo Sinmun*, Vol .5, No. 9[*Christian Newspapers*, Vol.5, No.9], 1901.2.28, I am using material from Man-Yeol Lee, 54.

strongly to the miraculous Korean evangelical expansion, there was little to no recognition about women's contribution and women's voices. Even though women have played an important role in the growth of the churches, women were excluded from leadership positions in the Korean Christianity. Why did this exclusion take place? Why did the leaders of Korean Christianity continue to assert that women should obey men? Was Christianity liberation for women or a reinforcing of oppression? To answer these questions, I will present how the Christian influences affect women's lives positively and negatively and what the basic reasons underlie both the positive and negative stances.

1) Korean Christianity's Positive Influences on Women's Lives

A. Educational opportunities were open to Korean women

Korean Christianity, which was introduced in the late 19th century, played an important role in developing openness for women in education, culture and the social areas. As I mentioned, the contribution in education was especially significant. The introduction of Christianity gave the chance to liberate the people from illiteracy because early missionaries emphasized the educational ministry by the church. The Bible, which was translated into Korean and this helped many people to move out of illiteracy. The church's educational programs gave the opportunity to learn reading and writing in the church school education and activities. This education contributed to people's enlightenment, and in a special way it helped women.

An example of how Christian leaders found it difficult to collect people in school. Missionary, Mary F. Scranton had a hard time meeting Korean women, because Korean women would hide quickly by closing their door when Mary appeared in the street and

children cried out her name. At best, Mary Scranton at times could hold only a short conversation with the mothers. The first Korean women's institute, *Ewha Hackdang*, was established by the North Methodist Church in 1886. But there were not many responses to women's education and people were skeptical about it. Missionaries tried to visit door to door but there were only one or two who might show interest; often these women were orphans or concubines. In time, the interest in education for women increased with the improvement of trust of the missionaries.⁵²² These women's missionary education programs contributed to Korean women's awakening at that time.⁵²³

The educational programs held by churches were like women's Sunday schools, women's churches, bible classes, and bible institutes. These programs were very interesting to Korean women and the churches experienced an increase of women membership. Representative women churches were inside the *Sangdong Church*, *Dongdaemun* and *Baewha* institute.⁵²⁴

According to Su Kwang-Sun, women missionaries challenged Korean society by educating women and slowly developed a women's true position with improving her

⁵²² Sun-Ae Ju, (1978), "Chogk Hangukgyohoe Yeosungundonge Gwanhan Yeongu [An Initial Study on the Korean Church Women Movements]," *Church and Theology*, Vol.10 (Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 1978), 71-72.

⁵²³ Hyun-Ja Kim, "Gidokgyo Yeosungundongsa [Christian Women's Movement History]," *Hangukgldokgyo Geoyuksa [Christian History of Korea]* (Seoul: Institute for Christian Education, 1973), 132.

⁵²⁴ Bueong-Uk Jang (1979), 137 and An -Jeon Gwak, *Hanguk Gyohoesa [Church History in South Korea]*, (Seoul: Daehankidokgyoesuhoe, 1973), 112.

social status. Therefore, the early women missionaries' vision and mission was the liberation of women who were not educated and who were socially oppressed.⁵²⁵

B. Increased women's self- identity

The opportunity for education contributed to increasing women's self-identity. Korean women's identity was low because of the ideology of Confucianism at that time. However, the introduction of Catholicism and the *Tonghak* (Eastern Learning) Movement began to influence Korean women's self-identity. Also, women's educational institutes offered the opportunities to raise their thinking, for they learned that everyone is made in God's image and all are equal in front of God. It produced the ideology of gender equality. Thus, women began to understand themselves as independent and free from tradition and suppression. This Christian teaching helped women be aware of their unique individualities as human beings and as equal in front of God. Thus, the idea of equality based on the Bible awakened women's consciousness. Even though they were treated as inferior beings, they started thinking that they are equal to men.

C. Education provided a female centered community and a place to use their talents⁵²⁶

In Korean history, women's outside work and activities were restricted by the traditional rules, and most of a women's life was spent in the domestic sphere. However, the Christian Churches provided an important extra-domestic-sphere for women, namely,

⁵²⁵ Kwang-Sun Suh, "Hangukyeosunggwwa Jonggyo [South Korea Women and Religion," *Hangukyeosungsa [South Korea Women's History*, Vol.2. (Seoul: Ewha Women's University Press, 1972), 504-505.

⁵²⁶ Kelly H. Chong, "In Search of Healing: Evangelical Conversion of Women in Contemporary South Korea," in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu : University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 360-362.

a female centered community. Cell meetings, bible study meetings, evening prayer meetings and bible class activities became the center for women and women were required to meet several times a week. These meetings gave women a “resting place”⁵²⁷ from an area which was male dominated and oppressive. By these meetings, women built their community and a network in which they could make friendships. Also, they could deal with their personal difficulties and share good information.

The churches also served as a place where women could use their talents. They were able to exercise non-domestic talents and have a chance to experience achievements outside of the domestic area. They served not only as workers for the Church kitchens, but they also served as teachers of Sunday school, directors of the choir, musicians and cell leaders. These works provided an opportunity for women to discover their talents, use their brain and also develop leadership skills.

2) Korean Christianity’s Negative influences on Women’s Lives

Even though Christianity provided many opportunities to improve women’s identity and status, there were negative effects also. One of the major reasons was that the church leadership simplified the gospels. In Korea, both Protestant and Catholic Churches were deeply conservative. As a result, the churches did not, at least in any great degree, enhance women’s leadership positions. In the Korean Churches women were not equal to men. Since the Christian missionaries targeted the working class as well as Korean wives, they had to adjust their teaching level concerning the Gospel; these Gospel explanations had to be simple and they presented church doctrines in a very conservative

⁵²⁷ Ibid, 361.

way. Also, the theological seminary education was simple and conservative and thus provided the churches with conservative pastors. The missionaries thought that the Korean pastor's level was beneath the missionaries themselves, but the pastor was in charge of the general church members.⁵²⁸ The Gospel education did remove women to some degree from a state of ignorance and oppression. Rather, these groups of women could accept the Gospel as escapism and personal salvation.⁵²⁹ Pak Sun-Kyung asserts that the faith of Korean Christian women did not allow them to escape totally from the shamanistic border.⁵³⁰ The Christian mission opened the way for women to escape their limits and achieve social advancement, but they had a limited goal. In reality, women to some degree did improve their personal status and some finally became bourgeois elite groups.

A. Mistakes in helping women's independence and leaderships

According to Jang Byung-Uk, missionaries made mistakes in helping Korean women to gain personal independence. First, missionaries were reluctant to hire Korean women in leadership positions in their mission. Korean women were neglected in planning and organizing church activities. Women had no power at meetings for they were seen simply as women who served their churches. Second, missionaries did not allow women to on any mission or other church activity without their permission. This

⁵²⁸ Suh Kwang-Sun, 504-505.

⁵²⁹ Ibid, 520, 526-531.

⁵³⁰ Sun-Kyung Park (1984), "Hangukminjokgwa Shinhakui Gwaje [Korean Nation and Theological Tasks]," *Segyesokui Hangukgamrlgyohoe [Korean Methodist Church in the World]* (Seoul: Wesley Publishing, 1984), 231.

led to a form of oppression of Korean women's autonomy and made them passive and dependent even within the churches.⁵³¹

Thus, there were no women leaders. For example, at the beginning of Korean Christianity, there were "Bible Women" who visited door to door to meet women personally and evangelize, teach them the Bible and teach Hangul for illiterate women. They led women to churches in the closed society of Korea and their contribution to Korean Christianity's expansion has been recognized recently. However, the system of the Bible Women had many problems. The Bible Women were largely widows and they missed marriageable age and they did not have any other systematic education for the work. They just were sent out only after a short term of training. Therefore, they could not be long-term and professional workers for they were just temporary helpers and assistants for missionaries. Also, they were not allowed to preach and teach men. All of this indicates that they did not have leadership in the churches because church leadership usually starts from preaching and teaching.

B. The wrong image of women ministers and the unequal systems in Korean Churches for women ministers

The image of women ministers comes from the images of the Bible women. Thus, treatment of women ministers today has had many problems concerning their positions, roles and paychecks. Usually the Christian Churches expect the women ministers' qualification to be not highly intellectual and professional, but women should image a vocational awareness, strong faith and a service spirit which are similar to the images of

⁵³¹ Byung-Uk Jang, *Hanguk Gamrlgyo Yeosungsa [Korea Methodist Women's History]* (Seoul: Sungkwang Munghasa, 1979), 382-383.

bible women. According to the research of Korean Gallup in 1983, the images of women pastors have problems in their families and are often single or widows. Also, male theological seminary students think that women as pastors are not following the principles of the Bible. Thus, the Korean church members expect women ministers to be humble, faithful, patient and obedient.⁵³²

Therefore, the work of women ministers is basically the following: taking care of church members, evangelical work, and counseling. Their jobs are usually the work of an assistant for the male pastor. They are asked to visit church members, and in these home visits to discuss their problems, to collect information about absent church members, and to guide the way for the senior pastor's visit. Even though they know the church members situations and problems, they cannot attend policy decision meetings. Therefore, the women ministers are in assistant positions and not allowed to be independent. Women ministers cannot stand officially before the public and they have to be quiet in their church work. Thus, churches prefer middle aged or older women as ministers rather than young and unmarried women.⁵³³ Today, there are some denominations of Christianity in Korea that do not allow women's ordination. Thus, it is hard to find senior women pastors.⁵³⁴ Kim Un-Ju points out that the reason for these images of gender discrimination

⁵³² *Minjok, Minju, Minjungwa Hamgge Saneun Saeroun Gileul Hyanghayeo* [A New Way to Live with Ethnicity, Democracy and Minjung], 21. <http://blog.daum.net/jesus>, Korea Christian Women 100 years Footsteps (accessed March 1, 2010).

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵³⁴ Seung-Hee Son, "Hangukgyoheoeui Yeosunggyoyeokjaui Imigie Daehan Yeongu [A Study about Images of Women Pastors in Korean churches]," *Nonchong*, Vol. 36 (1980): 97-98.

inside of churches came from a wrong interpretation of the Bible and to some degree from the women ministers' lack of self-identity.⁵³⁵

These wrong images of women ministers produced unequal systems in Korean Churches for women. 70 percent of Korean Church members are women but most leadership and operating roles are taken by men. Women are lower in the church hierarchy and authority structure. Women were called as helpers or service workers; women participate in every church task, easy and difficult, and in unnamed tasks, but there were/are no women in decision groups or leadership positions. The problem of ordination shows the phenomenon of the Korean Churches; in the Presbyterian Church of Korea, women who have graduated from a theological seminary could not have been ordained until 1996. Women ministers had to choose either to stay as an assistant minister or to go to rural districts where male ministers do not want to go. Thus, women ministers have to serve male ministers who are younger than themselves in age and experience. It was not hard to listen to the sad experiences of women ministers who became pioneers in the establishment of new churches and communities. But after the church had developed, the church members wanted to have male ministers because they know that women ministers who are not ordained could not administer sacraments such as communion and baptism. Thus, women ministers were asked to leave the church where they had devoted tears and sweat.

