

**“WHERE IS THE VALUE OF HOUSEWORK?”  
RE-CONCEPTUALIZING HOUSEWORK AS FAMILY CARE  
ACTIVITY**

Eunjung Koo

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**“WHERE IS THE VALUE OF HOUSEWORK?”**  
RE-CONCEPTUALIZING HOUSEWORK AS FAMILY CARE  
ACTIVITY

**“Waarin zit de waarde van huishoudelijk  
werk?”**

Een nieuwe kijk op huishoudelijk werk als zorgactiviteit  
binnen het gezin

to obtain the degree of Doctor from the  
Erasmus University Rotterdam  
by command of the Rector Magnificus

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The logo of Erasmus University, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a stylized, cursive script.

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## Acronyms

CO (co-housing)

DEC (dual earner couple)

EC (elderly couple)

FHC (fulltime househusband couple)

FWC (fulltime housewife couple)

GDP (gross domestic product)

GI-FH (group interview with full time housewife)

GI-FW (group interview with female worker)

GI-MW (group interview with male worker)

GNI (gross national income)

OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)

PDW (paid domestic worker)

SFE (single female elderly)

SM (single mother)

SME (single male elderly)



## Acknowledgements

In my mind there are two scenes. In the first, more than 20 years ago, a friend came to my house, and we had a meal, a chat, and fun together. While we were talking, my friend furtively went to the kitchen and cleaned something I never thought to clean. I said, “what are you doing? Don’t do that”. She said, “I just want to do it, it’s not a big deal; it’s very simple and finished soon”. For a long time, that scene kept returning to my mind, but I did not have the concepts or language to figure out why. Second, when I was a high school student, my friend and I stayed in the classroom after school, nominally for study but usually for having fun. One day, we felt hungry but had no money, so we borrowed money from our teacher for snacks. On the following day, we returned the money, but the teacher did not take it, saying “you shouldn’t give it back to me, but should give it back to your juniors”. For a long time, this scene would also come to me, especially when I disagreed with seniors or with customary rules.

My PhD journey is related to these two scenes, and what I wish to understand about them. Now I understand the gift. My friend found the dirtiness of that part of the kitchen and she knew how to clean it and did it for me. She loved me, so she gave it to me without any judgement of my laziness or expectation of reward. The teacher tried to teach us the circulation of goods from senior to junior, the way he learned in the community, which differs from equal exchange between two parties. Now, I appreciatively accept my friend’s gift, and I consider ways of circulating a gift in the community. These experiences began to open my eyes to a way of giving which differs from exchanges based on equal exchange and contracts.

I really appreciate those who have helped me to craft my life and have taken my PhD journey with me, especially the interviewees, who shared their life stories, through which I have learned and finally comprehended the varied ways we share goods and services in our lives: my supervisors who read my crude ideas and poor writings, and inspire me to polish them; my children, who also question the function of housework in everyday family life; and my husband, who always encourages me to do whatever I wish. The experiences I have had, and the people I have met and who have shared a part of my life both shaped and made it possible to complete this long journey, and through this I have gained most valuable wisdom. Thank you.



## Abstract

This research aims at scrutinizing closely actors' perceptions of the value, meanings, and meaningfulness of doing housework, in order to discuss the way in which people who do housework receive recognition. In doing so, it clarifies the function of familiar-private spheres in life, which differ from the market or political arenas. It is based on a two-pronged approach: firstly, to reveal conceptually the value of housework and to demonstrate its significance, thereby indicating ways to give recognition to doing housework, including something not yet included in political economic literature, namely actors' perception of doing housework. Secondly, it aims empirically to show how actors' perceptions of housework can offer a clue to comprehending the care deficit. This care deficit is often conventionally diagnosed as the result of increasing women's participation in the labour market, in line with modernization, industrialization and demographic change. However, while this conventional perspective sees women's contribution in family life, especially when the family is a unit of production, it does not, importantly, ask why men have not taken on housework in proportion to women's withdrawal from it.

In order to examine the underlying mechanisms of actors' practices of housework and their relation to the care deficit, this thesis uses the lenses of social psychology and of everyday life. In that our practices in everyday life produce and re-produce ourselves and society itself (Heller 1984), the everyday practice of housework is focused on here as the locus of care change. Then, relying on the rationale of symbolic interactionism, i.e. that we act on the basis of the meaning we find in interacting with external conditions and with others (Blumer 1969), this research analyses the value, meanings, and meaningfulness of doing housework, as shaped by actors' everyday practices.

South Korea is an exceptionally good case in which to consider housework, given its compressed modernity, which is characterized by rapid socio-economic change with partially overlapping pre-modern and post-modern

phases (Chang 1999). In Korea, compressed modernity has provoked intricately knotted interactions among actors, creating markedly different everyday housework practices in different generations. To begin to understand these, and the variety of life conditions and their relation to housework, in 2013 I conducted 79 biographical interviews in 8 categories of household in two generations (elderly couples, single elderly women, single elderly men, paid domestic workers, full-time housewife couples, dual earning couples, single mothers and co-housing couples), as well as a full-time house-husband couple and three focus groups (men with paid work, women with paid work and full-time housewives).

To analyse this data, firstly (after transcribing all the interviews), relying on inductive reasoning, I considered actors' perceived value and meanings of doing housework by categorizing interviews based on life strategies and trajectories. Secondly, by combining a framework of pathways to meaningful work (autonomous self, contribution, self-connected, and social self) (Rosso et al. 2010) and the different standards for social recognition in pre-modern and modern society (Fraser and Honneth 2003), I interpreted the meaningfulness of doing housework. Thirdly, I paired the three spheres in which people gain recognition (love, law and individual achievement) put forward by Honneth (2003) with three value domains (care, justice, and freedom) by Van Staveren (2001), to allow a conceptual discussion of ways recognition is gained by doing housework and thereby how the value of housework can relate to well-being in everyday life.

In Korea's early industrialization generation, which experienced extensive poverty and a very unequal gender order, the "gendered role division (women for the private arena/family, men for the public arena)" was fairly striking. Within this role division, given the significance of production within the family at a time of industrial underdevelopment, women's work (including housework) was a central source of material life in the family. Women's housework was crucial for family survival. Based on women's huge contribution to family material life, women's housework does receive recognition from other family members, as a mothers' sacrifice and as a material contribution. However, this recognition was only given after the role was completed, and within a strong gender hierarchy.

For the democratization generation, which has experienced economic development and laws proclaiming gender equality, the "gender division of labour (women for caregiving, men for breadwinning)" has a different meaning. It reinforced the economic inferiority of women. Also, housework and the

meaning of doing housework lost its productive character. It remained necessary labour linked to the well-being of the family, but became an obstacle to everyday life. The everyday practices of housework has shrunk within two generations, from: “as a woman I should do it as far as I can, I think to do housework is my reason” in the early industrialization generation to “I’m not such a person who is good at doing housework” in the democratization generation. This shift is rooted in the loss of the meaningfulness of housework and has resulted in a care deficit.

Three factors contribute to this loss of meaningfulness. Two are related to weakening traditional gender norms: gender equality and having a choice between housework and another lifestyle. These lead to the third factor, the decrease in the embodied value of housework. This stems firstly from the decreasing proportion of material value that housework contributes to family life, secondly from using market logic to perceive its value and, thirdly from the insufficiently fulfilling desire to take enjoyment from the non-material value of housework. As for the first, this decreasing contribution stems from economic development; we indeed have more room for choice. As for the second, perceiving housework by market logic is a conceptual fallacy discursively entwined with both social cultural standards. It is common within academic discourse and follows logically from the leading cultural ideology of individual achievement in modern society, which give priority to the public over the private. This conceptual fallacy excludes the non-market value of housework, causing the embodied value of housework to be undervalued. In everyday life, perceiving housework using market logic distorts the feature of giving, an enjoyment of its nonmarket value. This provokes the third factor. Since the way one earns a social self is now wholly through acting in public, housework and care are devalued, and each individual’s genuine choice is limited.

These findings gain greater depth when integrated with recognition theory (Fraser and Honneth 2003) and the triad economic value domains (Van Staveren 2001) and a triad of human deeds modified from a theory from Arendt ([1958] 1998). Employing this framework, I argue against the theoretical discussions that consider housework to be work, the root that allows people to consider housework using market logic. Unlike existing discussion about work, which focus on realms where the deed is conducted such as private or public, or goods and services which would involve values, I focused on the different ways people allocate goods and services. Integrating the framework with the experiences of paid domestic workers, who do housework both as paid domestic workers and (sometimes) as providers in care action programs

in addition to care within their own families, I discussed distinctive features of allocating goods and services in the triad of care spheres.

The distinctive feature of doing housework at home is giving with no contract, by which the receiver can enjoy the value of care and feel themselves to be precious as a person to whom someone willing to give care out of love. If someone does care work in the labour market, the care worker should get equal exchange between the work and the salary, thereby enjoying the value of freedom. To consider the relational feature of care relying on care theory would provoke a care penalty because it would hurt the basic logic of care in the market, where receivers get care work and fulfil their care needs through their ability to buy it. At the same time, as democratic citizens, all of us have a duty and right to a legitimate good public care system, allowing us equal access to a decent care level, according to the resources of the state. Thus, what makes the specific values in three domains visible is the way goods and services circulate. The human deeds related to care can consist of care work in the market, care activity in the home or community, and public care action in politics. This categorization is anchored in the empirical world thanks to domestic workers' embodied knowledge. It allows housework to finally be reconceptualised as "family care activity"

In sum, care value is not revealed in the logic of the market. Care is manifested by giving within familial-private spheres, which is between care givers and receivers, via shared experiences that include positive emotional values of gratitude and love. In this way, care is part of creating an individual self. The self also exists in two other spheres: in the market for the value of freedom and in politics for the value of justice through political action. The balance of these three domains (home, market, and public) in everyday life is not only the basis of the "work-life-balance" but also a vital life condition simultaneously creating the individual self and the social self.

## *Waarin zit DE WAARDE VAN HUISHOUDELIJK WERK?*

### *EEN NIEUWE KIJK OP HUISHOUDELIJK WERK ALS ZORGACTIVITEIT BINNEN HET GEZIN*



## Samenvatting

Het doel van dit onderzoek is om precies in kaart te brengen hoe actoren denken over de waarde, betekenissen en zingeving van huishoudelijk werk om te kunnen bespreken hoe mensen die huishoudelijk werk verrichten erkenning krijgen. Daarmee wordt de functie van de familie- privésfeer belicht, die verschilt van het terrein van de markt of de politiek. De benadering is tweeledig. In de eerste plaats wordt de waarde van huishoudelijk werk en de betekenis ervan aangetoond. Daarmee wordt aangegeven hoe huishoudelijk werk kan worden erkend, bijvoorbeeld door na te gaan hoe actoren aankijken tegen het doen van huishoudelijk werk. Dit aspect komt nog niet voor in de politiek-economische literatuur. Ten tweede is het doel om empirisch aan te tonen dat de wijze waarop actoren aankijken tegen huishoudelijk werk tot beter begrip kan leiden van het zorgtekort. Dit zorgtekort wordt vaak gezien als gevolg van een toenemende participatie van vrouwen op de arbeidsmarkt die te maken heeft met modernisering, industrialisering en demografische veranderingen. Hoewel in dit conventionele perspectief de bijdrage van vrouwen aan het gezinsleven wordt erkend, vooral wanneer het gezin een productie-eenheid is, blijft de vraag waarom mannen niet evenredig meer huishoudelijk werk zijn gaan doen toen vrouwen minder gingen doen.

Om de mechanismen achter het doen van huishoudelijk werk en hoe deze verband houden met het zorgtekort te onderzoeken, wordt in dit proefschrift het perspectief van de sociale psychologie en van het dagelijks leven gekozen. Vanuit het idee dat we met ons doen en laten in het dagelijks leven onszelf en de maatschappij produceren en herproduceren (Heller 1984), wordt de dagelijkse praktijk van het huishouden hier opgevat als de plaats van verandering van de zorg. Vanuit dit vertrekpunt volgt een analyse van de

waarde, betekenissen en zingeving van huishoudelijk werk, zoals die vorm krijgen in het dagelijks leven van actoren. Deze analyse is gebaseerd op de logica van het symbolisch interactionisme, namelijk dat we handelen vanuit de betekenis die we vinden in de interactie met externe omstandigheden en met anderen (Blumer, 1969).

Zuid-Korea is bij uitstek geschikt voor onderzoek naar huishoudelijk werk gezien zijn gecompliceerde moderniteit, die wordt gekenmerkt door snelle sociaaleconomische veranderingen met gedeeltelijk overlappende premoderne en postmoderne fasen (Chang, 1999). In Korea brengt de gecompliceerde moderniteit sterk verweven interacties tussen actoren met zich mee, waardoor er duidelijke verschillen zijn ontstaan tussen generaties in de wijze waarop mensen het huishouden doen. Om inzicht te krijgen in deze verschillen en in de verscheidenheid van levensomstandigheden en hun relatie met huishoudelijk werk, zijn in 2013 79 biografische interviews afgenomen bij 8 categorieën huishoudens verdeeld over 2 generaties. Dit waren oudere echtparen, alleenstaande oudere vrouwen, alleenstaande oudere mannen, betaald huishoudelijk personeel, echtparen met een fulltime huisvrouw, tweeverdieners, alleenstaande moeders en samenwonende stellen. Daarnaast zijn ook data verzameld bij een echtpaar met een fulltime huisman en drie focusgroepen (mannen met betaald werk, vrouwen met betaald werk en fulltime huisvrouwen).

Om deze gegevens te analyseren zijn eerst alle interviews uitgeschreven. Vervolgens is op basis van inductie gekeken naar welke waarde en betekenis huishoudelijk werk heeft voor actoren door de interviews te categoriseren op basis van levensstrategieën en trajecten. Ten tweede is een combinatie van een theoretisch kader van trajecten naar betekenisvol werk (autonome zelf, bijdrage, zelf-verbonden, en sociale zelf) (Rosso et al., 2010) en de verschillende normen voor sociale erkenning in de premoderne en moderne samenleving (Fraser en Honneth, 2003) gebruikt voor de interpretatie van de betekenis van huishoudelijk werk. In de derde plaats zijn de drie domeinen waarin mensen erkenning krijgen (liefde, recht en individuele prestaties; Honneth, 2003) gekoppeld aan drie waardedomeinen (zorg, rechtvaardigheid en vrijheid) die Van Staveren (2001) onderscheidt. Dit maakt een inhoudelijke discussie mogelijk over de wijze waarop huishoudelijk werk erkenning oplevert en daarmee over de relatie tussen de waarde van huishoudelijk werk en welzijn in het dagelijks leven.

De generatie die de vroege industrialisatie in Korea heeft meegemaakt, groeide op in een tijd van grote armoede en grote ongelijkheid tussen mannen en vrouwen. In deze generatie was het 'traditionele rolpatroon' (vrouwen

voor de privésfeer/familie, mannen voor het openbare leven) zeer opvallend aanwezig. Gezien het belang van productie binnen het gezin in een tijd van industriële onderontwikkeling, was het werk van vrouwen (inclusief huishoudelijk werk) binnen deze rolverdeling de centrale bron van het materiële bestaan van het gezin. Het huishoudelijk werk van de vrouw was essentieel voor het overleven van het gezin. Vanwege de enorme bijdrage van vrouwen aan de middelen van bestaan van het gezin, hadden andere familieleden waardering voor het huishoudelijk werk van vrouwen, dat werd gezien als offer van de moeder en als een materiële bijdrage. Deze erkenning kwam echter pas nadat de rol was vervuld en binnen een sterke genderhiërarchie.

Voor de democratiseringsgeneratie, die is opgegroeid in een tijd van economische ontwikkeling waarin er wetten kwamen waarin gendergelijkheid wordt geregeld, heeft de 'verdeling van werk op grond van sekse' (vrouwen voor zorg, mannen voor broodwinning), een andere betekenis. Het versterkt de economische minderwaardigheid van vrouwen. Ook zijn huishoudelijk werk en de betekenis van het doen van huishoudelijk werk losgekoppeld van productie. Het is noodzakelijke arbeid verbonden met het welzijn van het gezin gebleven, maar werd iets dat het dagelijks leven hinderde. Hoe mensen aankijken tegen huishoudelijk werk is binnen twee generaties enorm veranderd. Waar de generatie uit de vroege industrialisatie nog zegt: 'Als vrouw moet ik het doen voor zover het in mijn vermogen ligt; ik denk dat huishoudelijk werk mijn bestaansreden is', zegt de democratiseringsgeneratie: 'Ik ben niet iemand die goed is in huishoudelijk werk'. Deze verschuiving komt voort uit het verlies van betekenis van huishoudelijk werk en heeft gezorgd voor een zorgtekort.

Drie factoren dragen bij aan dit verlies van betekenis. Twee hebben te maken met de verzwakking van traditionele gendernormen: gendergelijkheid en de mogelijkheid te kiezen tussen huishoudelijk werk en een andere levensstijl. Deze leiden tot de derde factor: de afname van de waarde die huishoudelijk werk vertegenwoordigt. Dit komt in de eerste plaats door de afnemende materiële waarde van huishoudelijk werk voor het gezinsleven, in de tweede plaats door marktwerking te gebruiken om de waarde ervan te bepalen, en in de derde plaats door het feit dat de immateriële waarde van huishoudelijk werk onvoldoende bevrediging biedt. Wat het eerste punt betreft: deze afnemende bijdrage is het gevolg van de economische ontwikkeling; we hebben inderdaad meer keuzemogelijkheden. Wat het tweede punt betreft: het is een misvatting die is verweven met sociaal-culturele normen om huishoudelijk werk te bezien in termen van marktwerking. Het is gebruikelijk binnen het academische discours en vloeit logisch voort uit de heersende

culturele ideologie van individuele prestaties in de moderne samenleving, die voorrang geeft aan het openbare over de privésfeer. In deze conceptuele misvatting wordt geen rekening gehouden met de niet-marktgerelateerde waarde van huishoudelijk werk, waardoor huishoudelijk werk wordt ondergewaardeerd. In het dagelijks leven betekent het waarderen van huishoudelijk werk op basis van marktwerking een miskenning van de vreugde die mensen halen uit het aspect van geven en van de ideële waarde van huishoudelijk werk. Hieruit volgt de derde factor. Aangezien mensen hun sociale zelf nu volledig in het openbaar opbouwen, worden huishoudelijk werk en zorg geëvalueerd en heeft ieder individu slechts een beperkte keus.

Deze bevindingen worden nog inzichtelijker door ze te bekijken vanuit de erkenningstheorie (Fraser en Honneth, 2003) en de drie domeinen van economische waarde (Van Staveren, 2001), en een triade van menselijk handelen op basis van een theorie van Arendt ([1958] 1998). Vanuit dit theoretisch kader wordt gepleit tegen de theoretische discussies die huishoudelijk werk als werk beschouwen, waardoor huishoudelijk werk onderhevig lijkt aan marktwerking. In tegenstelling tot het bestaande debat over werk, dat is gericht op de omgeving waar het wordt verricht, zoals in de privésfeer of in het openbaar, of op goederen en diensten die waarden met zich meebrengen, is dit onderzoek gericht op de verschillende manieren waarop mensen goederen en diensten toewijzen. In dit onderzoek zijn de ervaringen van betaald huishoudelijk personeel opgenomen in het theoretisch kader. Deze zorgverleners doen huishoudelijk werk zowel als betaalde kracht als (soms) ook in zorgactieprogramma's, naast zorgverlening binnen hun eigen gezin. Op deze manier worden specifieke kenmerken van de toewijzing van goederen en diensten in de triade van zorgdomeinen besproken.

Kenmerkend voor thuis het huishouden doen is geven zonder contract, waardoor de ontvanger kan genieten van de waarde van de zorg en zich geliefd voelt als iemand aan wie een ander uit liefde zorg wil geven. Mensen die in de zorg werken op de arbeidsmarkt, moeten als zorgmedewerker een redelijk salaris ontvangen in ruil voor hun werk, wat hen de waarde van vrijheid geeft. Als we het relationele aspect van zorg op basis van de zorgtheorie in aanmerking zouden nemen, zou dat een zorgboete veroorzaken omdat dit in strijd zou zijn met de fundamentele logica van zorg in de markt, waar ontvangers zorg krijgen en hun zorgbehoeften vervullen door hun vermogen om zorg te kopen. Tegelijkertijd hebben wij allen, als democratische burgers, plichten en recht op een goed openbaar zorgstelsel, waardoor we gelijke toegang hebben tot een fatsoenlijk zorgniveau, afhankelijk van de middelen van de staat. De specifieke waarden in de drie domeinen worden dus zichtbaar door de manier waarop goederen en diensten

circuleren. De menselijke zorgactiviteiten kunnen bestaan uit zorgwerk in de markt, zorgtaken in huis of in de gemeenschap, en publieke zorgactiviteiten in de politiek. Deze indeling is verankerd in de empirische wereld dankzij de kennis die huishoudelijk personeel in zich meedraagt. Hierdoor kan huishoudelijk werk eindelijk opnieuw worden geconceptualiseerd als 'gezinszorgactiviteit'.

Samengevat komt de waarde van zorg niet tot uiting in marktmechanismen. Zorg komt tot uitdrukking door te geven binnen de familie-privésfeer, tussen zorgverleners en ontvangers, via gedeelde ervaringen die positieve emotionele waarden van dankbaarheid en liefde omvatten. Op deze manier maakt zorg deel uit van het creëren van een individueel zelf. Het zelf bestaat ook op twee andere terreinen: in de markt voor de waarde van vrijheid en in de politiek voor de waarde van rechtvaardigheid door politieke actie. Het evenwicht tussen deze drie domeinen (thuis, de markt en het openbare leven) in het dagelijks leven is niet alleen de basis van het evenwicht tussen werk en privéleven, maar ook een essentiële levensvoorwaarde die tegelijkertijd het individuele zelf en het sociale zelf creëert.

# 1

## Introduction

On January 14, 2017, a female South Korean (hereafter Korean) civil servant working in the Ministry of Health and Welfare collapsed in the stairwell of her office building and died. According to the news, after her parental leave for her third child, she had worked about 70 hours a week without holiday. The time she collapsed was 7 a.m. on a Sunday. With only this brief information, Korean people sufficiently comprehended her situation: she died from overwork. Overwork is very normal in Korea, where paid work time is second only to Mexico among OECD countries (OECD 2016a: 233)<sup>1</sup>. Needless to say, most Koreans reckon that with three children, her housework must have been very demanding regardless of any support from her family or the government. In this tragic story, an irony resides: she worked for the health and welfare of Koreans, but she could not defend her own health and welfare; she worked very hard for her happiness and family well-being, yet she died from hard work. Tragically, this irony is a common experience for Koreans, earning the country the title of “*hell Chosun*.” (*Chosun* is the name of the last Korean feudal state before the modern era.) Denoting the similarity between life in Korea and hell, for the past several years, the phrase “*hell Chosun*” has wandered into Korean discourse, and its effects into Korean society.

One of those effects, the ‘care crisis’ provoked by the dismal circumstance of “*hell Chosun*”, is the context of this research. Conventionally, in Western society, a care crisis is speculated to be the result of a ‘care deficit’ caused by the shrinking traditional care system (which had been based on gender division of labour) and by cuts in government welfare budgets (Hochschild 1995: 332). This diagnosis suggests reliance on a general welfare system or care regime (Isaksen et al. 2008, Razavi 2007) as the solution. As one of its core orientations, this solution socializes care to mitigate the family care burden. This is also absolutely compatible with conceptualizing

household chores as household labour, reproductive work, and care work (Engster 2005, Herd and Meyer 2002, Himmelweit 2000, 2007, Kain 1993, Molyneux 1979), an approach that aims to clarify the socio-economic value of housework by recognizing its contribution to society. However, to apply this conventional diagnosis and solution to the care crisis in Korea first requires that additional points are examined, and these will comprehensively reveal the intricacies of Korea's care deficit.

Above all, this includes considering the specific circumstances of Korea as a late industrialising country growing from a colonized country. This is markedly different from any Western country. Korea's socio-political and demographic conditions are determined in part by its aim to develop economic growth first with the implementation of a general welfare scheme being secondary (Chang 1997, Chang 2010, Kwon 2002). This set of priorities explains why the Korean Workfare Scheme, which began in 1997, left the care burden to the family (Takegawa 2009). However, this has been seriously problematic, given the long paid work time. Working people almost lack the time to even care for the self, let alone family or extended family. Meanwhile, working conditions for care workers are poor (Lee and Nam 2009, Peng 2010). Unsurprising, then, that the availability of potential carers has been dropping rapidly. Meanwhile, Korean demographic change has been extremely fast<sup>2</sup> and the birth rate is now the lowest in its history (cf. figure 1.4), and the proportion of the working population available to support the dependent population has rapidly decreased. This, combined with current policy, suggests that Korean public care must be far inferior to even the reduced welfare provisions in Western countries. Thus the specific circumstances of Korea indeed intensely demand the establishment of a public care system to resolve the care deficit.

However, in that the extent of public care will also depend on the extent to which families expect to take charge of care, it is necessary to look at actors' perception of care. The carers' perspective includes a significant change in attitudes towards gender equality (Na and Cha 2010) and its implementation as the gender equal practice in housework; with this, society has not kept pace (Joo et al. 2016, Statistics Korea 2016).<sup>3</sup> This mismatch may partly explain the lower satisfaction of women in relation to their partners and higher depression rates among women compared to men (Joo et al. 2016: 155, 370).<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the perception of family value has shrunk (Chin and Chung 2010) and the negative value of children is relatively large (Kim 2015). Further, while total housework time

and the parental time with children was the lowest among OECD countries (OECD 2015a: 171-201), women's participation rate in workforce is below the OECD average (OECD 2016a: 224). The conventional outcome of deliberating this has been that the cause of decreasing family care is the increasing participation of women in the workforce, but this may be an insufficient explanation. In Korea, in addition to the increase in women's participation in workforce, family care has been cut in line with the shrinking of the value of family and children. This seems to be another reason for the care deficit.

Rather than simply blaming women for the decrease in family care, particular attention needs to be given to the extent of family care that is needed and desirable, and actors' perceptions of changes in family care. This is especially relevant to the 'warm modern ideals of care', which suggests integrating gender-shared family care with public institutional care (Hochschild 1995). Such a blend requires more than focusing narrowly on establishing a public care system or preparing time to care by policy change (Lewis 2006), but as Elshtain suggests, also requires clarifying "the own dignity and purpose of the private-familial sphere in becoming human" (1981: 334) as fundamental to this sphere. This means that the extent to which family care is necessary for the well-being of people in everyday life needs discussion. In other words, reckoning not only with the contribution of care for society but also with the function of housework in the flourishing of an actor's life. This is true not only for the Korean context but also in general. However, in relevant care and housework studies, actors' perceptions of actually doing this work has received scant attention.

Scrutinizing actors' perceptions of doing housework could be the basis of assessing the available level of family care, i.e. a way of comprehending, addressing and reconsidering the care deficit. Doing so provokes a need to rethink conventional knowledge. It would not, for example, take as inevitable the general belief that the gender division of labour should be the basis of a continued unequal sharing of housework. Although this inequality is in general true – women do more care work and men do more paid work – it is not inevitable and also excludes racial and class divisions (Duffy 2005, 2007, Graham 1991, Sullivan 2011) which factor into the global care chain (Williams 2010, Anderson 2000, Cheng 2003, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Lan 2006, Parreñas 2001). It ignores the inferior working conditions of care service jobs (Lee and Nam 2009). It also, roughly speaking, does not consider that the care deficit is partially a result

of the movement from a feudal society of care servants to a modern society of care labour, in which race and class inequalities are little changed.

Second, the concept of gendered division of labour implies women as dependents, who produce little of the family's material life. However, the extent of women's dependency differs according to both concrete conditions and time period. Thus, such a view does nothing to clarify women's contribution to family life. For example, a representative study reveals that the proportion of the value of unpaid care work to gross domestic product (hereafter GDP) is 63 per cent in India and Tanzania (Budlender 2008: 38), meaning women are not simply dependents. In both countries, the concept of a gendered division of labour hides and fails to explain the large contribution of women. More importantly, making their substantial contribution essentially invisible hides the relative value of women's work. The concept of a gendered division of labour thus implies a devaluation of housework, by promoting the invisibility of its value compared to paid work. In theory, the relative importance of this contribution varies by time and place, so could be 63 per cent of GDP in Tanzania, or perhaps 7 per cent somewhere else. While 7 per cent of GDP value might seem negligible in everyday, by any measure 63 per cent of GDP surely is not. Once this is recognized, the perception of house and care work would necessarily change.

Third, clarifying the value of housework is one of the main strands in housework studies. The significance of care work is measured and its importance demonstrated by measuring the economic value of housework (Kwon 2006, Mullan 2010, Smith 2007, Yoon 2014), by discussing the political economic function of housework in domestic labour debate (Gardiner 2000, Himmelweit and Mohun 1977, Kain 1993, Molyneux 1979), or by conceptualizing the significance of care in economics and/or politics (Tronto 1987, Herd and Meyer 2002, Sevenhuijsen 1998, Engster 2005, Engster 2007, Van Staveren 2001). However, the extent to which this valuation of housework affects its everyday practice is rarely asked. In fact, if this valuation has not permeated everyday life, the extent to which people take enjoyment of its value in daily life would be doubtful. If people take little enjoyment of its value, people would see little value in it in daily life. This would accelerate the devaluation of the work, making the giving of care a low priority, which would worsen the care deficit.

In previous care studies, the extent and manner in which family care is necessary for family members to thrive, that is, care anchored by emotional bonds, has been little pondered. Without this consideration, care in the family has been assumed to be a sector to be monetized or socialized to reduce the care burden otherwise settled on women in the family. This does not fully consider men's share in care, instead restricting this only to the matter of equality within a couple. In this context, to conceptualize care as civic duty or a core for justice (Engster 2005, 2007, Held 1995, Sevenhuijsen 1998) would not persuade people to do it.

Thus the object of this research is to comprehend housework at home as a pillar within the care deficit. Thus, this research examines housework practices at home in everyday life, from the actors' perspectives, without first employing a conceptual framework. This approach is based on the theory that everyday life is the locus of social change (Heller 1984) and this study uses symbolic interactionism as a tool to access actors' perceptions of housework (Blumer 1969). According to everyday life theory, actors produce, re-produce, or transform society as well as themselves through everyday practices. According to the rational of symbolic interactionism, actors act relying on the meanings they have for things, with these meanings stemming from previous interactions between the self, external conditions and other beings. Thus, if the meanings of housework changes in the process of interactions, the everyday practice of housework would change. This approach enables the integration of external conditions and actors' interpretations of it, showing the ways in which the practice of doing housework enhances or reduces the care deficit.

In order to examine housework practices, the initial research question was "what are the meanings of doing housework." Starting from this initial question made it possible to scrutinize actors' diverse perceptions about housework: its meanings, perceived values, customary norms, and importance. The meanings of doing housework are, in brief, the motives to do housework generated by the digested external (socio-economic and cultural) conditions, intermingled with individuals' desires. Its value is one of the main factors defining its meaning, and this research reveals that value by focusing on actors' perceptions including the benefits of housework they take enjoyment in and which cause everyday life to flourish. That is, the extent to which actors have enjoyed a certain value in daily life will be investigated. The value of housework has material, moral, and emotional (love and gratitude) value. The customary norms are settled by the

reiterated everyday practice of doing housework (Heller 1984). Then, whereas actors might implicitly recognise the meanings and values of doing housework, its customary norms would be explicitly recognized. Meaningfulness would be the social-psychological impetus that persuades someone to do housework. That is, actors do housework based on the meanings of housework, and depending on its meaningfulness they do more or less. Hence, by grasping separately the meanings, values, customary norms, and meaningfulness of doing housework, the extent to which, and why, a particular actor does housework in a certain way can be elaborated.

Then, based on this richer understanding of doing housework and how it varies over time, the function of housework in individuals' everyday life can be re-reckoned: where the value of housework is; what sorts of values actors enjoy from doing housework; the way of taking enjoyment in its value. This discussion then allows the term "housework" to be reconceptualised, so as to illuminate its function in "the own dignity and purpose of the private-familial sphere in becoming human (Elshtain 1981: 334)".

As for the word 'housework', many different terms are used to discuss it, including unpaid work, care work, domestic labour, reproductive work etc. These all have their implied theoretical focuses (Quick 2008). The elaborated definition used in this thesis will be explained in chapter 2. In this chapter, I will only briefly define housework in order to clarify the boundary of the research object. In this research, housework denotes the work to be done by and for family members without payment, consisting of ordinary house chores, caring, provisioning work for maintaining the family and helping family members to flourish. In that all house chores, such as cleaning, cooking, laundry, and purchasing are for the care of family members,<sup>5</sup> I believe that the separation of care work from housework would be an inefficient way to analyse the perceived meanings of housework in everyday life by those who do it.