C. The process of women's ordination and the current situation of women ministers in the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK)

⁵³⁵ Eun- Ju Kim, *Hangukgyoheo Yeosunggyoyukui Yeoksawa Munjee Daehan Yeongu* [A Study about Korean Churches Women Education' History and Problems] (M.A. diss., Ewha Woman's University Graduate School of Education, 1984), 40.

In section three, I will describe briefly the process of women's ordination in the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Toghab*). The Presbyterian Church of Korea passed a law permitting the ordination of women in September 1994 and the General Assembly's resolution finalized women's ordination in 1995. The issue of women's ordination was seriously raised in 1933. However, it took 60 years before a woman was actually ordained. The process of the struggle for women's ordination is still in my mind. During my years in the seminary, I attended the meetings for women's ordination in PCK held by the National Federation of Sisters in Ministry. Every year women ministers and seminary students attended the General Assembly meeting of PCK as an audience, and we watched the process of the proposed agenda. We prayed and demonstrated for women's ordination. We asked why women could not be pastors and elders. Many Presbyterians simply answered: the Bible does not allow it. Over many years of prayer, demonstrations and persuasion, we had many helpers urging the passage of the issue. In 1992 with the expectation that this year will be the year to accomplish women's ordination, many women ministers and students gathered in the assembly place and watched the process. But the result failed narrowly because of lack of a few votes. The disappointment was big. We gathered again in another room in the assembly church and prayed with great sorrow not to lose hope in our mission. Everybody prayed and cried which was focused toward the all Christian newspapers. Every women minister and student was in deep sorrow feeling the big barrier which we could not overcome in this denomination. However, God heard the cry of the women and the next year the ordination of women was finally passed. With the grace of God, I was ordained as a pastor in 1997 with the

feeling of sorrow for senior women ministers who waited 50 years. I had waited only 5 years after graduation from the theological seminary.

What was and is the women ministers' situation after the ordination of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK).⁵³⁶ According to The National Federation of Sisters in Ministry statistics of the Presbyterian Church of Korea in 2007, Korean women pastors' number 667 persons and not ordained women ministers are 1,393. These numbers reflect a period after women's ordination in 1997. Women ministers who are not ordained are twice as many as the ordained women. 27% of women ministers who are not ordained are working full-time at churches and most ordained pastor's work is as assistant pastors (35.8% in 2007) and pastors of a church institution (16.9% in 2007). These figures show that many women ministers did not ask to be ordained after women's ordination had been accepted. However, even though some women are ordained, but they are concentrated in the assistant pastor position and work in Christian institutions.

Also, the women senior pastors have difficultness in their ministry; even though 25.3% pastors are seniors among the women pastors, most of them are in small churches and not in independent churches (Table 12). While the number of delegated male pastors is 2,253, female delegated pastors are only 4 (Table 13). To be a delegated pastor, the church has to be an organized church which has *Danghoe* (Session Meeting).⁵³⁷ Women senior pastors who are in the larger churches are very few. Therefore, the reality leads

⁵³⁶ We can see the women ministers' present situation through the Presbyterian Church of Korea because the PCK is the largest denomination among the Korean Presbyterian and their situation could be in the middle among in Korean Presbyterian churches.

⁵³⁷ To configure the *Danghoe* (Session Meeting), there are need at least two elders and one senior pastor.

women pastors to be assistant pastors with the thinking that the assistant pastor positions are more stable.⁵³⁸

Even though women's ordination in PCK was accepted after 50 years of fighting, the women ministers in PCK are struggling to find their positions. Why they did not break the barriers? We can see three reasons; first, the Korean society and churches did not change from the stereotype that women are assistants. Even many women think that a church leader has to be male, who is the same sex as Jesus and who has a leadership position in society. Therefore, church members including women avoid appointing women pastors as their senior pastors. The phenomenon is shown in the percentage of elders in churches. With the accepting of women's ordination, women elders were also approved in churches. However, the number of women elder is very low in churches today, and only a few women with education, social position, and economic ability, were selected as elders in their churches. This shows us that the Korean Churches have not accepted the idea that the church' leadership positions belong to both women and men. Second, there are many women ministers who lack their self-awareness as ministers. After male seminary students finished their studies, more than 90% of them decided to be ordained. However, as we see in the statistics, half of women ministers did not get ordained. This indicates that they have a lack of self-awareness as ministers. Many women ministers try to settle in their places, for they think that it is good enough for women to work in churches and Christian institutions as non ordained ministers or part time workers. They would struggle for their family and children. However, they do not

⁵³⁸ Bo- Kyung Park, "Yeosungmokhoe Hyunjangbunseokgwa Yeosungsayeok Jeonmunhwareul Uihaan Gwaje [Women ministry field analysis and a task for women ministry specialization]," *Jangshinnondan* [*Jangsin Nondan*], Vol.32 (December, 2008), 83.

think about why senior women ministers fought for ordination and how their position will affect the future of women ministers. Third, one of the reasons that only half of the women ministers are not ordained is due to the difficultness in finding churches that support their ordinations. The PCK denomination has legislated that preliminary pastors be placed in supporting churches. Also, the increasing number of women free pastors who have no places for work shows the difficulty of finding work places. All of this indicates that the Korean Churches are still built on male-dominated churches.

Table 12: Women pastor's present condition in the Presbyterian Church of Korea.⁵³⁹

	2004		2007	
	The number	The percentage	The number	The
The senior pastor	140	25.0%	160	25.3%
The assistant pastor	188	33.45	226	35.8%
The institute pastor	104	18.5%	107	16.9%
The missionary & student in foreign country	54	9.6%	54	8.5%
The part time pastor in education part	41	7.3%	37	5.8%
The free pastor	28	5.0%	42	6.7%
The retired pastor	7	1.2%	7	1.0%
Total	562	100%	631	100%

Table 13: Pastor's present condition in the Presbyterian Church of Korea on December 31, 2006.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁹Ibid., 80. Women pastor's present condition in the Presbyterian Church of Korea. Published by the National Federation of Sisters in Ministry

	Male		Women	
	The number	The percentage	The number	The percentage
Commissioned Pastor	2252	18.3%	4	0.7%
Temporary Pastor	3779	30.7%	99	17.0%
Evangelism Pastor	1201	9.8	161	27.8%
Associate Pastor	2408	19.6%	212	36.5%
Special Evangelism Pastor	47	0.4%	0	0%
Institutional Pastor	317	2.6%	32	5.5%
Mission Pastor	423	3.4%	21	3.6%
Pastor Emeritus	216	1.8%	0	0%
Honorary Pastor	326	2.7%	0	
Retired pastor	463	3.8%	9	1.5%
Undesignated Pastor	841	6.9%	43	7.4%
Total	12273	100%	581	100%

3) The reasons why Korean Christianity has not overcome the Discrimination towards Women

A. Christian theology is based on the patriarchal theory and was built on the Confucian culture in Korea.

In early Christian time in Korea, women who were influenced by Christianity tried to liberate themselves from the culture which ruled their lives. Thus, they started to find their identities and they rejected being called only someone's wife and someone's mother. They ran away from their houses and attended bible classes, revival meetings and

⁵⁴⁰ 2007 The 92nd Meeting of the General Assembly Agenda of PCK

mission schools. Therefore, high education opportunities opened. Nevertheless, they felt the limitations of Christianity because it was built on the Western patriarchal culture. Even though Christianity taught that everybody is equal, they restricted women with the words, “women be still and obey their husbands.” They were taught to listen to authorities who are inconsistent with the essence of Christianity. Therefore, the patriarchal Christian doctrine did not contribute to real women’s liberation and the Christian women’s movement stayed at the level of individual enlightenment.

Moreover, Confucianism was the background for Christianity. Thus, the Christian doctrine addressed Confucianism’s conservative perspective about women. These lead women were more passive in churches and home and did not allow women in positions of leadership.

B. The Bible was interpreted from the perspective of androcentrism

In oppressing and subordinating women, the interpretation of the Bible had a big role. Sexism or patriarchy ideology was not considered as a problem in the Bible.

Moreover, it was considered as a necessary system for maintaining the social order. In this situation, women could not raise their own voices. However, by the development of various ideologies of modern society, there were many thinkers who felt that patriarchy and androcentrism are sins which destroy the relationship between women and men.

After the 19th century, there are many developments of women’s liberation thoughts like liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism. Thus, feminist theology tried to reconstruct the Christian tradition and seek women’s dignity. Nevertheless, the Korean Churches are not trying to open themselves to hear the voices of feminist theologians. Having good faith means accepting the teaching and direction of

church leadership and obeying what the Bible says literally. Therefore, it is a major task of all Korean Christian Churches to resolve the interpretation of Bible. Christian scholars of all denominations need to hear in a serious way what feminist theologians are saying: the restoration of the humanity of women in the perspective of feminist theology based on the Bible.

C. Feminist perspective reunification theology must build up on overcoming Confucianism and patriarchal Christianity

As we have seen above, without changes in the Christian theology against women, there will be no change in women's life in churches and homes. Furthermore, the situation would be repeated after reunification. For the new generation of reunification in Korea, the change of Christian theology would be the first task. Many Christian theologians were interested in the national task and developed Korean reunification theology. Even though the reunification theology has good will toward healing the divided nation, most theologians are male and the male reunification theologians could not overcome the androcentrism in constructing the reunification theology. The Korean reunification male theology indicates there was suffering of oppressed and alienated people caused by the Korean division. Also, they point out the Christian's role as people to reconcile and proclaim the year of God's grace, Jubilee. Reunification theology is in connection with *Minjung* theology and shows interest about the poor and oppressed people. However, there are no women in the category of suffering people caused by the division of the country and its dictatorships. They are looking for the way of liberation and peace but women's space in that is too narrow. Thus, even though the problem of division is solved and peace comes, women experience is still oppression and division.

Therefore, the Christian reunification theology has to be developed with the feminist mind and theology because it influences not only the churches' system and women's status but also, social systems and the life of Korea's next generation. For this reason, a feminist reunification theology based on the right interpretation of the Bible is necessary.

2. A Community based on the Right Interpretation of the Bible

Today, there are many different hermeneutical approaches to the Bible. Raymond E. Brown and Sandra M. Schneiders, in their essay "Hermeneutics" present us with a large number of hermeneutical positions which scholars use today such as, structuralism, deconstruction, contextualism, rhetorical criticism, sociological criticism and phenomenological criticism. These forms of hermeneutic are, in some way or another, valid ways of interpreting scripture.⁵⁴¹

Feminist reunification theology, today, focuses on a woman's perspective, but this perspective is only one among many. Nonetheless, today the view of women has become an important issue in Christian theology. In the following pages, I will use feminist hermeneutics as expressed by Anne E. Carr, Elizabeth Fiorenza, Dorah Setel, Rosemary Ruether, Hyun-Ju Bae and Carolyn Osiek.

My material could be enlarged by liberation theologians such as Clodovis Boff and Jon Sobrino.⁵⁴² The volumes by John P. Meier should also be considered.⁵⁴³ Although these authors provide a solid hermeneutic for their interpretation, they do not raise

⁵⁴¹ Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy ed., *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 1158-1160.

⁵⁴² Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations* (New York: Orbis Books, 1987).

⁵⁴³ Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator* (Maryknoll, New York; Orbis, 1993). John Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, (New York; Doubleday, v.1, 1991, v.2, 1994, v.3, 2001, and v.4, 2009).

question regarding the role of women in society in any prolonged way. Therefore, in the following pages, I will use the feminist authors mentioned above, since my focus in this dissertation is on the role of women in the Korean reunification process.

Where did the definition begin that women's primary responsibility was as wife and mother and assistant to males? The major problem of the Christian culture was due to the wrong interpretation of the Bible. For many centuries, the Christian Churches did not overcome patriarchalism, androcentrism and sexism and did not provide human liberation to societies.

Feminist theologians understand the Bible as the Gospel for liberation and salvation for women but at the same time, they realize that it has been used as a tool to oppress women.⁵⁴⁴ Anne E. Carr claims that the Bible made women's lives impossible in their self-realization because the Bible asserts an unequal relationship between women and men in public and social lives. This includes such issues as a negative description of a woman's biological body; the sin of a woman as we read in Genesis caused the fall from grace for all human beings; women are to be subordinate in their relationship to husbands because of their inferior status; and there is an interpretation of biblical passages which reject a woman's full actualization and participation in churches including ordination.⁵⁴⁵ Elizabeth Fiorenza indicates that not only are the interpretations of the Bible problematic, but also the Bible itself is male-centered. Nevertheless, the reason Christians cannot give up the Bible is that the Bible is the source of revelation to

⁵⁴⁴ Elizabethe Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 36.

⁵⁴⁵ Anne E. Carr, *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 95.

both men and women. For Fiorenza, the Bible is the foundation of religious power but at the same time, it is the foundation for religious oppression to women. Arthur Waskow confesses that we cannot simply accept or reject the biblical tradition. More than that, we need to fight with the tradition but at the same time we need to struggle with it in love. Furthermore, we need to allow our lives to embrace the tradition.⁵⁴⁶

How do feminist reunification theologians read and interpret the Bible? Fiorenza claims that we need to see the Bible as a mythic archetype moving to a historical prototype. The mythic archetype understands the Bible as “the Bible as archaic myth therefore constitutes the enduring order and perspective of biblical religion, reflecting unchangeable ontological patterns and perennial models for human behavior and communal life.”⁵⁴⁷ Thus, even though the Bible has historically limited experiences and texts, the Bible is authoritative and normative for all times and cultures because it is God’s word which is immutable truth.⁵⁴⁸ In contrast, the historical prototype, “a formative root-model of biblical faith and life,”⁵⁴⁹ includes a critical evaluation of the Bible. Therefore, the historical prototype proclaims that the sexist texts in the Bible are not God’s words but these were reflected by patriarchal and male dominated thinking and culture. Thus, the equality of life which is found in Jesus and in the early church community is a model for our faith today. Fiorenza raises a question: how can the collection of documents which are past history and which reflect the faith of an earlier

⁵⁴⁶ Drorah Setel, “Feminist Insights and the Question of Method,” ed., Adela Yarbro Collins, *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 42.

⁵⁴⁷ Elizabethe Schussler Fiorenza, *Bread not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist biblical Interpretation*, (Boston, Peacon Press, 1984), 10.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid, 8-12.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 14.

community – a faith which has historical, cultural and political situations of a different age -- can set the standards and norms for today's faithful life.⁵⁵⁰

Rosemary Ruether uses the Bible as a resource for feminism, but she defines patriarchy as the social context not a faith context. Therefore, feminist reading of the Bible needs to be critical and reject patriarchal ideology and needs to rediscover the prophetic context. Thus, it goes beyond the letter of the prophetic message and stresses the prophetic *liberating principle* as it applies to women. She makes a further claim: "The prophetic-liberating tradition of Biblical faith is a norm"⁵⁵¹ and therefore the normative tradition of Bible has to criticize and renew itself. The prophetic principle criticizes sexism for it includes social sin. This procedure has its religious justification and it also expands the vision of messianic expectation.⁵⁵²

In Ruether's opinion, the prophetic messiah tradition shows God as a liberator and biblical texts support the liberation of women. Fiorenza criticizes her perspective since it is not an analytical and wise way of interpretation, because she relies on the Bible's authority as God's Holy Word in looking for supportive texts for women's liberation. Furthermore, she criticizes sexist texts of the Bible which depend on the Bible's authority.

Fiorenza suggests a way of interpreting the Bible which discloses the Bible's sexist characters and rejects its authority in four ways; a hermeneutics of suspicion, a hermeneutics of proclamation, a hermeneutics of remembrance and historical reconstruction, and a hermeneutics of reutilization and celebration/creative actualization.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid, 8-12, 127.

⁵⁵¹ Rosemary Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 23-24.

⁵⁵² Ibid, 22-24.

First, a hermeneutics of suspicion is a starting point and defines that androcentric languages used in all of the biblical texts together with a patriarchal social structure. The Bible was written by male authors and the biblical interpreters were also male. Thus, the Bible cannot avoid the andocentric and patriarchal perspective. Fiorenza asserts that we have to find the lost tradition and vision for liberation.⁵⁵³

Second, a hermeneutics of proclamation insists that the androcentric and patriarchal interpreted bible does not proclaim Christian worship or catechesis. Also, a feminist critical translation has to be applied in evaluating those biblical texts.⁵⁵⁴

Third, a hermeneutic of remembrance recovers/reclaims all biblical tradition in which women were in the center of the Christian community. It reveals the early Christian movement in which women were equal disciples and women's leadership and devotion worked. Thus, the memories of women in which their struggles, participations and leaderships were acted through the power of Holy Spirit, have to be reconstructed in the history and theology.⁵⁵⁵

Fourth, a hermeneutics of creative actualization proclaims the "historical reconstructions of women's biblical history" through women's active participation for the future. It asks for a reform of patriarchal prayers, and calls for a formulation of feminist rituals and renaming the God. Thus, it seeks a transformation from the patriarchal religion and evidences the true biblical story which is a resource to give vision for all and liberate all from oppression.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵³ Fiorenza, *Bread not Stone*, 15-17.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 19-20.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 21-22.

Thus, Fiorenza stresses reconstruction of one's memory and solidarity of the past, present and future women's struggle for liberation. She writes:

We participate in the same struggle as our biblical fore-sisters against the oppression of patriarchy and for survival and freedom from it. We share the same liberating visions and commitments as our biblical foremothers. We are not called to "empathize" or "identify" with their struggles and hopes but to continue our struggle in solidarity with them. Their memory and remembrance-rediscovered and kept alive in historical reconstruction and actualized in ritual on celebration-encourage us in historical solidarity with them to commit ourselves to continue our struggle in solidarity with them. Their memory and remembrance-rediscovered and kept alive in historical reconstruction and actualized in ritual celebration-encourage us in historical solidarity with them to commit ourselves to the continuing struggle against patriarchy in society and church⁵⁵⁷

The weak point in the interpretation of Fiorenza, according to Carolyn Osiek, is the limited and narrow understanding about revelation. While she considers the texts which are suitable for the emancipation of women as "scripture in scriptures," they lack consideration about the other texts. Furthermore, Western feminists, including Fiorenza, could have risks trapped in white and middle class women's limited experiences. It could limit the Bible's broad revelatory dimensions which are sources of overcoming the third world poor women. The third world's poor women's problems are not only the problem of gender discrimination but also class discrimination, racism, and imperialism. Therefore, even though Fiorenza's interpretation criticizes churches and society's sexism and paternalism and provides visions for transformation of the world in the perspective of women, it needs to include the third world women and black women's sufferings and

⁵⁵⁷Ibid., 115.

doubly oppressed situations.⁵⁵⁸

Kwok, Pui-lan also raises the question whether Fiorenza's interpretative model is enough to integrate Asian women's struggling for liberation under multiple oppressions such as neo-colonialism, imperialism, racism and militarism.⁵⁵⁹ Furthermore, she asserts that one needs to consider Asian women's heritage as following: "However, it has also oppressive connotations insofar it has been used to encourage Christians in Asia to leave behind their cultural heritage to join the Christian community whose style of worship and church structure follow exactly the pattern of the "mother" church in the west."⁵⁶⁰

Bae Hyun-Ju introduces a transformationist interpretation of the Bible according to Carolyn Osiek and Sandra Hack Polaski's theory.⁵⁶¹ It considers the Bible's authority and creative responsibility for the future as important things. But also, even though they accept the authority of the Bible, they reject the literal and authoritarian interpretation about the Bible's authority. They understand that the Bible is the living tradition which is made by the relationship between God and God's people and they understand themselves as members of the living tradition community. The living tradition means that it is not an invariant but it creates and forms continuously a dialogue with the tradition as beings that are responsible and subjective. Therefore, rather than transformationist readings which are limited to the Bible authors' intent and their cultural and historical limitation, the

⁵⁵⁸ Hyun-Ju Bae, "What is women's theological Bible interpretation?" *Theophilus*, Vol. 15, (Busan : Presbyterian University, 2008): 64-65.