Bearing in mind the variation of family members, the boundary of this research has been restricted to housework for and by family members. There are four reasons for this. First, having family and doing housework is one of basic human ways to give and receive care. Regardless of whether someone lives alone or with family, housework directly affects care for oneself or family members. Second, cautious discussion of the division of care between family members and a public program is needed to avoid disproportionately focusing on increases of public care that would miss

the genuine demand of people. Third, no matter how much public care increases, housework will not cease to exist, and it will remain at the core of private life. Finally, despite tremendous study and activism for the past half century, the conflict around housework has not yet been solved. Instead, the axis of conflict has slightly moved from gender inequality to work-life balance. Thus, while acknowledging the significance of enhancing public care, this research will scrutinize variations in housework practices by and for family members between generations.

This introductory chapter, in order to specify the overall picture of this research, will provide a brief background of the research, its conceptual constellation, research questions, research design, and the structure of following sections.

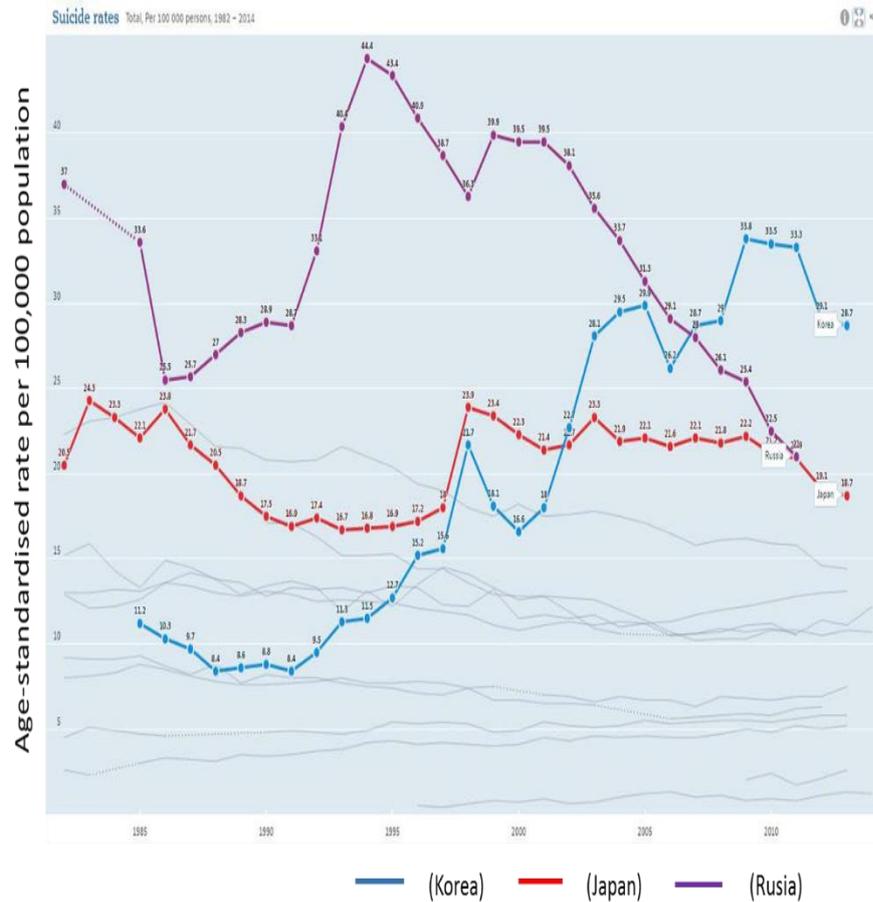
### **1.1 Research Background: a ‘Care Crisis’ under rapid economic development**

Demographer David Coleman once remarked that Korea will be the first country in the world to disappear because of rapid population decline by low birth rate (Ministry of Health and Welfare 2010).<sup>6</sup> He also highlighted the seriousness of the rapid aging phenomenon of Korea: if the country maintains the current ratio of active population aged 15-64 to the dependant elderly in 2000, the world population in 2000 should live in Korea by 2050 (Coleman 2002: 587). To be sure, Coleman’s projection is no more than a warning of the effects of low fertility and rapid aging. Nevertheless, this projection undeniably shows an impending care crisis. Whatever the cause, the reproduction of Korean society itself is under threat. The causes of this phenomenon must be very complex, but one threat it offers to the general well-being of Koreans is clear: receiving insufficient care (from whichever public, market, or family) is a problem now that might result in even more walking away from childbirth and an acceleration of the decline.

This assumption that the well-being of Koreans is under threat is supported by statistics. Koreans’ perceived well-being, measured as the level of subjective happiness of children and adolescents since 2009, remained at the bottom in the OECD countries.<sup>7</sup> Perception of adult health status as good decreased to the bottom of the OECD rankings 2014 (OECD 2016c: 117). The suicide rate in Korea has increased above the OECD

average increase since 1996 (OECD 2009: 127) and the country has remained in the top three since 2003 (OECD 2017).<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 1.1**  
Trends in suicide mortality rate of G 20, 1883-2014



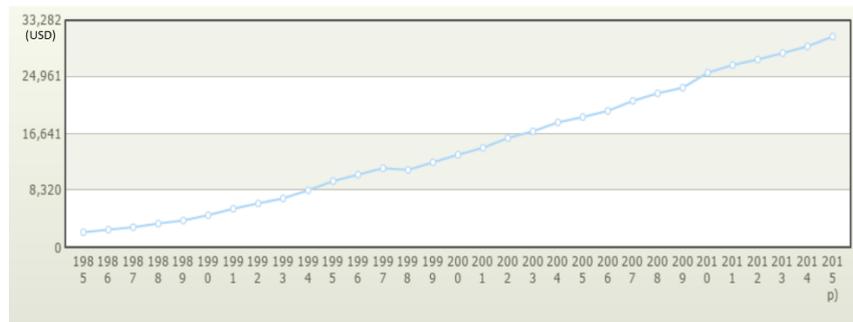
Source: OECD (2017), Suicide rates (indicator)<sup>9</sup>

This can be seen in figure 1.1, which shows the suicide rate among G20 countries. In it, the top three countries are Japan (in red), Russia (in purple),

and Korea (in blue). In the case of Russia, right after the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 the rate rocketed for three years, and then steadily deceased. Japan's rate has been roughly steady, but with a recent decline. In Korea, even after overcoming the Asian economic crisis in 1997, the suicide rate rapidly increased from 2000, and has been the top for several years, with big gap between it and the second highest country.

Perceived social network support (whether or not one has relatives or friends to count on) was almost at the bottom in 2012 (OECD 2013b: 57) and the bottom in 2014 (OECD 2015a: 82). Considering this, there is no doubt that the perceived well-being of Koreans is dismal and has deteriorated by the frail support in familiar-private area.

**Figure 1.2**  
Trends in real GDP per capita, 1985-2015



Source: KOSIS (Korean Statistical Information Service)

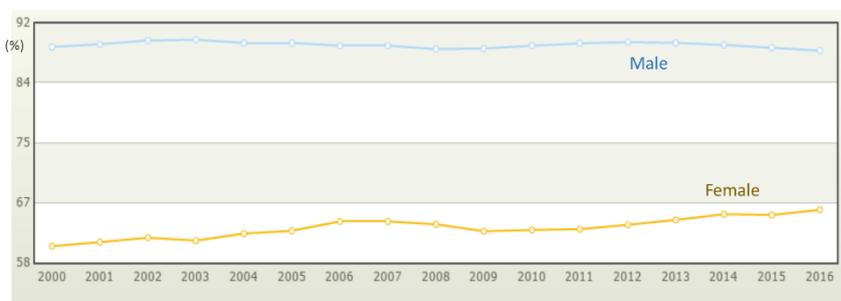
In comparison, material conditions have polarized. On the one hand, rapid economic development has brought more wealth, and the other hand, social inequality is deepening. Korea was one of the so-called “Asian miracle” countries, a newly industrial country that stood, together with Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, explicitly for rapid growth (Truong 1999: 133-134). This economic growth, has moved Korea from being one of the poorest countries in the 1950s (Heo 2012) to being an OECD country in 1996. This was supported by annual 10 % growth of the GDP in 1970s. As shown in the figure 1.2., there has been unflagging GDP growth.

While this rapid and enormous economic growth has improved overall material life conditions for all Koreans, it has had less influence on overall well-being, as indicated by the increase of suicide. Comparison with other

OECD countries indicates that social inequality could be one of the reasons for deteriorating Korean well-being. Firstly, in addition to very long paid-work time (Miranda 2011: 9), there is increasing income inequality and a small middle class (OECD 2014a: 32), with the highest proportion of workers earning at or below the minimum wage (OECD 2015b: 44).

**Figure 1.3**  
*Trends in employment ratio by gender, 2000-2016*

: Persons with at least a university degree



Source: KOSIS (Korean Statistical Information Service)

Secondly, gender inequality is a serious problem, as diverse data of OECD countries prove. For a start, the earning gap and the employment gap between tertiary-educated Korean men and tertiary-educated Korean women is the highest in the OECD (OECD 2013b: 114-115, 2016a: 222-239). Further, although the education level since 2004 is not very different between genders (OECD 2011a: 55, 2013a: 32, 2016c: 44), the employment gap has not significantly reduced. The gender gap in employment among those who have attained university education or over remains large (figure 1.3). Even though women's employment ratio has gradually increased for sixteen years, it remains far below the OECD average.

In 2014 among OECD countries, the employment rate of tertiary-educated women in Korea was at the bottom with 62.6 percent, far behind the OECD average of 78.9 percent (OECD 2016a: 224). For women with less than upper secondary education, the employment ratio, 58.3, was over the OECD average of 45.9. That is, the gap between employment rates of less educated women and highly educated women is comparatively small in Korea. This would imply that women with less education are in the

workforce due to deprived economic conditions, whereas women with tertiary education have fewer opportunities to get appropriate jobs than do Korean men or women in other OECD countries. Korean women also spent the shortest time on leisure and personal care among those in full-time employment, also spend one hour less on such activities per day than Korean men (OECD 2015a: 78).

Third, the lack of care for the dependent population is severe. In 2012-13, the public social expenditure<sup>10</sup> as a percentage of GDP was very low (9.3) compared to the OECD average (21.9) (OECD 2014b: 117) and in 2016 it was about 10 percent, at the second lowest after Mexico (OECD 2016c: 109). Given that social expenditure includes health, income support to the working age population, pensions, and all social services, the low expenditure must have direct, harmful influence on the marginalized population. In fact, among the Korean elderly, poverty is far more serious than for the average Korean: 14.6 percent of the whole population lives in relative poverty, while 49.6 percent of those aged 65 and over do so (OECD 2015c: 171). The low budgets suggest that informal networks are expected to contribute, but turning back to the bottom level of perceived social network support, a particularly serious situation is seen in both the less educated group (OECD 2013b: 57) and among people aged 50 and over (OECD 2015a: 84). Fully 60 percent of the less educated group and 40 percent of the elderly felt that they had no relatives or friends from whom to request help when they were in trouble. This would be very harmful for their emotional well-being, and also suggests that they have no safety net. Add to this the high suicide rate among the elderly and the lowest subjective well-being among children, and the scale of the problem is evident. The problem with care is undeniably largely provoked by the lack of a public care policy.

**Table 1.1**  
*Time spent on housework in 2004, 2009, and 2014*

|                  | 2004 |        | 2009 |        | 2014 |        |
|------------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|
|                  | Male | Female | male | female | male | female |
| Hours: minutes*  | 0:32 | 3:28   | 0:37 | 3:20   | 0:40 | 3:14   |
| Hours: minutes** | 2:34 |        | 2:32 |        | 1:58 |        |

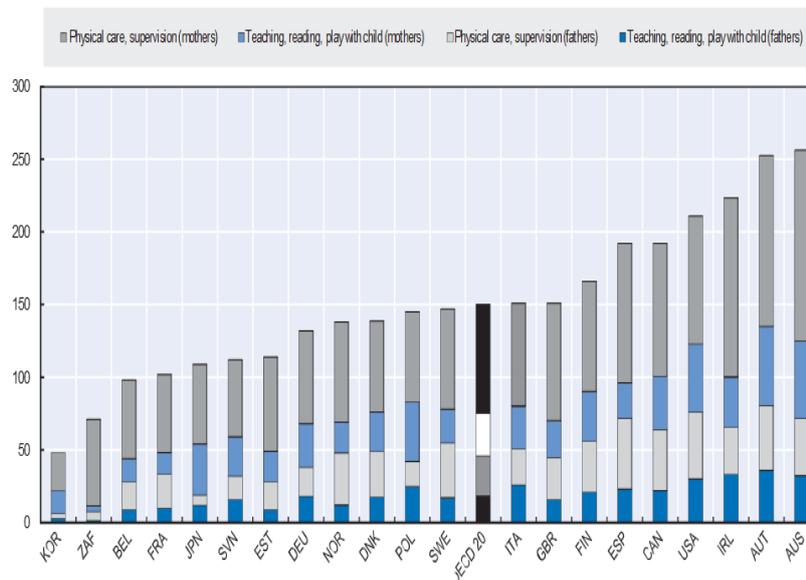
\*the total time spent on housework by gender in dual income households (Statistics Korea 2015a: 12)

\*\*the total time spent on housework in married households (Joo et al. 2016: 148)

However, the ability to provide care within familiar-private area is also weak. This problem is likely exacerbated by the housework gender gap. In dual income households, the housework gender gap has slightly narrowed but the gap remains very serious: in recent years, men have spent only slightly more time on housework and women slightly less (see table 1.1). Also, (see the last line of table 1.1), the total time spent on housework by married households significantly decreased between 2009 and 2014. The reason for this decrease is unclear, but this must be considered when understanding care within the Korean family.

**Figure 1.4**  
**Parental time with children**

Daily Minutes, 2013 or latest available year



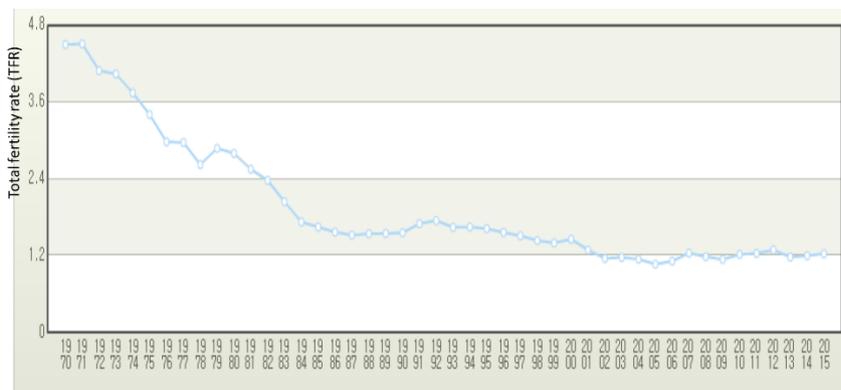
*Note:* Data refer to the amount of time spent on childcare that respondents report themselves in their time-use diaries as a primary activity (i.e. without doing other activities at the same time). Basic childcare includes childcare and child supervision, as well as time spent in transporting children, with the exception of Ireland and Korea where time spent transporting children is not included. Data refer to care for children under the age of 18, except for Australia and Canada (less than 15 years). Data for Ireland and Korea do not include time spent transporting children. Data refer to 1999-2000 for Estonia; 2000 for South Africa; 2000-01 for Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom; 2001 for Denmark; 2001-02 for Germany; 2003-4 for Poland; 2005 for Belgium and Ireland; 2006 for Japan; 2008-09 for Australia, Italy; 2009 for Korea; 2009-10 for Finland, France and Spain; 2010 for Canada; and 2013 for the United States.

Source: OECD (2015a: 171)

Compared to peers in other OECD countries, Koreans aged 15-64 spent the shortest time in unpaid work, about 150 minutes per day (Miranda 2011: 11-17). Whether or not this is due to long working hours, their relatively short unpaid work time case raises the question of whether it is adequate for family care. Their lack of time is also indicated by the fact that Koreans definitely spend the fewest minutes in volunteer work and providing child care (OECD 2015a: 171-201).

Apart from spending the least time volunteering, as figure 1.4 clearly shows, Koreans spend little time on child care, with fewer than 50 minutes per day per respondent as the sum of both genders, once time spent transporting children is excluded. However, including transport would change little, since in Korea to transport children is not a norm. For about one month, when a child first starts school for the first time, adults transport the child. After that, children normally go to school by themselves, or go to a private academy by school bus. While it is said that the quality of time with children is more important than the quantity, the small amount of time spent on child care is remarkable.