⁵⁵⁹ Pui-lan Kwok, "The Feminist hermeneutics of Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza: an Asian feminist response," *East Asia Journal of theology*, Vol. 3, Issue 2 (1985): 151.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁵⁶¹ Carolyn Osiek, "The Feminist and the Bible: Hemenuetical Alternatives," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985). And Sandara hack Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul* (St. Louis Missouri: Chalice Press, 2005).

three theologians respect the contents of faith and the vision of theology which they tried to testify at a particular time. Thus, they try to accomplish the vision of today with a critical and responsible attitude.⁵⁶²

The transformationist interpretation of the Bible gives us an example of how feminist reunification theology uses the Bible. A feminist reunification theology considers the Bible as the foundation of revelation in a way similar to Fiorenza's approach, but it rejects the literal and authoritarian interpretation. Feminist reunification theology is looking for what God's will is today with the Bible, and is looking for our responsibility in the current divided and unequal society of women and men. With this responsibility, we pray to do God's will with the power of the Holy Spirit who makes and renews the world. When a feminist reunification theologian reads the Bible in this way, it gives the power to change the corrupted society and it gives the churches the power to build a new community. In many ways, this interpretation aligns us with the Lord's Prayer: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10)

3. A Feminist Reunification Theology is looking to build up a Community

There are and will be tremendous needs to build up a community for an egalitarian society in a reunited Korea. For this, the first thing that has to be considered is attention to alienated persons. Who are alienated and who are oppressed is the first step. Fiorenza reminds us of the work of Jesus who called "marginal people"⁵⁶³ to be his followers and to create a community. The community creates liberation and healing for

⁵⁶² Ibid., 66.

⁵⁶³ Rita Nakashima Brock, *Journeys by heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*, (New York: The Crossroad, 1998), 67.

the broken hearted. The community has the ideal sociopolitical goal one finds in Galatians 3:28⁵⁶⁴ which proclaim the equality of all people no matter what their religion, status and gender. This is the basic principle in building a new society for a reunited Korea.

Therefore, the feminist reunification theology searches for an effective social change in church and society. The model of community by Fiorenza, Diaz, Rita and Min show the way of searching to effect social change. Their model of community will give the principles for making an egalitarian community for Korean society.

1) Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's the Basileia of God

Fiorenza introduces a new understanding of the community of God, the basileia of God. The community focuses on inclusiveness and wholeness. Thus, the community has a deep interest in alienated people, in its solidarity in struggling for them and in its reconstructing the Basileia of God.

She does not use the word kingdom for the New Testament discussion; instead she keeps the Greek word basileia.⁵⁶⁵ She reserved the word "kingdom" for the Old Testament ideas because the word, "kingdom," has the image of a triumphant king and territory; she uses an alternative image word, Basileia. The Greek word is more inclusive and the word "Basileia" has a better image as the reign of the Messiah which implies

⁵⁶⁴ "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28 (NIV)

⁵⁶⁵ Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 118.

the 'nearness of the liberator.' When she uses the word, she brings a feeling of the notion of a discipleship of equals.⁵⁶⁶

Thus, she points out that Jesus' vision of Basileia is inclusive wholeness.

According to Fiorenza, when Jesus says "thy kingdom come" in the Lord's Prayer, it does not focus on territory or reign in the time of non-Israel rule. Rather, it focuses on the wholeness of the people, a new consciousness concerning inclusive wholeness.⁵⁶⁷ Thus, to Jesus, according to Fiorenza, the proclaiming and restoring the vision of Basileia goes beyond the Temple and Torah horizon.⁵⁶⁸ To Jesus, moral pickiness and ritual purity were not his concern, even though it was typical with the Pharisees and Sadducees of Greco-Roman Palestine. Jesus' vision of Basileia is shown in his ministry, his preaching and his parables. The Basileia includes all persons not only men but also women, healthy persons, good persons, and rich persons. Jesus' vision of Basileia includes all people who are blind, sick, dead, prostitute, tax collector, and poor. (Luke 7:22) Jesus' healing the blind, the deaf and the sick, his cleansing of the lepers and his preaching of good news are experiences of wholeness. Fiorenza indicates that the awaited future is made present in and through these experiences or as Jesus says "the Basileia of God is in the midst of you." (Luke 17:21)⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 103.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., 113.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., 119.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

Therefore, according to Fiorenza, Jesus did not use the image of feasting with the cultic Temple and Torah horizon. The central symbolic actualization of the Basileia vision of Jesus was the festive table of a royal banquet or wedding feast instead the cultic meal.⁵⁷⁰ This vision of Jesus was probably a major conflictual point between the Jesus movement and the Pharisaic movement. Jesus did not stress the importance of God's power and presence in the cultic Temple and Torah.⁵⁷¹ Jesus' new image of the Basileia of God is a festive table in which all people are included. His festive table represents an inclusive symbol. No one is excluded from the festive table.⁵⁷²

For whom is the Basileia proclaimed? Fiorenza names three distinct groups of people who were in need of new hope in the time of Jesus. These were the sick and crippled the tax collectors, and the prostitutes.⁵⁷³ The first group is the poor. Fiorenza understands the poverty as a result of social injustice. She defines the poor and alienated persons in this way: "The power of God's Basileia is realized in Jesus' table community with the poor, the sinners, the tax collectors and prostitutes – all those who 'do not belong' to the 'holy people,' who are somehow deficient in the eyes of the righteous."⁵⁷⁴ Even though they do not belong to the holy people, they are called the righteous and they are the subject of the Basileia of God.

⁵⁷⁰ Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 119.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 121.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

The second group of people includes those who needed healing. Fiorenza understands dehumanizing power and oppressive power as “Satan,” “Beelzebub,” and demons because the dehumanized powers they cause disconnect social relations in people lives. Jesus’ exorcisms can be acknowledged as healing the dehumanizing power and making wholeness. For example, there was the woman with seven demons and the woman with the flow of blood for twelve years. They were separated from their family, society and religious rituals. They had to recover from the alienation and make new relations for recovering their whole life. Thus, feminist reunification theology proclaims the liberation from all dehumanizing power in the sociopolitical structure and it denies all demonic power. She points out that healing and eating is basic to human life. It means that illness and lack of food is a major point of dehumanizing people. Therefore, the vision of Basileia is restoration by healing and eating at this festive table. Fiorenza writes: “Everydayness can become revelatory, and the presence and power of God’s sacred wholeness can be experienced in every human being.”⁵⁷⁵

The third group of people s those who are usually condemned on moral grounds. They were the tax collectors, sinners, and prostitutes. Fiorenza says that they were not liberated from a holiness perspective and they were in a predicament socially.⁵⁷⁶ There were categorized by the society’s moral standard and ideology and prohibited from joining in their community. However, Jesus called these sinners and invited them to his table community and declared that “the tax collectors and harlots go into the Basileia before you.”(Matthew21:31) Parents should accept their children no matter what their

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 120.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 126.

status, morality, health condition or gender. Jesus called them children of God. Therefore, the vision of Basileia to Jesus means wholeness which puts a relationship into “emancipator praxis” for equality of rights and struggling toward a disciple of equals.⁵⁷⁷

Therefore, the feminist reunification theology includes the meaning of Basileia of God and is looking for inclusiveness and wholeness in the society. The Basileia of God does not discriminate people by their religion, status, morality, health condition or gender. The feminist reunification seeks the community including all people. It leads to participation in the struggle for freedom against patriarchal religions and social systems.

2) Isasi-Diaz’ the kin-dom of God’s community

Isasi - Diaz asserts that a community is based on solidarity and mutuality and looks for justice. Marginalized persons are in the kin-dom of God. This is the major theme of her book, *Mujerista Theology*. Isasi-Diaz uses kin-dom where many English writers prefer the words reign of God. To her, the words reign of God have the feeling of hierarchy and aristocracy and of elite who control. Therefore, she brings the word kin-dom which she heard from a Franciscan nun, Sister Georgine Wilson. The use of the word kin-dom emphasizes the importance of family and extended family. She experienced an insight while reading Matthew 25. The image of kin-dom of God describes being hungry, in prison, and naked. The Bible says, “Whatever you do to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you have done to me.” This reminded her of the family of God depicted in Matthew 25 -- and kinship seemed to her to be a better expression than the Kingdom of God.⁵⁷⁸ Thus, she says that “the concept of kingdom in

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 103.

⁵⁷⁸ Verna Elias, *Kin From Kingdom to Kin-Dom: three Feminist Interpretation of the Kingdom of God*,

our world today is both hierarchical and elitist which is why I do not use the world reign. The word kin-dom makes it clear that when the fullness of God becomes a day to day reality in the world at large, we will be sisters and brothers – kin to each other.”⁵⁷⁹ Thus, the kin-dom brings the whole notion of family dynamics which is more immediate and personal than the kingdom.

“Friendship” is an important word in the meaning of kin-dom. Isasi-Diaz says that friendship is the path to personhood and the path to the kin-dom of God. Friendship does not consider women as commodities and each individual’s worth is confirmed by deep friendship. Thus, one’s experiences, visions and hopes are considered as an important concept in one’s personhood. Isasi-Diaz says that Hispanic women can participate in the kin-dom of God through friendship as the family of God. This can be a positive force which will change their world. Therefore, the value of personhood is experienced, liberated and saved through friendship.⁵⁸⁰ Diaz defines friendship as “we are guided and motivated in and through your hope for a future in which we can live fully.”⁵⁸¹

Her vision of kin-dom of God gives an important meaning to the construction of a new Korean community. As she mentioned, when people consider each other family and friend and kin to each other, the societies’ problems which produce hierarchy, class, discrimination and violence would be erased. The community does not define who is subject and who is object and does not force them into special jobs because of their

(University of Manitobai, 2001), 83.

⁵⁷⁹ Anselm Kyongsuk Min, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World: A Post Modern Theology after Postmodernism* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 103.

⁵⁸⁰ Verna Elias, 101.

⁵⁸¹ IsasiAda Maria Isasi-Dias, “Defining Our Proyecto,” *Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol.9, No. 1 (1993), 17.

gender or status. Friends do not force their opinion on other friends and they dialogue and share their thoughts. For example, women are not considered secondary persons who only stay and care for their house. All people are friends in the kin-dom of God so, everybody is considered an important being and they could express and develop their interests and talents. Also, the hungry were fed, the thirsty were given something to drink and the strangers were received in their homes -- in the kin-dom of God. The community fulfilled their sister's and brother's needs. Therefore, there are no super rich and absolute poor and all people can experience fullness in their lives. Friendship and being a family are important factors in the new Korean community.

3) Rita Brock's Christa / Community

Brock sees Christology in the perspective of relationship and community because Christianity is not Jesus centered but centered in relationships and community as a whole. Thus Christianity makes a healing center which is called Christa/Community.⁵⁸²

She describes Christa/Community in relational images in which erotic power is evident. She emphasizes that the true Christological revelation of divine power and salvific power must live in connectedness. It cannot be revealed in a single individual. Therefore, the Christa/Community cannot be described as a patriarchal family structure in which broken hearts, crushed selves and "one heroic historical person" is identified as Christ. The Christa/Community understands Jesus as "the members of his whole community who generate erotic power"⁵⁸³ and he is "the revelatory and redemptive

⁵⁸² Rita Nakashima Brock, 52.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 67-68.

witness of God/dess's work in history."⁵⁸⁴ Jesus is a moderator between God and people as well as people and people and people and nature. Therefore, the Christa/Community announces the defeat of oppressive powers and reveals the healing power of the human heart.⁵⁸⁵ The community rejects all forms of oppression and ruling over by one special group or status or gender. Instead of that, the community focuses on Jesus' work in redeeming and healing broken relationships.

Erotic power is the basic power of the Christ/Community. It heals suffering and broken hearts and gives courage to the discouraged person. Thus, it is grounded in relational lives and binds broken relationships. Also, it enhances erotic power through their connectedness to others.⁵⁸⁶ Furthermore, the erotic power integrates all aspects of the self and makes us whole.⁵⁸⁷

Brock points out that the feminist power is not a ruling power. Instead, it is the power of serving others such as Jesus did in his ministry. In serving others, it cannot work to fulfill one's own desire and greed but with self-denial and suppressing the self-desire. Thus, Brock says that it is the way of extensions of self.⁵⁸⁸ By losing his life, Jesus gave life to all people who were suffering and tortured by broken relationships. Serving others and denying selfishness is the first step to create community. Thus, as Bernard Loomer says, power is extended when we are open and are committed to relationships. In

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., 69.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., 26-27, 88, 45.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. 39

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., 30.

contrast, excluding others from our world is an act to reduce our power and it brings fear into our lives. Hierarchical relationships are an example of limiting our relational powers. Brock says that “the final source of any power is through mutually internal relationships.”⁵⁸⁹

Her Christa/Community shows a possible way of the new Korean community. The community should defeat the ruling power which creates benefits for certain groups; the rich have more benefits, the higher class enjoys their freedom by oppressing the lower class, and males go back to depressing women. Thus, the community tries to heal the broken relationships and lives by erotic power. The power comes from serving others. Rich persons, governors, male, healthy persons have to serve others in economic, political and practical ways. Serving other persons is a means to make others successful. Jesus did by his dying, through which everyone has life. Serving other persons is not a way to gain privileges. Instead, those who serve other persons use their properties, talents, and health for others. Thus, they experience a giving up what they have and they share, so that many other people enjoy their lives together.

4) Anselm Min’s Solidarity of Others

Min explains the triune of God which makes a community. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit make community and share the totality of their own being. Thus, the triune of God is “the ultimate theological source of all solidarity.”⁵⁹⁰ The community is recovering the true meaning of the triune of God. He defines it as “the triune God is a

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁹⁰ Anselm Min, *The Solidarity of Others in A Divided World* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 65.

community of three persons each of whom shares the totality of his own being with the others while remaining different from them, a primordial solidarity of Others.”⁵⁹¹

Thus, a triune God is a relational existence and each shares the totality of his own being with others. However, each remains different from others. Min defines it as “a primordial solidarity of others.” In the triune of God, the Son is the exemplary source of all creation, redemption, recreation and the mutual love of the Father and Son. Also, the Son constitutes a theological source such as making possible incarnation, Jesus’ life, ministry, his death, and resurrection. By his sacrifice, he liberates all creation from selfishness and reconciles creation with God and with others in the Son. It leads us to “the ultimate divine purpose of creation.”⁵⁹²

In the Hebrew Bible, the Holy Spirit functions as the divine power that creates and renews all creation and changes personal and national life into a new people.⁵⁹³ Thus, the Spirit leads us to make a community in which justice and peace reign and lead to the liberated life. Also, in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of God” can be understood in a Trinitarian relation with the name, “the Spirit of the Jesus” (Acts 16:7), “the Spirit of Christ” (Rome 8:9; 1Pet 1:11), “the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:17; Acts 5:9), “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:19), and “the Spirit of his Son” (Gal

⁵⁹¹ Anselm Min, “The Division and Reunification of a Nation: Theological Reflection on the Destiny of the Korean people,” *Christianity in Korea*, ed., Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Timothy S. Lee, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 259.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, 260.

⁵⁹³ Gen1:2, Ps33:6, 104:29-30, Job 33:4, 34:14-15. In Min’s book, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World*, 95.

4:6).”⁵⁹⁴ These show that the works of the Holy Spirit are in relation with Jesus Christ and also the function of Jesus Christ in the relation with God, the Father.⁵⁹⁵ Therefore, the Son as “first –born of all creation” (Col1:15) and “the first-born among many brethren” (Rome8:29)⁵⁹⁶ has a mission to overcome division and hostility and to reconcile all creation as children of God.⁵⁹⁷ Leonardo Boff describes it “The mission of the Spirit consists in permanently actualizing the significance of the incarnation as a process through which God the Son takes on history with all its changes and makes it holy history, the history of the blessed Trinity.”⁵⁹⁸

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of relations and solidarity, and thus the Spirit reunites all alienated and separated beings. Whenever the Holy Spirit works, there happens reconciliation and reunion between woman and man, nation and nation. As the fruit of the Spirit is peace and love, it forms all in one in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Spirit is the Spirit of relation and solidarity through which the alienated and separated persons are reconnected.⁵⁹⁹

Therefore, we have to be a witness to the solidarity of others in the triune of God.⁶⁰⁰ Min explains that human identity is not from an individual or particular group; “the deepest human identity and destiny are not those that derive from the achievements

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 96.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid, p.96-97.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid, 97.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Min, “The Division and Reunification of a Nation: Theological Reflection on the Destiny of the Korean people,” 272.

of an isolated individual or from membership in a particular clan, region, gender, class, nation, or even religion, but those derived from being the children of the same Father and brothers and sisters in the Son brought together in a solidarity of others by the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁰¹ His emphasis on the community is very important because the community is not for some specific group and not made by an individual. Therefore, the making of a community starts by avoiding the interests or benefits of a special group. It means that when someone or some group have certain benefits, other persons or groups have losses. Feminist theologians do not ask for women’s benefits. Instead, they try to find the lost parts in their history and their lives. Thus, if we ask for God’s help so as to give us a loving mind and make harmony, the community is possible.

Humans have the ability to make harmony with those who are similar and understand them. However, Min points out that real solidarity is making community with different people, strangers and others who are not familiar and furthermore, you might dislike. Therefore, we need to extend the solidarity level more universally, profoundly and overcome our temporary interests.⁶⁰² Then, how can different people live together? Min claims that public means can help the way of living together, by instituting policies and laws which increase tolerance and exact a penalty for crimes of hate.⁶⁰³ Differences must be overcome for the common good which has to impact not on a particular group but on all groups.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 271.

⁶⁰² Ibid,

⁶⁰³ Min, *Solidarity of Other in a Divided World*, 70

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

The solidarity *of* others has a different meaning than solidarity *with* others. Solidarity with others considers others as others and sees them as victims who need my help. It is not a horizontal relationship but a hierarchical relationship. Solidarity with others considers others as those without privileged perspectives and they are equally responsible and all are subjects.⁶⁰⁵ It denies who is giver and who is taker. Min's definition of the solidarity *of* others provides an important meaning in social action and political practice because supporting and helping others who were suppressed and alienated is not simply helping them but it is recovering their rights as God's images. Therefore, in making solidarity of others, we need to be careful that it is not helping but recovering, giving back what they ought to have. Making community between females and males and also between North Koreans and South Koreans implies the principle of solidarity *of* others and with others. Therefore, Min claims that the solidarity of others is possible through the recognition that we are all children of God and we are brothers and sisters in the Son who brought solidarity to us by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁰⁶

4. The Community of Restoration, Love and Forgiveness through the Power of Cross

How can we form a vibrant Christian community? I will try to explain what kind of attitudes and characteristics are needed for the development of a Christian community,

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid, 82.

⁶⁰⁶ Min, "The Division and Reunification of a Nation: Theological Reflection on the Destiny of the Korean people," 271.

using the insights of the many scholars we have just considered. It is also for what the Christian Community can do to help bring about reunification.

1) Broken Hearts have to be Healed

The division of Korea has made deep wounds in the hearts of men and women of both sides of the divide. Many Koreans lost their parents, brothers, sisters and children by this separation. Many Koreans also lost their hometowns, their property and their livelihood. Many were confronted by new ideologies. Many considered each other enemies and some Koreans on both sides had looked for the day when the two sides would be unified. South Korea at times has wanted to attack North Korea and North Korea wanted to attack South Korea. Too often there seemed to be no room for accepting and understanding each other. In the South Korean society, whenever they experienced conflict with a northern group, the Northerners were called communists which applied to all areas in North Korea, such as politics, education, churches and social movements. North Koreans, for their part, tend to call the South Koreans “puppets of the USA.”

To make a community, broken hearts have to be healed. For this, the Korean churches have to study their broken hearts and see what happened. Only then will they be able to accept the heartburns of history. The Korean churches have to understand Korean history; why they were divided; what serious consequences have happened because of the division; and how the division produced a dictatorship government in South Korea and the all-powerful role of the Kim Il- Sung government in North Korea. Korean churches need to answer the questions; why did the Korean War happen and why has it caused painful experiences on both sides? The Korean churches need to see exactly what happened in Korean history and see each other not as enemies but as sisters and brothers

who were victims of the Cold War conflict and Capitalism. The Korean churches need to realize the pains were not caused by individual sins but by structural sins. Also, in the broken relationship between females and males, both have to see what happened to women's lives and how women's rights have been ignored. The Korean churches also need to consider the reason that churches and society allowed and justified the oppression of women. What were the fundamental reasons to make the churches and social system, the laws and customs in the society?