**Figure 1.5**  
Trends in total fertility rate (per woman), 1970-2015



Source: KOSIS (Korean Statistical Information Service)

One plausible reason for this is the long, paid work hours mentioned above, which leave no time or energy for unpaid duties. However, Mexi-

cans spend time in paid work and double the time in unpaid work (Miranda 2011: 11-17). The low investment of time in care could also be due to employing other public care programmes or maybe technological help. However, this does not hold up when Korea is compared with highly developed countries with better public care programmes and more budget for technological help, such as Australia or Canada. Or, this could be due to the low birth rate. Whatever its underlying cause, this must be a significant symptom of the overall care crisis.

The overall care crisis links the fact that Korea has the lowest fertility rate in the OECD (OECD 2014b: 89) with its most rapid population aging (OECD 2012: 17), which recalls the warning of the demographer, David Coleman. Figure 1.5 shows the trend in fertility rate for Koreans, i.e. since 2000 the rate has been around 1.2 per woman, which is far less than the replacement rate or roughly 2.0 to 2.33. The low fertility in Korea was seen by Suzuki (2008) as a typical case in which an advanced socioeconomic system and robust family pattern would be in conflict. In that analysis, low female labour force participation would be seen as due to family roles. Overall, such an interpretation may hold some truth, but other studies that show a divide between current and traditional women's role in terms of family and acceptance. This undermines the claim that family patterns are robust.

Korean women who have stronger traditional gender role attitudes manifest higher scores in depression (Han and Hong 2011), Korean women in general also show less satisfaction with family relationships than men (Joo et al. 2015: 155).<sup>11</sup> In this regard, they seem unhappy with traditional gender roles, which would indicate inner struggles against their traditional role. As for family value, even though a study (Baek 2009) using 2004, and 2002 survey data showed that Koreans' family value orientation and gender role attitudes were much more traditional than in, say, the USA, Sweden, or Japan, there have been changes in family values. The percentage who answered "must certainly get married" steadily decreased between 1998 and 2014 (Joo et al. 2016: 142),<sup>12</sup> and at least between 2004 and 2009, the wish for children also decreased (Chin and Chung 2010).

As for the value of children, in 2012 (Kim 2015), compared the USA, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Sweden, Japan, China, Taiwan, and Korea. Koreans consider children to have a high negative value: having children interferes too much with the freedom of parents; children are

seen as a financial burden on their parents; children restrict the employment and career chances of one or both parents. Koreans also disagreed with the ideas that watching children grow was the greatest joy in life, and that adult children are an important source of aid to elderly parents. Nevertheless, Koreans showed the highest gap between expected numbers of children (2.72) and the actual birth rate (1.24). For whatever reason, Koreans attach less value to family value and children, which again needs to be considered as a factor in the family care crisis.

In short, while rapid economic growth has greatly improved material conditions for Koreans over recent decades, emotional well-being has been under threat, and this threat is far more serious for the dependent population. The lack of sufficient care for the marginalized could be due to neo-liberal globalization, since Korea started to build its welfare regime during a time when paid workfare was prioritized (Takegawa 2009). Or, it could be due to the Korean government relying on developmentalism and Confucian familism, in which the care responsibility is imposed on the family (Chang 1997). Whatever the reason, there has been a shift away from assigning value to family and children. There is a mismatch between the relatively low female labour force participation and the lowest spending in unpaid work/the lowest birth rate.

Within the paradoxical Korean situation, material affluence is higher than ever, yet this has been accompanied by a fall in emotional well-being and a shrinking of the value attached to family and children. This motivates my study of the perceived meaning of housework, as a way to gain insight into the overall dynamic described here. As mentioned, housework is one of the main sources of family care, and a main part of every individuals' private life. At the same time, there might be an incongruity between the boundary of formal care and individuals' genuine care needs. Most importantly, emotional well-being is fairly dependent on the quality of close relationships. The family is one of the significant sources of close relationships, but studies of attitudes towards housework, a significant factor within the family, are usually restricted to its relation to traditional gender roles, and do not reveal the dynamics of its shifting everyday practice. In contrast, this intends to make sense of this normally unquestioned area (the meaning of housework in everyday life and the unique function of the familiar-private area) and will assist the search for a genuine care solution to help people thrive in everyday life. This, I believe, vindicates scrutinizing the issue of housework.

## 1.2 Conceptual Constellation of Housework

Around housework, research has ranged from debating domestic labour (which aims to see housework as work), to re-conceptualizing housework as care work, to revealing gender inequality in the time spent in housework, to measuring the monetary value of housework as a way to show its economic significance, and discussing the work and family-life balance needed to prevent population decline by supporting childrearing. These diverse issues have been contingent to two concepts, in line with their focus on different empirical problems: the gendered division of labour and the work-life balance. In this section, I will briefly give a picture of the issues around these two concepts. This will situate this research in a research gap: the role of housework in supporting the well-being of societal members.

**Figure 1.6**  
*Conceptual constellation around housework research*

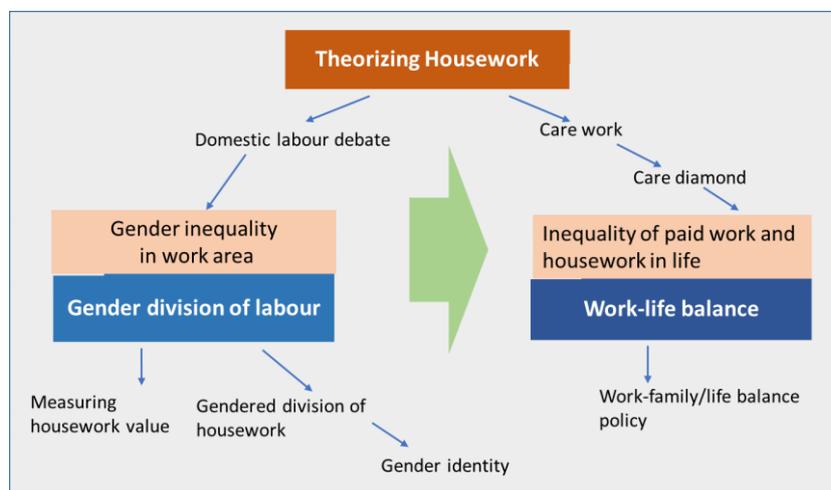


Figure 1.6 shows these two main concepts and their empirical aims, with the abstract level of studies, theoretical and empirical research issues in the vertical realm. On the left side, the concept of gender division of labour is more closely related to the early stage of capitalist society, while

the concept of work-life balance in the right side is more commonly linked to the current post-industrial stage. Thus, though not a linear flow, the big arrow in the centre indicates the flow of time and research issues along with economic, political, and demographic changes in social structures.

The concept of gender division of labour first focused on different areas of work by gender (women in housework, men in paid work) showing gender inequality (Kim 1994a). In capitalist society at that time, doing paid work guaranteed independence while doing housework denoted dependence, generating a hierarchy between those who did housework and those who did full-time paid work. In order to break down this inequality, the main research strategy has been to reveal the value of housework. In this way, scholars conducted, theoretically, a domestic labour debate and empirically, measured housework value. The core aim of the domestic labour debate, in political economic and sociological terms, is to broaden the concept of work, showing that paid work and the unpaid work that supports it deserve the same status (Beneria 1979, Folbre 1982, Gardiner 2000, Himmelweit and Mohun 1977, 1995, Seccombe 1974). By this reasoning, it is expected that the status of women will be the same as that of men because both would be labourers. This is the drive behind empirical research in economics, which has calculated the time spent on housework and converted this to a monetary value, to show the value of paid work and housework in a comparable way (Budlender 2008, Carrasco and Serano 2011, Kwon 2006, Mullan 2010, Yoon 2014).

This approach can be seen in the book, *Sociology of Housework* (Oakley 1974) and has partly succeeded in that the issue of housework has received attention. Housework is still conducted within and often by the family, in private, while the discussion of its contribution to material life is held in public, thereby getting public recognition. However, as was shown a long time ago in Italian feminists' debates (e.g. the debates in Alessandrini 2012), assigning value to those who do housework is both vague and paradoxical. If the value is not given, the work is not recognised as having value, so cannot break down gender inequality. If the value is given, since it is mostly women who do housework, that value would more solidly anchor women to housework. Since social status and identity are mostly tied to job position (Choi et al. 2008, Ardichvili and Kuchinke 2009: 158-160), again, to do housework with payment is not going to challenge women's low social status.

Within this paradoxical situation, the solution to gender inequality appeared to be for women to have jobs. However, after an increasing percentage of women began participating in paid labour, two new empirical matters arose, generating two new issues. One is the gendered division of housework and the other is the care deficit, generally for children of dual earning families, and (in aging society) for the elderly as well. This unintended consequence is partially due to the naive strategy of feminists who failed to consider re-familialization of housework (Yoon 2011). They believed that when women have jobs, their partners would share housework. However, as shown in studies of the gendered division of housework (Aranda and Glick 2013, Bittman et al. 2003, Brines 1994, Eun 2009, Sung 2003, Yoo 2010), there is no country in which men and women equally share housework. In order to comprehend why women do housework more, despite having jobs, the concept of gender identity or gender attitude arose in (social)-psychology (Brickell 2011, De Casanova 2013, Han and Hong 2011, Poortman and Van der Lippe 2009, Seong 2011).

The context in which women have a job yet men fail to share housework was described by Hochschild as a “stalled revolution” (Hochschild and Machung [1989] 2012). In a situation in which “all become like men”<sup>13</sup> with jobs but without responsibility for housework, the problem arose of the socialization or marketization of housework and with it the study of domestic workers and especially migrant domestic workers’ inferior (or even unrecognised) status as workers (Anderson 2000, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Lan 2006, Parreñas 2001). That is, the socialization or marketization of housework has provoked discussion about moral viewpoints of social inequality, where middle class households dump their housework onto underpaid domestic workers who are suffering degrading aspects of this work (Bowman and Cole 2009, England et al. 2002, Nelson 1999, Tronto 2002) and also discussions about the political economics of paid domestic work (Joo 2008).

Apart from the issue of paid domestic work, the practical matter in everyday life of how to care children in the “stalled revolution” became the basis of proposing a theory of care (Held 1995, Himmelweit 2000, Sevenhuijsen 1998, Tronto 1987). Unlike the domestic labour debate that aims at situating housework into a work concept, this care theory aims to clarify the fundamentality and inevitability of care in the natural interdependence of human beings. Within this theorization, without showing its material value (measuring and calculating its value) the significance of care

can be publicly recaptured. However, this recapturing has not resolved the neglect of housework by men, and the implications of and extent to which men neglect housework remain vague.

In addition, relying on this care theory, a so-called “care diamond” has been generated by Razavi (2007) to investigate the respective contributions to care in various realms of society (family, market, not-for-profit, and government). Within this framework, the concept of work-family balance came into practical use, focusing on setting up proper policy for precluding the effects of the decrease of birth rate (Hogarth and Bosworth 2009, Kim HyeKyung 2007, Lee 2012). However, the concept, which is compatible with the concept of family-friendly policy, involves comparatively strong connections between family and women while relatively freeing men from family (Borchorst and Siim 2008, Kim 2011, Lee 2012, Shin 2007). With the aim of overcoming this limitation, the concept has been re-coined as work-life balance, which indicates the individual base for balance, rather than a family base (Hogarth and Bosworth 2009, Jones 2003). Since everybody should have this balance to flourish in their own lives, the term, work-life balance seems to finally unravel gender inequality in housework and the imbalance of paid work with housework/care/life.

However, actualizing this unravelling seems to be unlikely. First, the concept has been vague, with implied assumptions of gender neutrality and a focus on individual choice despite the implausibility of this in concrete individuals’ lives (Lewis et al. 2007). That is, even when individuals wish for such a balance, women usually have a greater family burden, and marginalized people may lack material resources, both of which do not allow pure individual choice. More fundamentally, the term is generally used to emphasize the need for social care policy rather than to re-organize the mode of life, which as a result is still paid-work oriented. A survey in 2015 in Korea shows the priority given to paid work instead of family: 53.7 percent of Koreans aged over 19 put priority to paid work while 11.9 percent did so for family, while 34.4 percent perceived paid work and family as equally important (Statistics Korea 2016: 38). Thus, the vagueness of “balance” seems to be in the foreground. The work-life balance is of course not a mechanical time balance of half and half. Yet the urge to attach the same weight to both areas is at its core, a life free from subordination to overweening materialism.

Thus, the axis of housework research has moved from obtaining gender equality by revealing and recognizing the value of housework to balancing between paid work and care. In this shift, there are several points to consider. First of all, there is no single solution to all the multifaceted empirical problems around housework. Rather, as if playing at Whack-a-Mole, as one matter is solved, its unintended consequences create a new empirical problem. These unintended consequences are likely overlooked by one-dimensional approaches, such as focusing on only gender equality or revealing value of housework in the market. For example, when focusing on gender equality, the need to care for the dependent population is unnoticed. Similar, studies of gender ideology or attitudes have been insufficient to reveal the mechanism of gender identity (Davis and Greenstein 2009). They focused on revealing gender difference, rather than on investigating all-round actors' perceptions or practices of doing, for example, housework. Furthermore, even though studies revealed the significance of housework as work for economic life, for society as reproducing society itself, for political life as citizens who share care, no studies consider the ramifications of the role of housework in our daily lives. In this sense, relying on elaborated analysis on actors' perceptions and attitude about doing housework, this study is positioned in that gap, investigating the role of housework in the familiar-private area of everyday human life.

### 1.3 Research Questions

Housework is something ordinary people do in everyday life, and the initial concern of this research is to understand how people think about it. To elaborate this as fully as possible, this research employed qualitative research methods. Relying on qualitative heuristics that are open to the possibility of new concepts and changes from the researchers' previous knowledge (Kleining and Witt 2000), the research questions have been educed in the process of analysis. That is, even though I explained three different dimensions of positioning this research in terms of concrete/abstract levels, the initial research question is only one. Focusing on actor's perspectives and practices, this research, at the first push, investigates:

*What are the values and social meanings of housework generated by actors: its customary norms?*

By investigating this initial research question, I expected to comprehend the core impetus of doing housework in everyday life, and by so doing find a way to re-organize it. However, while analysing the meanings of housework, I realized that meanings and meaningfulness are different, and that there was the loss of the meaningfulness of doing housework between the two generations from whom I generated data. Hence, drawing upon the fact that in contrast with the elderly, the young have pervasively lost the meaningfulness of doing housework, the second research question was generated:

*What are the dynamics that provoked the loss of meaningfulness of doing housework from the elderly to the young?*

Lastly, entwined with the standard of gaining recognition (which shifts as time goes on) the dynamics of losing the meaningfulness of doing housework have revealed the harmful effect doing housework has had on achieving an individuated self (separated from others and embedded into society). In this context, in order to re-reckon the way of doing housework for a flourishing family and self, the need is to question the role of housework in the individuals' everyday life and to support the emergence of the individuated. That is, in relation to the purpose of the familiar-private area in becoming human beings (Elshtain 1981: 334), to illuminate ways in which people can take enjoyment from housework is needed. This educed the third research questions:

*What is the housework for a thriving family and self in current Korean society? (Where is its value, what values from housework can people enjoy, and how?)*

Because of the evolving nature of these research questions during the process of analysis and interpretation, a process very different from the conventional way of generating research questions, the evolving characteristics of the research process will be fully and carefully explicated. This is fundamental to the rigorous presentation of this qualitative research, lending it clarity and reliability.

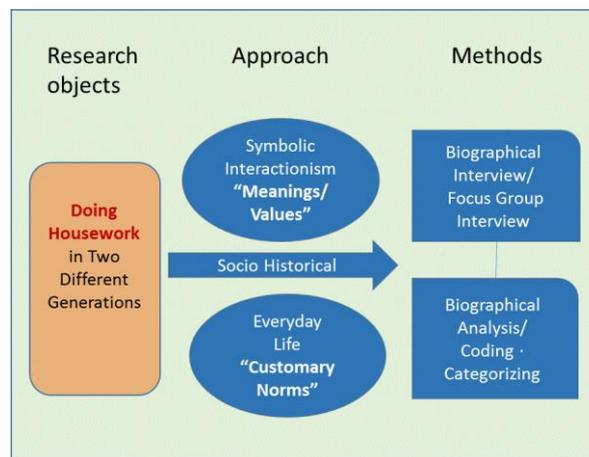
#### 1.4 Research design and epistemological foundation

### 1.4.1 Research design

There are three foci in this research: firstly, actors' desire around housework and the meanings of everyday housework practice; secondly, a multi-dimensional approach including socio-historical dimension; and thirdly, re-capturing abstractly the meaningfulness of doing housework and the role of housework in daily life. The three foci are integrated into the research as depicted in figure 1.7.

To start with, the research object is the housework conducted by two different generations. At the outset of this research, this generational difference was unanticipated. However, in the preliminary analysis the large difference was revealed. The two generations indeed differ in socio-historical context beyond simple age or life course differentiation. This concept of generation difference is in line with Mannheim's, in that a generation has similar social experiences and consciousness, whereby similar social practices arise (Mannheim 1952, Pilcher 1994). Thus, the approach used in this thesis was able to capture unanticipated change in conducting housework over a period that included political and social economic change. Thus, the primary findings will relate to the shift in doing housework between two generations.

**Figure 1.7**  
*Research design*



Second, two further approaches were used. One is symbolic interactionism, as a tool to address the meanings of housework practices. The other is everyday life as a passage to meet roles and norms in everyday practice. As mentioned, according to symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969, Mead and Morris [1934] 1967), actors do housework according to the meaning housework holds for them. These meanings are generated by their interactions with others beings and social structures. The conduct of housework lies at the centre of everyday life, a life in which and by which the roles and norms related to doing housework are (re)produced and shifted. Through everyday practice, a person is socially formed and integrated into the given milieu, which has been transferred from the prior generation. They then perceive the integrated world as their own, and in turn transfer it to the next generation (Heller 1984), sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously (Venn 2010: 134-135). In this regard, everyday life is the space for these ongoing processes of the generic activities to which roles and norms belong. According to the meanings of housework they generate in specific contexts, the boundary of roles and norms for doing housework will be demarcated.

Third, bearing in mind the principles of qualitative research, I employed biographical interviews and focus group interviews as the main tools for generating data. Biographical interviews, as suggested by Rosenthal (1993, 2004) started with an open question about the life story of the interviewee, following initial narrative questions and external narrative questions. With no additional questions, the open question allowed the interviewees to tell their life story, giving the initiative to lead the interview to them. At the stage of internal narrative questions, the interviewer would ask for elaborations/explanations of issues the interviewee has raised in the phase of the open question. Then, finally, the interviewer would ask additional, external questions. To keep to this interview modality was important not only to give the initiative to interviewees (Rosenthal 2004: 53) but also to allow them to get used to the interview gradually. As well, this was a way for interviewees to be knowers, rather than being simply offerers, of information.

The process of analysis, in order to remain open to serendipitous occurrences in the qualitative research (Bryman 1984: 78), at the outset offered no concrete analytical framework. Like the analytic methods of grounded theory, this biographical analysis was fundamentally based on

inductive reasoning, which provided a way for qualitative heuristics to focus on generating new knowledge from the bottom. This was especially useful with, for example, the thorny usage of the concept of gender division of labour, where inductive reasoning is the most reliable way to address and embrace the concrete realities of the participants as knowers.

After the analysis of meanings, values, and customary norms, the dynamics of meaningfulness of doing housework were explored, using a framework to be explained later. The findings were then re-interpreted using recognition theory, and then discussed in terms of how to re-organize everyday activities so that individuals and families thrive. These parts will be presented in chapter 3.

#### 1.4.2 Situating this research by its epistemological foundation

This research, in striving to precisely understand the actors' practice of doing housework, has an epistemological foundation: research starts from actors and views actors' practices as "open-endedly social" (Venn 2010: 135). This epistemological foundation is consistent with the combination of symbolic interactionism, everyday life theory, and the concept of individuation. It sees actors in terms of symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969, Mead and Morris [1934] 1967), generating their practices of doing housework based on the meanings of housework which stemmed from interactions between actors and external conditions. In this sense, the meanings are the initial thread to follow to locate solutions for how to re-organize everyday activities so that individuals and families thrive. These everyday practices rely on the meanings actors generate, so customary norms are not constants, but re-form and shift (Heller 1984). Thus, rather than employing theories or concepts which are largely exogenous interpreters for actors, all research starts from individuals' perceptions and practices. This is not to imply that social norms are irrelevant, but just as theories or concepts are social, the meanings or customary norms are social, relying on interactions between individuals and society and reiterated collective practices. This epistemological foundation of individual practices as social reality indicates that without changing the actors' practices in everyday life, the empirical problem would not be solved.

Visualizing this epistemological foundation in the case of the domestic labour debate should clarify the point of focusing on everyday practice.

The main focus of the domestic labour debate is how to theoretically prove housework is work, in order to qualify women who do housework as a quasi-labour class (see Beneria 1979, Seccombe 1974). It assumes structural determination, e.g. that structural change would naturally change actors' practices. Thus, according to the conceptual structure of illuminating the function of housework in the political economic system, men would recognize women's contribution and would share the housework. Or, at least, women might take pride in doing socially significant work. It could be, however, that doing housework in everyday life is too far removed from such pure abstract reasoning. Actors are not the material parts of system, rather they are the ones who produce the system by their everyday practice (Heller 1984).

Research about work and family balance mostly focuses on setting up working conditions, such as flexible working hours or reducing paid work time, to enable family care. There is no doubt an urgent need to improve working conditions and it is highly plausible that this will generate more family care. However, without considering the genuine desire of actors, aiming to increase fertility in this way is simply an instrumental approach. Human beings do not live only in terms of their function in a society. Reasons for low fertility are not entirely due to working conditions. Like all one-dimensional approaches, an instrumental approach could provoke unintended consequences by failing to consider actors' complex surroundings and desires.

To illustrate, in the Korean case, people have fewer children compared to their ideal number of children, mainly due to the economic burden (Lee 2010). If the economic burden is the main reason, reducing working time in a job would not address this and could instead trigger a need for extra paid work. Or, considering the far greater time Korean men spend in leisure and on personal care compared to Korean women (OECD 2015a: 78, 171), increasing free time would not directly result in men doing more housework or families having more children. Since Koreans do less unpaid work and child care in general, even compared to countries with comparable paid work time (Miranda 2011: 9, OECD 2015a: 171), another factor must be at work that causes Koreans to award it less priority. This could also underlie Korean ambivalence toward the value of children (Kim 2015). Scrutinizing the sources of the low priority awarded housework and child caring would be the first step towards creating a better balance for people.

That is to say, just as women are not “naturally gifted” at housework (Cook 1987: 522), housework is not the work human beings automatically do if they have free time. Like any job, the priority given to housework is socially constructed (Shin 2007: 18). In accordance with this socially constructed priority, individuals may do some amount of housework. Thus, the care crisis in Korea could be due not only to the harsh paid work conditions and absence of a social care system, but also to a socially settled hesitation to do housework. This causes Koreans to miss the chance to enjoy the value of housework as a contribution to their well-being and flourishing lives. Fully comprehending how people think about housework would be a cornerstone of a well-organized care system including state, market, and individuals.

Bearing in mind the significance of actors’ practices in a social phenomenon, this research investigates the meanings of doing housework also by accessing interactions with external conditions and neighbouring people. Thus, while situating it in a conceptual constellation, the starting point remains the bottom at a very concrete level. Unlike methodological individualism, in which the unit of analysis is individual level (Walsh 1997), the focus of analysis for this research is at the social level, namely the construction of social meanings. This analytical focus on the social is also anchored at the epistemological foundation of symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969, Mead and Morris [1934] 1967) and the theory of everyday life (Heller 1984). In symbolic interactionism, in order to generate meanings, actors rely on interactions with other beings and external conditions, so culture and histories, as well as social structures, must be included. Everyday life is the locus of individual and societal reproduction or transformation by transferring everyday practices from parent generation to child generation (Heller 1984), again unavoidably including the social.

Basically, human beings are ontologically social. The term “individuation” which is from psychological research, stands for the process by which an individual becomes an individual through social connection with others and yet is separated from them (Fordham 1958). This means that investigating “the social” beings as distinct beings is the core to comprehensively examining social phenomenon beyond methodological holism or methodological individualism (Davis 2013). Unlike methodological holism, which sees an individual as a member of group, the approach in this research does not separate individuals’ practices into specific groups like gender or class. Also, unlike “methodological individualism” which aims

at picturing a social phenomenon via the sum of individual opinions (Hodgson 2007), the approach in this research aims at revealing “the social” that is beyond the sum of individual opinions. That is, an individuals’ practices are already at the social level without summing them or categorizing them as common to a group.

In relation to housework, “individuation” is different from “individualization.” Individualization is actually the more conventional term around housework, focusing on the separation from tradition at the beginning of modern society (Dawson 2012: 307). For example, the conventional understanding of women’s choice to have paid work instead of focusing on family care is considered to be due to individualization. That is, individualization allows one to be separated from traditional norms and to focus on oneself, so women can choose their own jobs. In contrast, the advantage of considering ontological “individuation” of human beings is that this admits that this choice does not rely only on individual choice, but also on being social, as will be discussed in chapter 8.

This research will draw attention to everyday practices as the locus for social change, and aims to look into ways of enjoying and valuing housework by illuminating where housework value is and what kind of values are involved, as well as how this value can be enjoyed by actors in everyday life. This leads to a theoretical, abstract discussion aimed at re-conceptualizing housework so as to revealing the role of housework in individuals’ daily life. I believe that this bottom up method will be a way to maintain a distance from structural determinism and instrumental approaches, while connecting actors’ desire to social structure.

## 1.5 The pathways from housework to family care activity

In this chapter, I have briefly delineated the overall picture of this research. Focusing on the main research problem of the care deficit, this research aimed to find the role of housework in individuals’ everyday life. In so doing, this research argues that addressing the meanings and meaningfulness of doing housework is necessary to investigate and overcome the hidden dynamics of care deficit. *Chapter 2* reviews the literature in the connection with ongoing empirical problems and the detailed terminology about housework. The literature reviewed discusses the devaluation of housework, gendered work division, putting less priority on housework,

and dumping dirty work onto the marginalized. All these issues have links to the low position of housework in work hierarchy, which would provoke unbalanced work-life arrangements in a paid-work-oriented society. In this context, whatever the housework is called (house chores, domestic labour, reproductive labour, and care work) the terminology would not reflect what people think about it or desire about it.

*Chapter 3* offers an epistemological stance, theoretical resources, and further explication of the methods employed, in order to make clear the vertical consistency of this research. Relying on symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969, Mead and Morris [1934] 1967) and everyday life theory (Heller 1984), the main epistemological stance is in the nature of the “individuation” of human beings (Davis 2013). This epistemological stance supports the employment of biographical methods to reveal the social meaning of housework. As for the meaningfulness of doing housework, a framework for pathways to meaningful work (Rosso et al. 2010) has been introduced. Looking at housework, holistic, socio-historical (Mannheim 1952), social psychological (Mead and Morris [1934] 1967) and behavioural economic (Van Staveren 2001) theories are intertwined. In addition, the theory of recognition (Fraser and Honneth 2003) was employed so as to re-interpret the loss of the meaningfulness of doing housework.

*Chapter 4* explains the way data was generated and analysed. This relied on biographical interview and a purposive sampling strategy, whereby nine categories in two generations could be seen, depending on different condition of the needs for and practices of housework. Particularly, as an example of biographical analysis, I show how breadwinning consciousness intertwined with the biography of a male interviewee in line with his life trajectory and strategy under specific socioeconomic and political conditions. This is also an example of arguing for the ahistorical application of the concept of gender division of labour. In the Korean case, for the early industrial generation, the gender division of labour was not a reality.

*Chapter 5* presents a detailed empirical background of Korea. This shows two features of Korean modern history (rapid economic growth and compressed modernity) (Chang 1999) as major factors generating a different mode of life. “Compressed modernity” includes the co-existence of pre-modern, modern and post-modern modes. That is, Korea’s industrialization generation inherited a strong legacy of Confucian life mode, a modern political system and underdeveloped economic conditions. In

contrast, the democratization generation has enjoyed the fruit of economic growth and has achieved a political, democratic shift that rejects the Confucian legacy. At the same time, they suffer from the Korean developmental state's delay in establishing a social care system, which collides with their strong gender equality idea and is the background of current care deficit of Korea.

In *Chapter 6*, the meaning of housework as 'survival of family' in the early industrialization generation is demonstrated. This is strongly anchored to the legacy of Confucian life mode, and the severe national poverty following Japanese colonization and the Korean War. At that time, women offered primary support for the family, with little prospect of decent paid jobs and little commercialization of housework: their work was the survival of family. The obviously hierarchical gender status of the period defined this women's role as the only way to get belongingness in a family and a community. In this context, the role of housework was to support material life and give moral value for women who acted within these roles and norms.

*Chapter 7* shows that the meanings underneath doing housework in the democratization generation have varied: 'necessary labour', 'well-being of family', and 'everyday obstacle for life'. Under a gender division of labour, this variation is based on the bifurcated women's role. Compared to the industrialization generation, woman's role has centred on the role of mother, weakening the role of daughter-in-law and wife as well as the role of supporting family. Thus, younger Korean women see full-time housework as incompatible with their idea of gender equality, but have staggered between their role as mothers, the norms of women who are eager for gender equality, the norms from their parents' generation and their own norms. In this sense, the role of housework as a source of moral value has dwindled. The function of housework in material life has been also weakened by economic development. Instead the desire for non-material values like emotional caring have emerged, but these are as of yet little acknowledged.

Chapter 8 uses four dynamics to detail the loss of meaningfulness of housework from the early industrialization generation to the democratization generation.

*Chapter 9* revisits the domestic labour debate as the starting point to reveal the incompatibility of housework in market logic in order to take enjoyment of emotional value from housework in daily life. Housework is

re-captured using the theory of triad value domains in economics (Van Staveren 2001), and housework in the giving domain will be discussed.

*Chapter 10* reflects on the journey taken in this research, and its merits and limitations.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In 2014 and 2015, only three OECD countries (Greece, Korea, and Mexico) had annual working times over 2,000 hours. In Korea, this was 2,124 (in 2014) and 2,113 (in 2015) while the OECD average was 1,763 and 1,766.

<sup>2</sup> In the Korean case, it will take only 18 years to move from an aging society to an aged society. This took 24 years in Japan, 40 years in German, 71 years in USA and 115 years in France (Kim 2008: 11).

<sup>3</sup> The significant change toward egalitarianism is shown by the 1979, 1998, and 2010 survey data (Na and Cha 2010) and the increasing rate of attitude for equal sharing of housework (30.7 in 2002, 32.4 in 2006, 36.8 in 2010, 45.3 in 2010, 47.5 in 2014, and 53.5 in 2016). The percentages of real equal sharing remains under 20 percent (8.9 in 2008, 10.2 in 2010, 15.8 in 2012, 16.2 in 2014, and 17.8 in 2016) (Statistics Korea 2016: 23).

<sup>4</sup> Considering a study that women who have a traditional gender role attitude have shown higher scores on depression (Han and Hong 2011), to assume the negative relation between high gender equality attitude and gendered sharing of housework would be reasonable.

<sup>5</sup> Korean statistics have shown in the category of housework the sub categories of food preparation and clean-up, laundry and clothes care, cleaning dwelling and arrangement, home management, purchasing domestic goods, household management, and caring family members. For investigating how time is spent, this categorization would be useful, yet in my research the separation has little meaning.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Health and Welfare, Press Release, 15-07-2010, "International Conference on Population Prospects and Policy Responses," accessed on 04-03-2016.

<sup>7</sup> The Chosun Ilbo (07-05-2012) 'Korean Children Unhappiest in OECD Despite Material Wealth', [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2012/05/07/2012050700775.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/05/07/2012050700775.html), accessed 18-05-2012; Yonhapnews (02-05-2012) 'The bottom of the happiness level of Korean children and adolescent,' <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2016/05/02/0200000000AKR20160502148300017.HTML>, accessed 18-02-2017

<sup>8</sup> OECD (2017), Suicide rates (indicator). doi: 10.1787/a82f3459-en (Accessed on 18 February 2017)

<sup>9</sup> OECD (2017), Suicide rates (indicator). doi: 10.1787/a82f3459-en (Accessed on 29 March 2017)

<sup>10</sup> In the OECD research, “social expenditure clarified as public when general government controls the financial flows” (p.116).

<sup>11</sup> Among factors of family relationships, gender in the relationship with children and parents shows little difference while in the relationship with spouse, spouse’s parents, and spouse’s brothers and sisters, women are more unsatisfied than men. This might reveal the disagreement with traditional gender role of women.

<sup>12</sup> The rate decreased in percentage: 33.6 in 1998, 25.6 in 2002, 25.7 in 2006, 23.6 in 2008, 21.7 in 2010, 20.3 in 2012, and 15.2 in 2014.