2) The Expression of Forgiveness

When we have truly studied the reality of the Korean problems, the most important next step for the healing of broken hearts is express forgiveness. Learning how to forgive is only possible if there is a deep feeling of compassion.⁶⁰⁷ Even though our hatred for each other was deep and the wall between us was high, it can be opened for a peaceful reunification if there is a willingness to forgive. Only when we decide to forgive each other, can we begin to understand the other's difficulties. Forgiveness opens the way of understanding. Some might want to continue to argue over the cause of the separation, but the past cannot be changed. The major question is: what is the goal of a future reunited society?⁶⁰⁸

Forgiveness has to happen not only at the individual level but also at the community level, if we wish to support the process of healing.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁷ Carter Heyward, *Saving Jesus from Those Who are Right*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 160.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

Aware that forgiveness often is misused and trivialized among Christians as a way of baiting victims to “forgive” those who have wounded them, I suggest that we cannot comprehend the Sacred Power of forgiveness unless we realize that it is, above all, a moral foundation of our life together in a community, Forgiveness, to be granted and received in a sustainable way, requires not only that individuals repent and make amends, but moreover that our communities support the process of healing and reconciliation and that all of us seek to build new ways of living together.⁶¹⁰

The broken heart caused by the nation’s division and gender discrimination has to be dealt with at the community level and at the national level for forgiveness. In order to give and receive forgiveness, there are five issues that we have to consider⁶¹¹ ; the first one is solidarity. As mentioned, it is the necessary for an individual and community level of forgiveness, for the forgiveness, solidarity through community and friendship is needed. Separated situations cannot lead to restoration. When communities join in the work of forgiveness, it gives power to the struggle for justice and love. The second is compassion. Heyward says that when we join solidarity with forgiveness, we can learn compassion; with the understanding of what happened and what were the fundamental reasons behind the problem. It makes a way to understand the opponents and leads to decisions not to harm one another because they know how the broken relationships were painful. Therefore, it leads us to a commitment to heal the pain by forgiveness. The third issue is humility; we need to be humble. All people are living on common ground and have the same rights. All people are made in the image of God, no matter what their color, gender, ethnicity, class, and government might be. The fourth issue is honesty. It is the starting point at which we repent of what we have done and also of what others have

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 161.

done to us. Thus, we need to be honest in facing what has happened in the past. The last issue is this: we need to imagine our changed situation in which we have been liberated and heralded and transformed. This is what now empowers our actions and decisions. Furthermore, Heyward asks that we pray harder and meditate well with these five characteristics because the prayer and meditation will guide the direction that we have to take and give us power to do the right things.

Furthermore, learning forgiveness teaches us to learn nonviolence.⁶¹² Forgiveness gives up the desire for revenge. It accepts it as it is and decides not to use violence. Nonviolence has to be an important part of reunification in Korea. Because the ultimate goal of reunification is to make peace between Korean men and women, it has to be done in a nonviolent way.

3) Restoration is a Reunification not simply of Individuals but also of two Major Communities

Restoration of relationships is also a beginning to heal broken heartedness for the community. For this, we need to define the meaning of others in a correct way. In capitalistic society, the others are competitors and in patriarchal society, the others are those in the measure of who is in under me or above me.

However, if we define others as sister, brother and friend, then becoming brothers and sisters means that when my sisters and brothers are in need I will fulfill their need willingly; when they are in trouble, I will try to solve the problems with all my ability. Thus, there is the love that Jesus gave us until he died. However, one-sided charity may

⁶¹² Carter Heyward, 160.

be adequate in fulfilling other's need, but we still have to be careful to practice love.

When we live in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed, we have to figure out the difference between charity and solidarity. Helping is not for the giver's satisfaction and pleasure, and also helping is not only what I will give to others. Instead of that, the giver has to think what the others need. When they consider others as neighbors (Matthew 25) who are sisters and brothers, they can make solidarity.⁶¹³ Furthermore, solidarity can be understood in the interconnection between oppressed and privileged, rich and poor and the oppressed and the oppressors. Thus, "Solidarity moves away from the false notion of disinterest, of doing for others in an altruistic fashion. Instead it is grounded in "common responsibilities and interests," which necessarily arouse shared feelings and lead to joint action."⁶¹⁴ Solidarity leads to love relationships in human lives.

Also, what we have to remember is that solidarity includes "preferential option" for the poor and oppressed. Because the oppressed are "pierced by suffering and attracted by hope, (we have to), allowed them, in their struggles, to conceive another reality. Because the poor suffer the weight of alienation, they can conceive a different project of hope and provide dynamism to a new way of organizing human life for all."⁶¹⁵ Also, the oppressed feel alienation which limits love and cannot exist in their lives.

Isasi-Diaz' idea is similar to Min's solidarity of others and "a preferential love" for the poor and oppressed people. Min also stresses the importance of the way of

⁶¹³ Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, *Mujerista Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 87-88.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 89.

⁶¹⁵ José Mígues Bonino, "Nuevas tendencias en teología," *Pasos* no.9 (1987): 22. Based on Isasi-Diaz, *Mujerista Theology*, 91.

solidarity; supporting and helping others who were suppressed and alienated is not only helping them but it is recovering their rights. Also, it has to be a horizontal relationship not a hierarchical relationship. As I mentioned above, Min says that the solidarity of others considers others as another without a privileged perspective, and they are equally responsible, and all are subject.⁶¹⁶ Solidarity is not interested in who is the giver and who is the taker. Both scholars point out that solidarity with the poor and oppressed people has to be done in an equal position as sisters and brothers. Also, Min stresses “a preferential love” which is God’s love for the poor and oppressed people who need more compassion and caring even though God’s love is universal and unrestricted to all, no matter what their gender, language, government, religion, culture and class.

4) “Love” is a Fundamental Element in Building a Community

Min explains “an excessive love,” “a practical love,” “a political love” and “a self-transcending love” for a community. “An excessive love” goes beyond an ordinary love in your neighborhood and it is a more extended love to reach even to one’s own enemies. The love is “a practical love” which cannot remain just in word but is expressed in deed in a concrete way. The love is “a political love” which does not remain in the doctrinal teaching but struggles for liberation and changes unjust structures.⁶¹⁷ The last is “a self-transcending love” which is the love of God through the Son. The Son did not remain in his own position as God’s son but he threw away his own privileges and became a human being. He loved his people until he died and fulfilled God’s love for all humanity by his

⁶¹⁶ Min, *Solidarity of Others in a Divided World*, 82.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

suffering and dying on the cross. However, his life did not remain in death and failure but he was raised by the Holy Spirit and the way of salvation was open for who suffer the burden of sin and mortality.⁶¹⁸ The love of the Son for the world teaches us that a more important fact for building community is serving others and also self-denial. The community is made possible by serving others and by self-denial in imitation of the Son. As Jesus proclaimed: he came here not to be served but to serve, and the community develops when each one serve the other. We should not to expect to be a ruler over someone because of gender, class, age and richness. We should rather ask how I can serve someone with my wealth, talents, and ability. Serving other is not fulfilling my desire and greed but it is fulfilling other's need and success. This becomes possible when I deny myself and when I love my neighbor as I love myself. However, the important thing is that in our service we do not serve only one side, such as the patriarchal order. Rather, it is serving each other in an equal way. Moreover, the healthier, the richer, and the more knowledgeable persons might be, there is a greater responsibility to serve. To having more means to share more.

5. Women becoming Co-Builders of the New Community

When Jesus started his work, the first work was calling his disciples. He did not do his mission alone but he collected the people who joined in God's work. Moreover, one of his first ministries was to call others to participate in creating the community of God.⁶¹⁹ Also, the members of the community were not limited to "the marginal" such as

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Brock, 66.

the dispossessed, women and non-Jews. There were women disciples who joined his work and were part of the first community. Even though they were not represented as part of the 12 disciples of Jesus, they were the basic founders, first witnesses of the resurrection and co-founders of the early church community. According to Fiorenza, Jewish women were involved in Jesus' vision and movement; the Jewish women fought for justice and created an egalitarian Christian community after Jesus' death.⁶²⁰ It shows that Jesus gathered a discipleship of equals.

Also, Rita Brock points out that Jesus did not work alone in making any miracles in Mark; "He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits (Matk6:5-7). A more interesting part is that the unexpected and new power which was not worked by Jesus alone but by the participation of others, such as the Syro-phoenician and hemorrhaging women. They, according to Brock, were not allowed in Jesus' unilateral power but they revealed a new power of Jesus by their joining in Jesus' sole possession of power. It reveals the divine way of power by the weak and a "new understanding of power that connects members of the community."⁶²¹ It shows us how Jesus created his community and how women and alienated people were co-builders of his community.

1) Women are co-leaders in churches

⁶²⁰ Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 99-104.

⁶²¹ Brock, 87.

In discussing women's leadership role in churches, we need to consider these questions; what was role of women in the early church? Was the leadership of women denied at that time? Churches have to restore the original form of church from the early church of Christianity. Before the church became highly institutionalized, women had different forms and functions. A most particular form would be women's leadership. For many years, the institutionalized churches did not accept women's leadership roles in the church and this was reinforced by many theologians who built up male centered theology and churches. When the women's ordination issue rose, the Vatican's 1976 *Declaration on the Question of Admitting Women to the Priesthood* justified the position that the Catholic Church cannot accept women's priesthood because the female body does not resemble the male body of Christ.⁶²²

Karen Jo Torjesen provides women's religious leadership in the Jewish and Christian community in her book, *When Women were Priests*. According to Bermadette Brooten and Ross Kraemer's investigation on funerary epitaphs and dedicatory inscriptions, women in Jewish communities had charge of religious offices positions such as rulers of the synagogues, elders and priests from the first century B.C.E. to the sixth century C.E.⁶²³ Also, women were deacons, priests, presbyters and even bishops in Christian churches from the first century to the thirteenth century. Moreover, women's priesthood was shown through papal letters and inscriptions in the first thousand histories of the Catholic Church, The early churches' women leadership is shown in many areas

⁶²² Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests* (New York: HarperSan Francisco, 1993), 3.

⁶²³ Ibid., 2.

such as prophets and teachers. Women's leadership especially was prominent when they gathered in homes during the first and second centuries.⁶²⁴ Also, many literary sources such as the writing of the New Testament, letters, sermons and the early church's theological treatises show women's leadership in the early churches. Among the Christian communities, the three cities of the ancient Mediterranean such as Philippi, Corinth, and Rome had strong women leadership.⁶²⁵

Also, Torjesen provides evidence of women's leadership as both bishops and priests. A Roman basilica was dedicated to two women saints, Prudentiana and Praxedis and also portrayed four female figures. Among the four, three female figures are recognizable but the fourth is not. According to lettered inscriptions in the basilica, the fourth female figure is named Theodora Episcopa. Her name is important because the name means Bishop Theodora; the Latin masculine form of bishop is *episcopus* and the feminine form is *episcopa*. It means that there were women Bishops. As evidence of a women priest, she provides (suggests) the archaeological findings of a burial site on the Greek island of *Thera*. There is a commemorative inscription on a tomb (epitaph) in which a woman is named as priest or presbyter (*presbyteris*). Her name is Epiktas. That is a women's name and she was a priest in the third or fourth century.