<sup>13</sup> “where we all become like men and the amount of time spent on caring significantly falls” (Himmelweit, 1995: xix)

## 2

## Re-reading Dilemmas in Housework

In this chapter, I re-read dilemmas in housework, starting from my experience and moving to literature, so as to more precisely capture the empirical reality around housework. Despite academia's efforts to show the value of housework, the imposition of housework on those marginalized by gender, race, or class has barely changed, and inequality in care continues. This has created an ongoing empirical problem dilemma: deteriorating care at home, namely a care deficit. To be as precise as possible in discussing this deficit, the chapter will also map the terminology of housework used in this study. To do this, I critically review the two main concepts: domestic labour debate and care work. This not only identifies the proper terminology to use, but also helps situate the research within recent academic work, in particular on the identification of housework as work.

### 2.1 Rereading Dilemmas in Housework

Why do I not like doing housework was an initial question to me for this research. As a mother of two children, why was joining in social movement activities more important than taking care of my children, even when they were infants? This is a question I asked myself after my children became adolescents. The problem of gender inequality in housework has been a major concern in my married life. I have also experienced the non-recognition and devaluation of housework. These well-known dilemmas would be the basis of my preference for social movement activities over caring for my children.

However, I also recognize that there have already been many studies to enhance the recognition of housework and reveal its value. These measured the monetary value of housework, employing the new term 'care

work' to reveal its moral and political economic value (Engster 2007, Sevenhuijsen 1998). The endeavour to spread recognition of the value of housework has prevailed not only in academia but also in mass media. Hence, most Koreans are already aware to some extent of the mass of information about the value of housework. Nevertheless, I am not sure that anyone around me increased their housework because of its value as shown by these works.

Rather, quite the reverse: at least in Korea. Online space is very noisy with complaints about both the failure of men to share housework and the lower contribution of women to the family budget. Relying on the assumption to have natural motherly love (Secombe 1974: 20), women are expected to be primary caregivers, but at the same time they are expected to earn money for the family economy. Meanwhile, men are expected to earn more money than women, yet to share housework in an egalitarian way. While arguing with these two slightly different but in a sense identical viewpoints, the conclusion that living alone and having enough to support oneself, or at least having no babies, roughly comes out as the best option. Both genders value being independent and earning money, making the preference to marry weaker and weaker. Similarly, the dilemma of gender inequality in housework seems to find its solution in uprooting the possibility to bring about housework.

In this section, ongoing housework dilemmas around the ambiguous work concept, devaluation, and gender inequality will be re-read. The unintended consequences of the priority awarded paid work will be discussed, namely both the care deficit and the dumping of housework onto the marginalized. Lastly, I will review the success and limitation of work-family/life balance studies aimed at solving the care deficit, particularly compared to the studies focusing on paid work arena. The omission of housework in studies of work-family/life balance will be highlighted, as the basis of this research. That is, in order to investigate the hidden dynamics of the unending housework dilemma, elucidating the role of housework and the purpose of that familial-private area in daily life would be fundamental. This has been missing from preceding studies.

### 2.1.1 Ambiguous Work Concept and Devaluing Housework

My mother was a housewife and my father was a breadwinner. When in a bad mood, my father would tell my mother, “you do not do anything at home”. This was, of course, not true. My mother usually woke up around 4 a.m. and made four lunch boxes<sup>1</sup> for my two brothers and me. In addition to other household chores, when I was in my last year of high school, she had to wait until 1 a.m. for me to come home. My father is the first son in his original family. In Korea, a wife of the first son usually is expected to also do household chores for the whole extended family. Therefore, what my father said cannot be true. However, even my mother partly accepted what my father said; the emotional aspect of this was very complex. She concluded that there was a need for her to earn money.

This demonstrates a thorny dilemma in housework: a peculiar work concept in capitalism society, whereby looking after one’s own children is non-work while taking care of children in a day care centre is work (Gorz 1999: 2). Focusing on the ways capitalist society has been supported by non-work, Illich (1981) coined the term “shadow work”, to manifest the link between paid work and non-work. These clarifications do not, as shown in my mother’s conclusion, equalize the housework compared to a paid job. Instead, this peculiar work concept directly provokes the devaluation of housework: doing housework within the family is nothing, because it produces no direct (market) value. Of course, this is untrue; we need however to address the issues: how to consider housework as work, and then how to recognize its value.

Fortunately, studies in this area there have been remarkable. First of all, in order to draw attention housework as work, Oakley (1974) a sociologist, wrote *The Sociology of Housework*. Second, Marxist feminists have debated ways to consider housework as work in contrast to interpretations that conceive work as productive work only. In this debate, the mechanism of housework value being exploited via the work force of husbands and children was proposed (Kain 1993). This insight resulted in the generation of a new term, ‘reproductive work’ which focuses on the social function of housework in reproducing society itself as well as human beings (Molyneux 1979). Owing to this strand of study, at least in academia, housework has been regarded as work.

However, simple recognition that women’s household-based labour is work is insufficient to resolve problems around housework. First of all, in

everyday reality, the recognition of housework as work is actually not tangible, due to the vague way of rewarding for it. Furthermore, the socio-economic conditions have changed: the burden of physical domestic labour has been diminished by technological progress, an expanding market and an increase of women's participation in paid work. Reflecting on these changes, feminist scholars have coined new term 'care' instead of domestic labour. In doing so, two insights have arisen: one is focusing on "care-giving work as the core element of domestic labour" (Gardiner 2000: 96) and the other is aiming for an alternative way of analysing the contribution of caring, in order to overcome the work/non-work dichotomy (Himmelweit 1995).<sup>2</sup>

Employing this new term 'care' has allowed significant headway into recognizing housework as a public matter. This is, first of all, supported by the theoretical linkage of the care ethic to justice and citizenship (Engster 2007, Held 1995, Herd and Meyer 2002, Sevenhuijsen 1998, 2004), through which the contribution of housework can be cooperatively expanded to the sphere of social care. Second, considering care to be public rather than private becomes efficient when urging the establishment of social care systems (see Razavi 2007). Third, it makes it possible to graphically analyse the contribution of care in three domains (family/community, market, and state) in policy studies (An 2012, Yoon 2014). This means no matter whether housework is categorised as work or not, the contribution of care to society can be diagrammatically revealed.

This visualization of the contribution of housework has been additionally clarified by the feminist project to contrive a means of calculating the economic value of housework, which the second question has also addressed. Since introducing Household Satellite Accounts (HSAs) in the 1990s to situate household production into systems of national accounts (Carrasco and Serrano 2011) based on the time spent on housework, its value has been calculated in four different ways (Budlender 2008: 35). These four approaches all show different monetary values for housework<sup>3</sup>, but this has allowed a variety of additional studies to employ the HSA to calculate diverse disadvantages women have due to housework.

For example, table 2.1 shows studies that calculated gender inequality provoked by the difference between time used in care and non-care work. Also, based on the economic value of housework, even the disadvantage of women in pension or insurance schemes has been measured (An 2009, Jefferson 2009, Moon et al. 2002). Furthermore, the distribution of care

among four sectors (family, state, market, and the third sector) has been visualized, which in Korea clearly shows, despite the expansion of social care, the dominant contribution of the family in care (An 2012). Most importantly, this counting can be converted to be compatible with GDP, making it possible to compare the distribution of care and non-care in economics not only at the domestic level but also at the global level. In this regard, there is no doubt that the endeavour to publicly recognize housework has attained a significant success.

**Table 2. 1**  
*Studies addressing care time and care work*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Gender inequality in time use                  | (Heo 2008, Warren et al. 2010)                      |
| Counting child or elderly care                 | (Mullan 2010, Smith 2007, Yoon 2014, Tuominen 1994) |
| Pension or insurance schemes                   | (An 2009, Jefferson 2009, Moon et al. 2002)         |
| Social care expansions                         | (An 2012)   |
| Comparing value between care and non-care work | (Budlender 2008)                                    |

The endeavour to publicly recognize the value of housework has been an obvious success. Nevertheless, in that there would be little progress in women's reality without change in everyday life, the next question is the effect of this success on empirical reality. This could be measured as the extent to which this recognition has had an impact on real women, e.g. acknowledgement of their contribution by family and community. It could be measured by the degree to which men are persuaded to share housework. However, disappointingly, empirical studies show little or no recognition. For example, fewer than half of 60 married couples in Canada viewed housework as work (Shaw 1988). Similarly, among 1,200 Canadian adolescents, 22 percent responded that housework was not at all important to the community (compared to 2 percent for father's job and 8 percent for mother's job) (Looker and Thiessen 1999). Housework is seen as women's work and less desirable than paid work, and for men being a full-time homemaker is at the bottom of expected job options (ibid). In addition, even if the value of housework is calculated by academia, how that value would transfer to actors is thoroughly vague, as is the meaning of the measurement in our daily experience.

Apart from having little effect on changing everyday reality, the way of valuing housework by putting it in the 'work' category has a fundamental limitation. In fact, twenty years ago, Himmelweit (1995) had already cast doubt on the work/non-work dichotomy, followed by Van Staveren (2001: 44), who argued the conceptual fallacy of valuing unpaid work with market prices. That is, for example, in measuring housework value with market prices, the difference between childcare by mother or father at home and by carers in a day care centre would be hidden. This could suggest that institutional care could be more cost-efficient than family care, because a carer in an institutional setting usually cares for more children than a mother, who, in current Korean society, has more or less two children. This point will be covered in more detail in chapter 9, but a particularly noteworthy point here is its unintended result. That is, in contrast to its original purpose of thinking about housework value, measuring value by market prices gives priority to paid work rather than housework, thereby again increasing the possibility of a care deficit.

For example, if housework is merely measured by its market value, consider the difference between a birthday party prepared by family members at home and a birthday party offered in an expensive restaurant. The latter is likely the preferred way, due to the price. Because of the expense, people tend to think the restaurant party has more value. If others flatter the hosting family for their ability to spend big money on the party and look down at home-based preparation, everybody would be eager to spend their time earning money rather than doing housework by themselves. As Hochschild (2012) correctly showed her book *The Outsourced Self*, this modern life style that outsources even intimate relationships to the market is one of the salient features of modern society, with different degrees of outsourcing in different cultures or subcultures. To measure housework value by market value would accelerate this lifestyle, an unintended consequence of overlooking the non-market value of housework.

### 2.1.2 Gendered Work Division

A friend who organized a friends' gathering soon after I gave birth to my first child did not ask me to join the gathering. Several months later, when I asked him why he had not invited me then, he replied "you have a baby". I said "I have a husband who can take care of his baby, too". My friend had never considered that my husband could look after his baby, even

though all of us have been very close friends since university. All of us joined in social movement activities, which means, all of us had progressive ideas, at least in politics. However, in everyday life, having progressive political ideas does not mean insightful differences, especially, in regard to gender equality. By contrast, with no appointment, many of my husband's friends would suddenly come to my husband's office to meet him at the end of working hours. If my husband said, "today is my turn to take care of my baby", they would ask, "Why? Where is Eunjung?" They have never understood that my husband has a duty towards family, to take care of his babies in person, no matter what their educational backgrounds or political opinions, were. They have a similar attitude on the matter of gender equality in housework.

Despite regional differences, the gendered attitude or unequal sharing of housework is worldwide. As figure 2.1 shows, among 15 indicators to measure gender inequality across 90 countries, leadership, unpaid care work,<sup>4</sup> and political representation are the top three areas largely showing extremely high gender inequality. Looking at the unpaid care work, measured based on time spent on it, in two zones (North America/Oceania and Eastern Europe/Central Asia) inequality is high, but in the other eight zones it is very high. Korea belongs in the zone of East and Southeast Asia, where the gender inequality of unpaid care work is also very high. While this comparison may be too rough to show the everyday reality of serious inequality, this indicates that gender inequality is global.

**Figure 2. 1**  
Gender inequality in ten “impact zones”

|                                   |  | China   | East and Southeast Asia (excl. China) | India   | South Asia (excl. India) | Middle East, North Africa | Sub-Saharan Africa | Latin America | North America, Oceania | Eastern Europe, Central Asia | Western Europe |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------|---------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| Gender equality in work           | Labour-force participation rate, F/M ratio   | 0.817   | 0.707                                 | 0.338   | 0.508                    | 0.324                     | 0.839              | 0.672         | 0.823                  | 0.777                        | 0.792          |
|                                   | Professional/technical jobs, F/M ratio       | 1.072   | 1.003                                 | No data | 0.346                    | 0.553                     | 0.744              | 1.064         | 1.319                  | 1.648                        | 0.964          |
|                                   | Wage gap, F/M ratio                          | 0.570   | 0.647                                 | 0.483   | 0.506                    | 0.604                     | 0.629              | 0.463         | 0.608                  | 0.586                        | 0.527          |
|                                   | Leadership, F/M ratio of leadership position | 0.201   | 0.384                                 | No data | 0.076                    | 0.116                     | 0.339              | 0.573         | 0.736                  | 0.582                        | 0.503          |
|                                   | Unpaid care work, M/F ratio                  | 0.389   | 0.299                                 | 0.102   | 0.176                    | 0.161                     | 0.476              | 0.350         | 0.618                  | 0.506                        | 0.482          |
| Essential Services                | Unmet need for family planning, % of women   | 4%      | 13%                                   | 13%     | 17%                      | 12%                       | 24%                | 10%           | 7%                     | 10%                          | 9%             |
|                                   | Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births   | 32.0    | 103.4                                 | 190.0   | 163.5                    | 57.4                      | 483.3              | 70.4          | 24.9                   | 21.4                         | 6.4            |
|                                   | Education level, F/M ratio                   | 0.973   | 0.962                                 | 0.763   | 0.788                    | 0.883                     | 0.689              | 0.989         | 1.000                  | 0.978                        | 0.997          |
|                                   | Financial inclusion, F/M ratio               | 0.873   | 0.845                                 | 0.659   | 0.525                    | 0.638                     | 0.740              | 0.799         | 0.865                  | 0.881                        | 0.827          |
|                                   | Digital inclusion, F/M ratio                 | No data | 0.868                                 | 0.724   | 0.723                    | 0.767                     | 0.580              | 0.965         | 0.996                  | 0.941                        | 0.951          |
| Legal protection, Political voice | Legal protection, F/M ratio                  | 0.583   | 0.483                                 | 0.399   | 0.261                    | 0.226                     | 0.415              | 0.657         | 0.742                  | 0.525                        | 0.771          |
|                                   | Political representation, F/M ratio          | 0.191   | 0.156                                 | 0.114   | 0.152                    | 0.116                     | 0.310              | 0.302         | 0.346                  | 0.169                        | 0.486          |
| Physical security and autonomy    | Sex ratio at birth, M/F ratio                | 1.170   | 1.060                                 | 1.108   | 1.066                    | 1.049                     | 1.038              | 1.049         | 1.049                  | 1.061                        | 1.057          |
|                                   | Child marriage, % of women                   | 2%      | 8%                                    | 27%     | 26%                      | 12%                       | 19%                | 3%            | 2%                     | 3%                           | 1%             |
|                                   | Violence against women, % of women           | 15%     | 25%                                   | 37%     | 44%                      | 38%                       | 40%                | 37%           | 33%                    | 19%                          | 22%            |

Extremely High
  High
  Medium
  Low
  Data unavailable

Source: modified from Exhibit E 9 in (Woetzel 2015: 18)

Turning to another example: the controversial news of Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer's maternity leave plan<sup>5</sup> in 2015 indicated the extent to which women are considered to be primary care givers. While male CEOs are not questioned about parental leave, many criticized her decision to have only two weeks maternity leave of the eight weeks allowed in Yahoo. This criticism was not due to concern about her health after giving birth, but because of her duty as a mother. Nobody wondered if her husband would take parental leave for his newborn baby. The main theme in this criticism is that women, but not men, should be "juggling family and job" (Lee 2012); as a powerful woman, she should be a model for other women who have the desire to care for their families while having jobs. In this critique, there is indeed no consideration of the caring desire of males. This may be true in terms of the ethic of care; nevertheless, it is strongly anchored to the conventional thinking about women as primary care givers.

Many studies have presented reasons for this undying gendered division of housework, including those from an economic exchange perspective, a socialist-feminist perspective and a psychological/socialization perspective (Coltrane 2000). Reasons have also been sought in gender ideology, relative resources, and time availability (Davis and Wills 2013, Kroska 2004). All of these reasons are actually interrelated. Socialization teaches actors a gender ideology that presents women as caregivers and men as breadwinners, with different economic opportunities. These differences in economic opportunity mean that gender enters the economic exchange of care and living costs, so that different amounts of time are available for the respective types of work. Circumscribed by this socialization, women do more housework because they are being pressured by a sense of obligation for family caring (Aronson 1992).

Turning to gender identity/gender attitude/gender ideology, the relationship between gender equality attitudes and gender equal practices is actually rather tricky. Further, the methodology of the work mentioned above is not necessarily internally consistent. For example, according to Kroska(2000), concepts like gender identity, gender role attitudes/ideology, and gender practices have all been employed in housework studies, despite the disparity between them. As Kroska pointed out, sometimes gender ideology has been measured in attitude scales, then the results conceptualized as identity. That is, after measuring gender attitude scales by, for example, asking the extent to which the subject agreed that the children

of full-time working mother had difficulty (for example, Baek 2009: 246, Chung 2008: 77), the result was categorized as “traditional wife/husband” or “feminist wife/husband.” However, that identity is connected to self-meaning while ideology is related to belief systems (Kroska 1997, 2000). Identity would include practices, while a belief system can sometimes inadequately match with practices. In this sense, in order to assess the equal sharing of housework, rather than examining gender attitude, researchers need to separately investigate (gender) identity.

Similarly, there is a mismatch between gender identity and gender ideology, and some studies have shown a gap between attitudes and practices. In Korea, a study (Kim and Kim 2015) on the attitudes of male workers has pointed out the difference, in relation to a work-family reconciliation policy, between policy support and participation intention. That is, when they were considering income substitution as a policy benefit or the level of work-involvement of their wives, they revealed different attitudes: positive support for the policy but passive intention to participate in it. Similarly, in 2009, 31.2% of male respondents agreed that housework should be shared equally between husband and wife yet only 10.0% of the same respondents answered that they shared equally (Lee et al. 2012: 140). Nevertheless, one of the most salient changes for 30 years in Korea, according to a study of the trends of value changes using 1979, 1998 and 2010 survey data, has been an increase in the egalitarian perspective (Na and Cha 2010). Consequently, as in the differences between accounts and action (Jerolmack and Khan 2014), there is a clear mismatch between gender equality attitudes and gender equal practice of housework.

To think the mismatch from another angle, consider a study (Conlon et al. 2014) that showed weakening gender in elderly care across generations, from a mother to her daughter (in law) in middle and higher socioeconomic groups. That study uncovered a dynamic of weakening gender ideology in Ireland, where old women are pursuing change by not expecting care from their daughters (in law), and either preparing budgets to purchase private care or taking state care. At the same time, young women no longer anticipate giving care to parents by providing emotional or financial support, and are freed from the duty of giving direct care. Interestingly, despite the clear dynamics of weakening elderly care by daughters (in law), the research did not investigate those who are newly in charge of elderly care, disregarding men’s role entirely.

Thus, considering who would do the housework, the research reveals the transfer of housework from women in the middle and higher socioeconomic groups to women with lower socioeconomic status via a market or state scheme, rather than increasingly gender equal practices. That is, to change habitual behavior is very difficult and would be an everyday conflict in a couple, so for a woman with middle or high economic status, purchasing housework substitution would be easier than persuading her husband to do housework. This appears economically rational when comparing the money earned by her husband or herself in middle class job positions to the expenditure needed to pay for cleaning the house, which is a low wage job.

But cost is not the only consideration. As a study (Van der Lippe et al. 2013) in the Netherlands revealed, the outsourcing of certain domestic tasks is less likely if partners enjoy those tasks. The choice of aforementioned middle and upper-class household, then, would be not only because of the difficulty of changing habits or the economic benefit but also due to the unenjoyable nature of certain housework tasks. This suggests that if we see this with the lens of choice to do housework, the analysis changes.

In this section, the ongoing gender inequality in housework in the context of increasing gender equality ideology has been reviewed, showing the transference of housework as relying on economic efficacy and preference. This, however, remains no more than an assumption, and the phenomenon in Korea remains confusing. That is, considering comprehensively the relatively moderate inequality score in the labour force participation rate and the low inequality in professional and technical jobs (Woetzel 2015: 18) as well as the increasing support for gender equality, at least attitudinally (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004, Chang and Song 2010, Na and Cha 2010), the lack of change in gender inequality in housework is quite puzzling. Unravelling this knotted puzzle will require attention to interrogating the meanings individuals assign to themselves (Kroska 2000: 369). This should relate gender practices to perceived meanings of housework, unravelling the mismatches among gender identity, gender attitude and gender practices. The first and the second research questions of this research, concerning the meanings and meaningfulness of doing housework, will help to disentangle the mismatch.

### 2.1.3 Dumping Dirty Work on the Marginalized

A woman I interviewed for my MA research was a dog sitter, a migrant domestic worker. While she took care of a dog (bathing it, brushing its teeth, cooking, walking, brushing it) in the Netherlands, her eight-year-old daughter had to take care of her one year younger brother (bathing, changing clothes, preparing for meal and school, and going to school and coming back home together) in the Philippines. No doubt, her work as a dog sitter is all primarily for her two children. With her wage, she can afford to give a good education to her children, which is her main life goal. Nevertheless, the surest truth is that taking care of a dog in her host country left her own children without proper care in her home country, and must be an uneasy situation for her and her children (Koo 2011: 27).

In the aging Global North society, such disconcerting situations are pervasive, sometimes by free contract, sometimes by human trafficking, sometimes in the formal market and sometimes in the informal market. Many studies have revealed the inferior working conditions of these migrant domestic workers. These surely differ depending on documented or undocumented status, but no matter what their documents say, they remain located at the bottom of the global work strata, with working conditions insufficient even to fulfil basic human rights. For example, there is almost never a way to legally reunite with family members in the host country. Their position in the care market, which is dumping dirty work on to the marginalized to solve the care deficit, raises at least three important issues:

The first is the bottom-most political economic status of migrant domestic workers. For example, in the countries which have state-legislated projects for receiving migrant domestic workers such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and wealthy Middle Eastern nations, in addition to the prohibition of family reunion, stringent labour control measures are widespread (e.g. restriction on changing employers and proscription against marriage and pregnancy, prohibition of permanent settlement) (Cheng 2003, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Ueno 2010). Sometimes, employers confiscate passports, demand specific dress codes or uniforms that show loyalty to the employer or indicate the employer's high status, or mandate a lack of make-up, etc. (De Casanova 2013, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). In the case of the undocumented, needless to say, they can be treated as criminals with the everyday risk of deportation (Gheasi et al. 2014). This harsh political socioeconomic environment has led to them being characterized as

“contemporary slaves” (Anderson 2000), “servants of globalization” (Parreñas 2001), or “global Cinderellas” (Lan 2006). They experience an extreme version of the political economic marginalization that all domestic workers share. In Korea, where migrant domestic work is not dominant, paid domestic work by Koreans is also almost bottom-most in occupational prestige (Choi et al. 2008), with low pay and poor working conditions (Lee and Nam 2009, Moon 2008).

Second, the continued gendering of housework has been supported by paid domestic work (Cohen 2004). There is a three-tier transfer of reproductive labour; from middle-class women in receiving countries to migrant domestic workers and from migrant domestic workers to third world women who are too poor to migrate abroad (Parreñas 2000). This three-tier care chain shows the consistent gendered practice of housework as it crosses borders. In this care chain, housework is transferred between female employers and female employees, freeing men from the care obligation.

Third, this monetized solution to the care deficit creates a moral dilemma (Tronto 2002). On one level, its resolution would be to guarantee decent working conditions and a full citizenship scheme rather than to offer a moral objection to the commodification itself (Bowman and Cole 2009, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). However, the real problem is that both possible solutions (rejecting commodification and fully supporting rights as citizen including a living wage) are unworkable. A moral objection to commodification of housework is unrealistic, and to guarantee decent working conditions and citizenship for all foreign domestic workers may be overly idealistic.

Without guaranteeing family reunification, namely ending the distortion or erosion of family ties of the South (Isaksen et al. 2008), to grant full citizenship would be a fiction. To guarantee family reunification and support decent lives for migrant families in host countries would require higher payments by the middle class in the Global North. This would reduce the number of families able to hire domestic workers legally. Therefore, unless overall demand for domestic workers reduced, the extension of the informal/illegal market would be unavoidable, making a legitimate protection scheme for domestic workers likely inoperable.

Thus, there are multi-dimensional glitches in any resolution of migrant domestic workers’ victimization. Furthermore, the present arrangement is partly in line with conspiring to neglect of men’s care obligations. Here, it

is important to interrogate not only demographic socioeconomic conditions, but also family choices for their lifestyle, to grasp what underlies the increasing demand for outsourced housework. While paid domestic work has been excluded as a topic in this research, this again points to suggested research questions, which might help resolve the problem of dumping housework on the marginalized. If the function of housework in individual and family life is only for material needs, the dumping housework on the marginalized would increase with increased economic development.

#### 2.1.4 “All become like men”

From the age of six months, my children attended day care. As soon as they began going to their day-care centre, for more than one month, they had illnesses for no special reason. At the time, everybody said that this was very normal and due to the stress of adjusting to new circumstance. I thought this was very unfair: I got my right to work at the expense of my children, who were unable even to express their opinion. But in an unfit social system, I lacked the ability to satisfy all family members. Most parents of babies in the day care centre were activists in the village, so they frequently worked even until late evening, bringing their babies wherever they went. Thus, in the morning, they brought sleeping babies to day care. Though I totally understood the situation, I felt awkward in the paradox that most of us worked for a better, more equal society, but at the same time the most victimized were our babies, in their uniquely marginalized status.

This is a general problem, revealing a priority awarded to work other than taking care of one’s own babies. To even utter this priority provokes a dichotomising feeling that is both somewhat understandable and embarrassing. This somewhat paradoxical mind set can be viewed through the lens of studies on volunteer identity within social psychology. Compared to stressors in obligatory roles such as parent or employee, stressors in volunteer roles are low because they are acquired by choice (Thoits 2003, in Thoits 2013: 378). To be sure, this would be partial. Interestingly, an interviewee in Thoits’s study (2013: 384) on the question about the thing that is less important than her volunteer role said, “I don’t know. Maybe just being a housewife?”. She had responded that her church involvement was more important than housework. In that research, identity salience was linked to physical and mental well-being (Thoits 2013: 375-6), and the

interviewee might feel more well-being when she did volunteer work than she did doing housework. This sense of greater well-being can be one of causes of preferences against housework. No doubt, to have more choice or to have a preference of one thing over the other was not problematic at all.

What we need to pay attention here is that in order to have any chance of overcoming the care crisis in its many facets (the elderly in aging society, children of dual income families, children of migrant domestic workers, and the disabled in all families) what reduces the priority of housework in relation to other work should be considered in housework studies. The generation of this lower priority holds the clue to its resolution. Furthermore, without understanding these dynamics, to impose care obligations on all human beings in the name of justice (Engster 2007, Held 1995), citizenship (Sevenhuijsen 1998), or ethics (Engster 2005, Himmelweit 2000) might not be far different from forcing it on women in the name of (motherly) love. Ignoring the actor's desire is common to all of these.

The current approach to housework has been signposted by the term "all become like men" (Himmelweit, 1995: xix) and puts priority on work outside of family, ignoring care practice. This boosts a less-care environment for those who need care: a care deficit (Hochschild 1995). Children can also be the victims of this, as women cut back and men do not share housework. As Hochschild said, "Most working mothers are already doing all they can. It is men who can do more" ([1989] 2012: 231).

But if all put more priority to paid work, it is unclear how men can be persuaded to do more housework. Furthermore, since priority is given not only to paid work but also to voluntary work, the cause of this priority is not simply material benefit. Thus, it is necessary to comprehend why and how priority is given to forms of work such as voluntary work and paid work, over housework. Without unravelling the priority over housework, no solution to the care deficit is likely.

### 2.1.5 Work-family/life balance

Aside from research on the priority given to paid work at the individual level, there are studies about work-family/life balance at the societal level (Shin 2007). In modern society, the ideal worker can always commit to paid work, thanks to someone who does housework full-time at home

(Appelbaum et al. 2002: 126). Thus, without “shadow work” (Illich 1981) i.e. work outside the market in capitalist society, ideal workers cannot exist. This is partly why it is generally believed that the increase in women’s participation in paid work increases the care deficit. Furthermore, as the birth rate decreases, the population relatively ages, making the care deficit at home an urgent public issue. Hence, reversing the priority of paid work becomes imperative for maintaining society itself. However, existing studies on work-family balance are actually limited to paid work conditions, almost ignoring housework.

To be sure, there are critical studies of the concept of work-life balance. Many critiques exist showing the impossibility of balance, given existing power inequalities in class, gender, and race (Collins 2007, Durbin et al. 2010). Endeavouring to achieve balance can also sometimes provoke stress (Caproni 2004). Further, solutions may be unworkable internationally because of local constraints (Lewis et al. 2007) or workable in only restricted ways (Haas 2005). However, it is also obvious that many policies exist to settle the balance, somehow fulfilling at least a few practical needs (Jeong 2004, Yoon 2006). For example, women have a negative attitude toward marriage in many countries where the average working hours are long and public child care schemes are comparatively poor (Fuwa 2014). This shows the positive relation between work-family balance and individual choice, albeit when balance is implausible.

But regardless of the positive relation, the important point is that, to date, all successful work-life balance policies have fundamentally stemmed from changing working conditions, with housework and family life rarely considered. This is somewhat similar to the above-mentioned naive assumption that increasing women’s participation in paid work would cause men to share housework. In particular, work-life balance studies with a focus on leisure leave the position of housework maximally ambiguous (refer Sturges and Guest 2004). That is, the issue of housework is at best on the periphery of most work-life balance studies. Challenging this and arguing the problem of dichotomizing terminology of leisure and paid work in terms of work-life balance, Collins (2007) suggested investigating work-life balance using the lens of unpaid work. Collin’s suggestion relies on a categorizing of work, family, and life, and where housework should belong to is somewhat blurred. Between work and family, housework must belong to family, yet there is no consensus to exclude housework

from the work category. Between work and life, housework may belong to life arena, but this is not clear-cut.

Indeed, the problem of dichotomizing terminology is at the core of studies of housework. For example, consider the following:

*'Work-life balance' is meant to articulate the desire of all individuals – not just those with families or caring responsibilities – to achieve and maintain a 'balance' between their paid work and their life outside work, whatever their 'life' involves, from childcare and housework to leisure or self-development. (Jones 2003: 4)*

In the quotation, the boundary of 'life' includes childcare, housework, and leisure or self-development, yet not the sphere of work. This implies that in work, there is no life. Thus, this kind of dichotomized conceptualization has a conceptual fallacy. In the work-family balance, it seems that family is outside of work. Such a conceptualization is exactly opposite the early feminists' endeavour to recognize housework as work within the domestic labour debate. In fact, in everyday life there is no absolute segregation; work is one of the main parts of life and without housework the family would not exist. As Clark (2000) wrote, in the work/family border theory, between two conceptual spheres of work and family, there is always the mixed zone and time and we are always crossing this blurred border in everyday life.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the conceptualization of housework has moved slightly from women-friendly policy (Kwon 2003, Borchorst and Siim 2008), to work-family balance (Statistics Korea 2016, Sohn et al. 2015, Kim 2011, Han 2011), to work-life balance (Durbin et al. 2010, Hogarth and Bosworth 2009, Sohn and Park 2014). The main criticism throughout is that women are generally assumed to be the primary care givers. In particular, "women-friendly policies" have insidiously implied that women are or should be primary care givers<sup>6</sup>, thereby imposing a double shift (paid work plus housework) on women (Kim 2011, Lee 2012). Finally, in the concept of the work-life balance, women need not be seen as primary care givers; instead there are individuals who wish for balance. This is progress: it cuts the link between woman and care. However, even here, as shown in the studies of work and leisure, there is no clear consideration of housework. Care responsibility must be directly addressed. Otherwise, as with the priority awarded to paid work over housework, priority will be given

to other activities (leisure or voluntary activity) over housework, with all its unintended results.