As another example of the early church's women leadership, Torjesen points out Lydia (Acts 16:11-15). Lydia was a householder and merchant with financial independence and a wide network. When she decided to convert to Christianity, her

⁶²⁴Torjesen, 2-5.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 13.

whole household which means not only her family but also domestic slaves were baptized together. Torjesen points out that it shows her authority in her house and her prosperity, such as providing space for Paul's teaching and lodging (Acts 16:40)⁶²⁶

Such women had important roles in Jesus' mission and women were important leaders in the early church with a variety of roles.⁶²⁷ However, by the time the churches became institutionalized in the third century, house churches with diverse leaders started to be transformed into the institutional churches ruled by monarchical bishops. The institutional church started to define church leadership as male. Also, another reason that women lost their leadership role and achievements in early Christianity can be found in the process of canonization. The process started in the middle of the second century and finished in the early fourth century in which women's leadership was controversial. Finally, it was concluded that they could not include those books which "celebrated women's apostolic activity (*Acts of Thecla*), containing women's words (collections of oracles of a women prophets), and transmitting women's teachings (*Gospel of Mary*)."⁶²⁸ Those books show women's leadership and contributions in the early Christian church and were used in training religious life for many churches.⁶²⁹

The Christian Church was a marginal sector in the first century to the imperial religion of the Roman Empire, Christianity which was reformed into the

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 15.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁶²⁸ Karen Jo Torjesen, "Reconstruction of Women's Early Christian History," in *Searching The Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction*, ed. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (New York Crossroad, 1993), 291.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

patriarchalization of the Church. Especially, according to Ruether, as patriarchal Christianity became the imperial religion, the Messiah symbol was integrated into kingship ideology for installing political power. The kingship ideology applied to the political and social hierarchy as a “sacred canopy.”⁶³⁰ Thus, it made the hierarchical order, namely, Christ as *Logos* of God governs the cosmos, the Christian church of the Roman emperor governs the political universe, the master governs slave, and men govern women. Therefore, women, slaves and barbarians were considered “mindless” ones.⁶³¹ Also, the Aristotelian biology in medieval scholasticism provided the anti-women ideology in Christology and it further developed into defining that only males are the generic sex of the human species, representing the fullness of human nature. In contrast, women are defective persons mentally, physically and morally.⁶³² Furthermore, in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas defined women as inferior by nature, with the result that women could not be capable leaders. The ideas of Aquinas were influenced by the Greek philosopher Aristotle.⁶³³

Torjesen raises other questions: “why are we so unaware of the prominence of women in the birth of Christianity? Why does this powerful misperception continue to marginalize women in even the more enlightened branches of contemporary Christianity?”⁶³⁴ Her questions have to be implied in the South Korean Churches and in

⁶³⁰ Ruether, 125.

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² Ibid, 125-126.

⁶³³ Torjesen, “Reconstruction of Women’s Early Christian History,” in *Searching The Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction*, 4.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., 12.

women's leadership. Therefore, feminist reunification theology asserts that women's leadership role has to be recovered as found in Jesus' own movement and in the ministries of the early church.

2) **Women are co-leaders in nations**

Park asserts that women have to have important roles in building a new community of nations. Thus, she calls women "A Mother of a Nation."⁶³⁵ She connects feminist movements, women's equal rights and the reunification movement, and considers all as the same system in Korea. According to Park, the male dominant system in Korea is connected to the Korean national historical, social problems; the problems of social inequality and division of the nation are mixed together as the same fundamental problem and are today the biggest problems in Korea. Therefore, Park asserts that disclosing of male dominance and male systems is the first step to bring about the new relationship for women and men and the new humanity of nations in the world. Also, the reason for women dealing with the nation's problems is that without women dealing with the nation's problems, the nation cannot be liberated from male dominated ideologies. Also, male domination can be applied to the issue of reunification; if the process of reunification is made by males, the new united Korea cannot avoid another male dominated country.⁶³⁶

⁶³⁵ Sun- Kung Park, *Tongil Sinhakui Mirae [The Future of Reunification Theology]*, (Seoul: Sagyejeol, 1997), 273.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 270-276.

Therefore, liberation of women cannot be separated from the nation's problems. They have to be developed together. Class hierarchy and women's equality have to be connected in a process of rebuilding a nation's community.

In the divided situation of the nation, Korea is threatened by inequality in relations with the USA and Japan. It is hard for Korea to be free from being subordinate to strong countries. Thus, even if the feminist movement focuses on the problem of male domination, Korea is in a subordinate situation to strong countries politically, militarily and economically. In such a situation, women's liberation could not be completed. Therefore, the women's equal rights movement and the Korean national division problems are in the same system and line.⁶³⁷ Thus, liberation of women cannot be separated from the nation's problems and has to be developed in the perspective of solving the problems of the nation. The feminist movement cannot be separated from the Korean nation's biggest problems, reunification. This is the reason why we have to discuss gender politics and theology as part of Korean reunification.

Also, Min defines the Korean national division as an ultimate theological destiny. Individuals cannot be separated from the Korean nation and he calls it "the national community" in which we are interdependent with each other. The nation is categorized by a unity of ethnic origin with its own cultural, political, and linguistic history and it is called a nation or community. As the destiny of an individual Israelite is thoroughly intertwined with the Israelite nation, the destiny of the Koreans is not separate from the

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 280.

destiny of the Korean nation.⁶³⁸ Therefore, he develops the meaning of ethnic national identity; the value of ethnic national identity has to be recognized as the universal human community in the Christian perspective.⁶³⁹ Thus, Christianity recognizes the nation as important in the history of salvation and shows “a preferential, political love for a particular nation suffering oppression by another.”⁶⁴⁰ Furthermore, Min warns and rejects “exclusivistic, imperialistic nationalism.”⁶⁴¹

Min’s “the national community” and Park’s “a mother of nation” give the reasons and challenges why women have to be co-leaders in nations. Also, Park’s assertion that the national identity as the universal human community, “a mother of nation” has universal, spiritual identity which presides over the limits of family members and has an identity that can lead the nation’s present and future life. Also, “a mother of nation” is a total symbol that presents the women who fight and labor in the field of history for a nation’s unity and to build the nation’s communities.⁶⁴²

Furthermore, The Korean churches have to learn lessons from the German reunification. The German reunification did not help the women issues in their reunification, basically because the men, including Church men, ran the show. The Christian Churches in Korea could pressure the governments to have women at every

⁶³⁸ Min, “The Division and Reunification of a Nation: Theological Reflection on the Destiny of the Korean people,” 262.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., 265.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 265.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Park, 275.

level of discussion for reunification. Also, this feminist reunification theology has implications not only for the North and South Korea reunification but also for the whole Christian community.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In my introduction, I stated that my thesis focused on the process for an eventual reunification of North and South Korea. In this process, the Korean leadership, both North and South, consider the political, economic, cultural and even religious issues which are part and parcel of reunification. My own central position focuses on the cultural and religious factors. In my thesis I claim that without involving both the perspectives and participation of women in rebuilding Korea, the eventual reunification process will be seriously inadequate. Thus, the cultural and religious factors must include an equal involvement of women and men.

My argument for this thesis was mentioned in chapter one. I gave the reasons why the feminist perspectives are needed in reunification discourse of both North and South Korea. We saw in the case of the German reunification, women in an overwhelming way experienced a loss of status and economic opportunity after the reunification. Their situation provides us with a feminist perspective in reunification discourse is needed. The reunification of Korea struggles to bring about peace, national autonomy and national prosperity. Korean churches, which are in ideological struggle between progressive and conservative in the matter of Korea reunification, are also challenged to be part of building a feminist reunification theology.

In chapter two, I examined three representative Protestant reunification theologians; Ham Sok-Hon, No Jong-Son and Kim Young-Bock. Their response to the situation of a divided Korea was theologically well done. They even defined the division

as sinful. They asserted anti-statism and they gave a special place for the *minjung* and their role in the reunification process. Even though the three theologians contributed much to the building of a peaceful reunification theology, they also can be called to task for some limitations and even omissions. In their reunification theology, there were no voices of women and they did not show any concern about women's issues. Moreover, they did not try to overcome a patriarchal ideology which is so prominent throughout Korea. Thus, women's pain and cry were not included and women were once again alienated from the construction of a reunification theology.

In chapter three, I investigated in great how the German reunification influenced women's lives. I proved that both East and West German women suffered because of their exclusion from the reunification process. They suffered politically, socially, economically and in a family way. Simply put, the situation of German reunification did not include the participation of women. Also, with the statistics which I mentioned, I raised a major question; what were the gender attitudes behind the eventual unemployment rate of women? Culture, politics and religion impacted the number of unemployed women after the German reunification. Thus, I claimed that culture and religion play a strong role in the politics in human life and therefore religion must be part of the reunification of political entities. The dichotomous category of gender considers women's primary responsibility to be motherhood. Also, the determining political culture and family policy institutions which establish women's positions and employment rates in the society is affected by religion which influences people's minds, beliefs, ways of life and social systems.

The German case study can and should be a warning for the Korean situation. The German situation indicates what should not happen to women's lives when the process reaches its practical situation. Korean women's current peace and reunification movements need to be re-investigated because of the information we have regarding German women after their reunification. The situation of the German women can assist the Korean women today, as they realign their peace and reunification movements.

Chapter four started with the statement that religion is a major factor in political cultures. Korean culture, both North and South, is strongly Confucian. In many ways, Confucianism is not a religion; on the other hand it has throughout Asia a religious quality. Confucianism maintain a dominantly male government and male family life, and these two issues affect the lives of Korean women in the education of women, in their married life, in their work force and in their position within the Korean political life. I searched how the Confucianism affected women's lives in both North Korea and South Korea. I made the observation that North Korea is still deeply influenced by Confucianism and this influence is felt strongly by North Korean women. We can find that the role and positions of North Korean women have not changed in actual life even though North Korea's new systems and laws have given major changes to women's positions and roles. The ideology of subjection of women to men is still evident, and a woman's role is still defined as mother and supporter for her husband. Thus, I called the North Korean socialism "Confucian socialism." The "Confucian socialism" is not just ideology and system but it is a form of practical religion in the North Korea society.

In the case of South Korea, even though the status and roles of South Korean women have been improved with South Korea's economic development, the influence of

Confucianism and conservative Christian ideology are still strongly influencing the lives of South Korean women. The South Korean government remains dominantly male and family life is also male dominated. As I mentioned, South Korea was the economic miracle of Asia and hosted the G20 meeting in 2010, but in 2009 women's rights had ranked 61st among 109 countries according to UNDP. Also, average annual wage of women in South Korea is about \$16,931 compared to the average wage of men which is about \$32,668. The average wage of a woman was just a little more than half the wage of a man in 2010. Also, the economic development did not bring about an improvement for the status of women. Rather, women in the work force gave women a double burden, namely as an employee and as a housewife. Without social support and lack of recognition by their family members, women are still struggling with their double burden.

In chapter five, I examined how Korean Christianity influenced Korean women. The patriarchal Christianity was mixed with Confucianism in South Korean churches. Korean Christianity has indeed contributed to the better awareness of women and their participation in society but at the same time, it has reinforced the view that women are in a second-rate position status and they have a passive image in church, family and society.

As we saw above, unequal situations and systems in German society were not only political but also, they had a strong religious base. German Christian religion gave no support for the establishment of an equalitarian community during and after the reunification. North and South Korea are in the initial stages of process for reunification. If the Korean reunification process does not include women's participation and if the religious community does not support women's equality, Korea will simply repeat the

failures of the German process of reunification, a process that did not improve the lives of German women.

Therefore, I maintain that there is a serious need to reaffirm and develop in an even stronger way a feminist reunification theology in order to build an egalitarian community. A feminist reunification theology needs to be based on the right interpretation of the Bible; otherwise it will not overcome patriarchalism, androcentrism and sexism. We need to reject the literal and authoritarian interpretation and search out the true meaning of God's will for us today. A feminist reunification theology is looking to build up a community. The community centers its attention on alienated and oppressed persons. As Fiorenza claims, a feminist reunification theology includes the meaning of the Basileia of God and is looking for inclusiveness and wholeness in the society. Also, it leads to participation in the struggle for freedom against patriarchal religions and social systems. In Isasi-Diaz's the kin-dom of God's community includes a deeply Christian friendship as an important issue. Friendship does not consider women as commodities and each individual's worth is confirmed in and through a deep friendship. Everybody is considered important and everyone needs to express and develop his or her interests and talents and thus fulfill their sister's and brother's needs. Rita Brock's erotic power is the basic power of the Christ/Community. It heals suffering and broken hearts and gives courage to the discouraged persons with its binding broken relationships. Jesus lost his life and but his losing gave life to all people who were suffering from broken relationships. Serving others and denying selfishness are the first steps to create community. Thus, as Min asserts, we need to make a community such as the triune of God makes a community. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of relations and solidarity, and

thus, the Spirit reunites all alienated and separated beings. Therefore, we have to be witness to the solidarity of others in the triune of God.

To accomplish this, broken hearts have to be healed and men and women need to learn how to express forgiveness of individuals and also at the community level.

However, the most important thing is love through the power of Cross. Thus, to build up an egalitarian community, women have to be a co-builder. Torjesen has provided us with the examples of many women in religious leadership as seen in the early church. This early church history gives witness to a variety of roles such as deacons, priests, presbyters and even bishops within Christian churches from the first century to the thirteenth century. Women's leadership especially was prominent when they gathered in homes during the first and second centuries. Therefore, feminist reunification theology asserts that women's leadership role has to be recovered and also, women have to be "a Mother of a Nation" for their nation's future. This is how I constructed my argument for my thesis.

Have I proved my thesis? I believe I have.

First of all, the three reunification theologians developed in a good way a reunification theology, but their theology would be enriched by an incorporation of women's issues and voices.

Secondly, by investigating the process of German reunification, I have proved that women had lost their status and economic opportunity in the German situation. Furthermore, I proved that the unequal situation and systems in society are not only political but also there are strong and basic reasons why religion which influence deeply

on people's mind. Therefore, I challenged the Korean efforts not to repeat the German experience. Women's participation and women's voices need to be major element in and through the development of a feminist reunification theology.

Thirdly, I proved that Confucianism has deeply influenced the lives of Korean women. Even though North Korea has guaranteed women's right in their constitutions, Confucian culture is still working negatively in their lives. North Korea socialism is "Confucian socialism." South Korea developed an economic miracle, but women's lives were and remain under a negative Confucian influence.

Fourthly, Korean theologians, two major reunifications and the mixture of Confucianism with Christianity have not brought about an equal role of women and men. With this background, I have showed in chapter five that there are three important ways to includes women's concern for true reunification. The first is the creation of an egalitarian community in work, family, and society. The second is the restoration of humanity by healing, love and forgiveness through the power of Cross. The third is the need for religion to be reformed in which a woman can be a co-leader in family, church and nation since the male and female the female belong to God in one and the same way.

Implications

My implications will follow the structure of my dissertation.

In chapter II, I examined three great Protestant reunification theologians. As I mentioned before, even though they contributed much to the building up of a peaceful

reunification theology, there is a lack of concern about women's issues in their writings. Therefore, an implication of my dissertation is the following: Korean reunification theology has to include women's voices and deal with women's issues at every level of the discussion whether the discussion is political, economic, educational, etc. Furthermore, patriarchal ideology could easily remain underground in the reunification process, if male theologians dominate the reunification process. Moreover, South Korean churches and society are in an ideological struggle between procreative and conservative models in the reunification matter, so there is need to develop an inclusive reunification theology to harmonize churches and society into a unified goal.

In chapter III, I argued that without the perspective and participation of women in the process of reunification, the eventual reunification process would be inadequate, since women and minority groups could easily be ignored (see p.119-121). Thus, "Women have to remain aware of what happened to women many times in history and they have to be prepared that past mistakes are not repeated." (p.122) Non-repetition of this mistake is a major implication of my thesis.

Also, I pointed out that "There is no women's improvement in the many aspects of the Ministry of Unification, the Foreign Affairs Department, and the Defense Department. Women senior officials in government are rare, and there are no women secretaries. Also, all the representatives of 'the Six Party Talks' were men." (p.126) Therefore, there is a strong need to make sure that in the reconstruction process women will participate in a decisive way. In order to accomplish this, the new government has to save seats for women by law (perhaps up to 50 %), and also the North and South Korean

people have to overcome their consideration that these governmental areas are reserved only for male participants.

Furthermore, women need to increase their power in politics, in the military, and in the economic spheres as I mentioned: “Another reason for the lack of women’s participation is the powerlessness of women themselves in politics, the military and economic spheres. Even though there are a few professional women in the areas just mentioned, it is difficult for them to penetrate the male-dominated fields because there are no groups for women’s empowerment. (p.126) Another implication is the following: contemporary women’s studies have to include more research on Korea’s division and reunification because the division has to date had a strong influence on women’s lives. In the new Korea, the role of women needs to be more pervasive. Shim asserts that “One problem of women’s studies is that there has been little to no preparation for the future reunified society. Without preparation and participation in the reunification discourse and politics, there will be no room for women in the future reunified Korean society.” (p.128)

A further implication is this: feminist perspectives have to be developed to build a better society. Feminist perspectives are looking for peaceful coexistence such Park Ye Kung describes: “The way of unification is changing today from an absorbing unification to an establishing of peaceful coexistence unification that is based on reconciliation and cooperation. Thus, it is time for women’s roles and perspectives to appear strongly through new forms of men-women relationships through the use of dialogue, understanding and cooperation.” (p.129-130)

Through German reunification case studies, we have seen that German women, especially East German women, struggled in their employment, child care and positions in work places and family during and after the reunification. Therefore, the balancing of employment of women and men in a reunified state has to be studied, and the social support systems for women have to be more developed in the new Korean society. East German women became losers in their new state. To avoid this in the Korean new state, there will be an overwhelming need for social support systems to take care of North and South Korean women as they adopt a new society.

An implication which comes from chapter IV of this dissertation is the following. There are two categories which have affected women. The first category considers women's primary responsibility as motherhood. The second category determines the political, cultural and family policy institutions which establish women's positions and employment rates in the society. Both of these categories are affected by religion to some degree. Therefore, religion (by religion I mean Christianity, Confucianism, and Buddhism) needs a prophetic and self critical viewpoint. In the reconstruction of Korea, these religions will, in various degrees, influence people's minds, beliefs, way of life and social systems.

In chapter V, as we saw in the reconstruction of the two Germanies, German Christian religion gave little to no support for the establishment of an equalitarian community during and after the reunification. Therefore, a feminist reunification theology, which focuses strongly on the building up of an egalitarian community, will challenge the Koreans who are presently constructing a new system. In the initial stage of

this reconstruction, a feminist reunification theology needs to be more publicly developed. This is a major implication of my dissertation.

How can we build an egalitarian community and how can we be reconciled?

Jeong Yong-Sub's interpretation of 'the Parable of the Lost Son' (Luke 15) could be used in this matter. The oldest son is angry at his father who welcomes his son back and has a feast for him. The oldest son's response would be right because he worked harder to build up his family but his brother wasted all his property with a past life. It would be a similar situation for Koreans who have had painful experiences by the Korean War. They have felt *han* in their hearts and they say "I cannot forget my *han* and also forgive it." Many Koreans lost their families and properties but now South Korea has created an economic miracle in Asia. Nevertheless, how can the South Koreans forget the painful experience and can they share their properties with the North Koreans now?

However, his father has a feast for the youngest one instead of punishing him. The father says to his oldest son that your brother lives again even though we thought he might be dead and we found him again from the lost. We can see the fundamental difference between the two situations and also the fundamental joy in the return of family life. Jeong points out that the older brother sees his brother's action but the father see his son's existence itself. This gives us a very important insight. Even though North Koreans have suffered major pains and even though the South Koreans lost their properties, the question remains: who they are the Koreans? North Koreans are sisters and brothers to South Koreans and South Koreans are brothers and sisters to North Koreans. Jeong states that while the oldest brother criticizes his younger brother's morality, the father is considering his son's living existence as more important. Jeong understands that this is

the key point of Jesus' parallel. The fact is that the youngest one's past life is not important here. Forgiveness starts from forgetting what they did to me. Keeping painful experiences in my mind is not useful and furthermore, it makes my life more painful.

The father's love is the key point here. This is the kingdom of God's order that all Christians follow. If we try to judge somebody only in view of morality, we will fall into legalism. In the story, the existential love and action are more powerful for they lead to reconciliation. This same view would apply to the reconciliation of two countries. We have to focus on our brothers and sisters and their way of living first and we should also try to avoid an undue attachment to their morality. We need to learn from the father's love and practice what forgiveness truly means. As the father has a feast for the youngest one and puts a ring on his finger, we South Koreans need to prepare a feast for by our North Korean brother and sister who were lost but are – we hope -- now found.

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