To escape this tricky conceptualization, it is informative to consider the outset of work-life balance arguments dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and demonstrations calling for reduced working hours (Hogarth and Bosworth 2009), which could be more relevant than the current incarnation. The history of human beings from industrialization onwards would be the process of reducing working time for physical life, so as to have more time for family, friends and the self. Indeed, even the genesis of private or individual life in the Renaissance (Ariès and Duby 1988) would support this movement. In this sense, human history might be seen as the process of enhancing private life. The work-life balance is then not only due to a care deficit caused by increasing women's participation in the workforce, but also as the outcome of a balance achieved by individuals who need family, friends, a bigger community, and own time as well as work to thrive in life. Then, the core of work-life balance in the post-industrial age would be the time sovereignty of individuals (Jones 2003 10), the ability to re-organize their life based on their desires. In the time sovereignty, one might wish to maximise leisure, another to prioritize family life, another to earn more money. Depending on their desires they would organize their own balance. In order to demonstrate the options, it is necessary to elucidate the role of housework, one of keys of familial-private life.

In Korea, a few studies have dealt with some aspects of this: part of actors' desires. In recent research (Kim and Kim 2013), people in dual income families have been shown to attach the same value or significance to work and family. In another recent study (Sohn and Park 2014), men's satisfaction in marriage was more affected by work-family balance, while women's satisfaction in marriage was more tied to work-leisure balance. In addition, Korean working women are relatively more work-centred (seeking extrinsic and intrinsic work value) than those of Japan and the UK (Sohn et al. 2015). Finally, when the shift in the value of work and the meaning of work-life balance among three generations was considered in terms of the ever-changing needs of a work-life balance (Lee and Yu 2013) the oldest generation put value on achievement and gaining recognition from the organization they belonged to, but put little value in the "life" area. The youngest generation put significant value on meaningful work and self-development, and for own their lives show eagerness to have time

flexibility or control their own time. Overall, these studies show a weakening priority of paid work and the increasing significance of meaningful life, family, and self. Nevertheless, as mentioned, the desire for housework, namely how to organize housework to balance everyday life, is never raised.

In this section, the ongoing dilemmas around housework has been reviewed in terms of my interactions with my parents, children, friends, and interviewees. I have focused on academic visualizations of housework, including theoretical achievements (from domestic labour debate to care theory). These are real successes, but they rarely affect the unequal imposition of housework by gender, class, or race/ethnicity (Duffy 2007, Sullivan 2011). This raises three points. First, the process of revealing the value of housework has in general used the conceptual fallacy of measuring value as market value: this gives priority to paid work, and makes the need to clarify its non-market value more urgent. Second, despite the disparity among gender identity, gender role attitudes, and gender ideology, in academic studies the three are at times employed as though they are compatible. But the increase of gender equality attitudes cannot assume a turn to gender equal practices. Third, work-family/life balance policy studies have focussed on the arena of paid work, and although this has been successful in setting certain care regimes, the issue of housework is obscured from this perspective. Overall, elaborate research on housework from the actors' perspective and in terms of actors' daily lives is needed to reveal its non-material value, to enjoy the value it can offer to the work-life balance. In this context, to investigate the meanings and meaningfulness of doing housework, as one of the fundamental activities in everyday life, can be a steppingstone for wholly comprehending actors' needs

## 2.2 Mapping Housework: reproductive labour or care work

As Quick (2008) has pointed out, nine different terms refer to housework: the production of use values, housework, non-market production, unpaid work, reproductive labour, the production of labour power as a commodity, caring labour, domestic production, and household production. These nine terms reveal the complex characteristics of housework, in which controversial theoretical issues (paid/ unpaid, market/ non-market, and pro-

ductive/ reproductive) reside. Given the very subtle and complicated implications of the diverse terms, clearly mapping out the main term for this research is necessary.

Thus, in this section, the three main terms (domestic labour, reproductive labour, and care work) will be reviewed. The former two terms, domestic labour and reproductive labour, are within the market value system, theorizing housework in comparison to market labour. Here the original aim, to reveal the significance of housework for a society, has been ineffective. By contrast, the term care work has revealed the significance of care by theorizing it linking to care ethics, which supports the care obligation of all human beings. However, mainly due to overbroad usage of care, from doctors' work to housework, to call housework unpaid care work (which would also include voluntary work) would be unclear. The next section will clarify the concept 'housework', as used in this research.

### **2.2.1 Domestic labour debate and reproductive labour**

The failure to recognise that housework provides goods and services for the family (Wharton 2000: 169-70) is being considered in political socio-economics, with terms and mechanisms being devised to capture its role and value. This reconceptualization has, broadly, flown from household chores to household labour or reproductive work, to care work. Even though the theoretical issues this entails might slightly differ according to the focus in each term, the virtual root of these theoretical issues is the same: the advent of industrial capitalism, which divided the labour process into two divergent units, the industrial and the domestic (Seccombe 1974: 6). Only in the industrial unit is labour rewarded with payment, and labour in employment has had a monopoly on perceived value (Dupré and Gagnier 1996: 555). This division has helped to trivialize housework (Coltrane 2000) and is entwined with a sexual division of work that trivialises women's work more generally.

In political economics, to establish women's position, Marxist feminists wish to restore the status of housework as productive labour. This debate, in order to show the "assimilation of work to participation in the labour market" (Dupré and Gagnier 1996), aimed to define the issue of how surplus value is generated by housework and what mechanisms are involved. In this debate, labour power was considered as the locus of surplus value or exploitation, and housework to make an economic contribution by the

act of producing labour power, which enables to maintain society itself (Folbre 1982, Molyneux 1979, Seccombe 1974). Then, women who do housework are a quasi labour class. This debate had ended by accepting Himmelweit and Mohun's (1977) argument that work in the household is not subject to the law of value. This seemed to return the status of housework to where it started, outside capitalist work.

Though this perspective is somewhat complex, the debate did hand down a legacy of solidified usage of the term reproductive labour. Originally, in the Marxist view, housework was considered unproductive because being productive means to produce surplus value exploited by capitalists (Alessandrini 2012: 11, Kain 1993). In *Capital*, volume 1, Marx (2001: 43-107) presented the concepts of use value, exchange value and value. All goods and services produced by labour have use value. Then, in the market, due to the need to measure the use value for calculating exchange value, Marx devised the concept of value as a unit to measure commodity value based on "socially necessary labour time" (ibid: 48). The commodity value consists of cost price and surplus value (Marx 1991: 118). And, given that all value is generated from labour, the surplus value is from over-labouring in relation to the wage paid as the price for that labour.

According to this reasoning, Marxist theory only makes a sense in terms of market exchange, as in the thoughtful argument of Himmelweit and Mohun (1977). In Marxist theory, the concept of value does not include the worth of a product; instead, the value only shows the quantity of "abstract human labour" (Marx 2001: 47) in a commodity. Since the endeavour to recognize housework corresponding to market labour cannot reveal the whole value produced by housework, it is a conceptual fallacy to value housework by opportunity cost (Van Staveren 2001: 44). In fact, in that domestic labour is the production of use value (Gardiner et al. 2000: 31), rather than measuring housework's value as market value, its value may more properly be recognized in terms of its societal significance and its role in individuals' lives.

Further, the solidifying usage of the term reproductive labour is ineffective in recognizing the worth of housework. Without a doubt, employing the term reproductive labour reduced the stigma of producing nothing in housework. Nevertheless, the side-effects are not trivial. First, the peculiar status "reproductive" could never be raised to the status of productive. Consider the reversed optic: "the site of capitalist production is the place where workers' labour power is *consumed*, while the domestic site of

subsistence consumption is the place where labour power is *produced* (italic in original text)” (Seccombe 1986: 57). The term “reproductive” seems too passive and accepting of auxiliary status. In fact, just as a commodity of today in a factory differs from that of yesterday, the labour power of today is different from that of yesterday, because labour power is not living human beings themselves. This means there is no reason to refer to reproducing labour power while producing a commodity. Second, apart from these trivial twists, the term “reproductive labour” fundamentally misunderstands family life. Women do not exist only to give birth and maintain society. Having a family life cannot be reduced to producing labour power.

The negative sides of both the term, reproductive labour and of positing housework as work may be partially based on lower productivity in the 19th century. Housework at that time would support physical life in ways dissimilar from those of the present, at least in affluent society. Also, partly, this thorny reasoning might derive from epistemological limitations at that time, as shown in the next chapter.

### 2.2.2 Care Work

Another way to see housework is as care-related work. Since care ethics, with a responsibility orientation anchoring in relationships, was empirically shown by Gilligan (1982), the term “care” has, for many feminist scholars, been a core of political and economic theory (Engster 2005, 2007, Graham 1991, Himmelweit 1999, 2000, 2007, Meyer 2000, Razavi 2007, Sevenhuijsen 1991, 1998, 2004, Van Staveren 2001, Tronto 1987). Further, care has been seen as the core of housework, with increasing time spent in child care and less time given to physical tasks, (Gardiner 2000: 96-99) gradually shifting the emphasis from seeing housework as work to seeing it as care (Himmelweit 2000).

Gilligan (1982) identified different ethics of care by analysing the ethics of girls and boys. Responsibility and relationships seen as the care ethics of connected beings differ from the ethics of justice (which characterized by rights and rules based on the concept of separate beings). Previously, the characteristics of the ethic of care had not been recognized as moral, and women had been considered to be inferior to men in moral philosophy. Hence, Gilligan’s findings (of a care ethic among girls, based on responsibility and relationships) made sense in terms of visualizing women’s ethics. However, there is a risk that her findings enhance the conventional

view of the connection between women and care. In fact, given that caring for family has been a long-lasting women's burden imposed by paternalism, integrating the ethics of care with feminism is an uneasy task (Sevenhuijsen 1991: 173).

To do so, Tronto (1987) has reinterpreted Gilligan's finding as the result of different social positions rather than as psychologically determined, thereby detaching them from the conventional, imposed connection between women and care. Based on this, care ethics has gone further in moving the connection with "justice" out of the private sphere and into the public political sphere as a universal ethic (Engster 2007, Held 1995). The implication is that all human beings have an obligation of care giving as proper citizens (Sevenhuijsen 1998) as well as the rights of care taking, as vulnerable beings passing through birth, aging, sickness, and death (Engster 2005). This provides an initial theoretical focus in care, theorizing care ethics as general virtues of all human beings, rather than as women's inherent propensity.

Integrating this moral obligation into care theory would be a paradigm shift in moral philosophy. In fact, to complete an ethics of justice which is based on the concept of universal equality among autonomous individuals as free, self-determined subjects, has been a human dream since the enlightenment (Taylor 1989). However, in the era of modern self, who by individualization is differentiating from others, social inequalities arise from unequally distributed power. Worse, the logic of the market and the idea of free contracts among autonomous individuals has paradoxically operated to obscure these inequalities, using "free contracts" as a symbol of equality. In contrast, by reminding people of the embeddedness of individuals in a community, care ethics focuses on our relationship with others as dependent social creatures relying on inherent senses of sympathy and compassion (Engster 2007) and this would be a competitive ethics to confront the failure of market as well as of ethics of justice. Also, in that care ethics have arisen as contextual values from shared human vulnerability, the basis of sympathy and compassion as moral sentiments, they do not risk suppression by Kantian imperative morals (Van Staveren 2001: 38). Thus, a theory of care ethics would be an advance compared to ethics of justice, as well as a closer step to everyday reality.

In practical terms, caring means helping individuals meet basic needs, developing or sustaining their capabilities, and alleviating or avoiding pain or suffering in an attentive, responsive, and respectful manner. This caring

allows society to exist (Engster 2005, Engster 2007). In addition, care is the relationship between carer and people who are cared for (Himmelweit 1999). Thus, care is the development of a relationship, rather than the production of an output (Himmelweit 2007: 583). Indeed, care is relational, inter-subjective, structurally located and embodied (Doucet 2013: 289). These definitions, plus the above-mentioned theorization of care ethics, seem to overcome the limitation of the term “reproductive labour”, in which the value of housework is recognized only as corresponding to market value. From an economic perspective, no matter what value care has in the market, the term “care” shows its significance to individuals and collective lives as well as to society.

In the policy sphere, this conceptualization and theorization becomes a positive background to urge for a social care system. In this, the care diamond of Razavi (2007), a leading framework, has been an especially effective tool in visualising proportional contributions to care. This framework identifies four care providers: families, the state, markets, and non-profit organizations. It shows the allocation of the care burden to each, so visually compares, for example, the family contribution to those by the other areas. It supports, by showing the contribution by respective care providers, efforts to persuade the state to make a larger contribution (see An 2012). Furthermore, the slogan, “from welfare regimes to care regimes” (Razavi 2007: 19) seems to bring care into the centre of the policy sphere. Hereby, it seems clear that care become one of the main factors in public policy, and not merely an invisible, private matter. In this connection, the term “care” visualizes the value of work done in the home, not only from its material angles but also in relation to political, moral and metaphysical stances.

Despite the huge progress made to valuing housework by conceptualizing care, there are still problems with employing the term “care” in this research. First, in fact, to describe housework using the term care does not resolve the paid versus unpaid care work issue, one of the main dynamics to devaluing housework. Second, even in the case of paid care work, considering that many studies have revealed the problem of under-remuneration, (England et al. 2002, Peng 2010, Razavi and Staab 2010), the problem of imposing low-paid care work on the marginalized is unchanged (Duffy 2007). Thus, the practicality of high valuation using the term care might be controversial. Third, it is unclear whether the term care includes do-

mestic services, or not. For example, Duffy (2005) argued for the exclusion of very low wage workers from consideration and a focus on a nurturance frame in theorizing care. Since the practical experience of doing housework never makes this separation, this point needs to be clarified. Fourth, the status of self-care is unclear. When care focuses on the relationship between caregiver and one who receives it, self-care is excluded. However, for sharing housework among family members, and also when considering the increasing numbers of single person households, self-care is basic care. For these reasons, the term “care” is both too wide and too narrow for this research. Care work has also, traditionally, included various types of work, ranging from work at home to work by doctors. Thus, the term could fail to present important features of aspects of housework. Considering these limitations, this research will not use care as an operative term.

### 2.2.3 Mapping out housework

Instead, in this research, the term housework will be employed, for the following three reasons.

First, although the term “care” is prevalent in academia and in policy domains, in everyday life it is still not customary, at least in the Korean context; thus, employing ‘care’ is unlikely to deliver precisely the practical meaning the interviewees of this research intend. In the same vein, despite the complication of intertwined meaning between “labour” and “work”, “housework” has become the usual term for work that maintains the household, at home, with no payment. Second, regarding the whole public sphere, the “obligation to care” should be stressed, even though this risks (for the group on whom obligation has been heavily imposed under the cloak of roles or norms such as the glorification of motherhood) producing difficulties when arguing its uneven allocation. Finally, there has been rapid change in every facet of Korean society, which has been analysed as “the simultaneity of non-simultaneous matters” (Chang 2010: 7). This co-existence of characteristics in pre-modern, modern, and post-modern society does not compare with post-industrial societies in which the term ‘care’ would be more appropriate.

Thus, considering that social meaning forms at the centre of daily behaviours of ordinary people, and that many women still struggle with the

roles or norms that justify its gendered allocation, I believe that employing the terms housework and household labour would be more appropriate.

In this research, housework is defined as the work done at home by family members to maintain (or cause the flourishing of) households without payment. Thus, doing housework for oneself is also included. This is in line with the concept of care to develop human capacities or relationships; maintaining implies continuing life and overcoming pain or suffering, and flourishing means aiming towards “an optimal range of human functioning” (Fredrickson and Losada 2005: 678). The boundary of the family would differ depending on a respective individual’s perception on it. For example, a daughter might do housework for her mother who lives separately from the daughter, but not wish to do housework for her mother-in-law, not regarding the in-law as family. However, if she has to do housework for the mother-in-law due to social norms, this situation would affect the meanings of housework she generated. In this sense, rather than restricting the boundary of family, in the context of meanings this boundary would be discussed. The housework itself could range from everyday household chores (meal preparation, washing dishes, house cleaning and laundry, repairing household equipment) to care work as well as to provisioning work (communicating with children’s teachers or the staff in clinics, home economic management, organizing family recreation, attuning relative relationships) (Neysmith 2012). However, several terms (domestic labour, household labour, housework, and care work) could be compatibly, employed according to specific contexts.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> At that time, all Korean students brought lunch boxes to school; because upper secondary school students had to study until late evening, a student would bring two boxes (for lunch and dinner).

<sup>2</sup> Related to this research, overcoming the dichotomy of work and non-work is significant, and will be revisited in chapter 9.

<sup>3</sup> The four approaches are the average earning approach, the opportunity cost approach, the generalist approach, and the specialist approach (Budlender 2008: 35). Opportunity cost uses as a baseline the wage of a full-time homemaker when she/he performs paid work. Generalist refers to, for example, cooks or teachers who do one type of task as an occupation and specialist means domestic workers.

Thus, the values of unpaid work can differ quite a lot, according to the approach employed.

<sup>4</sup> In this report, unpaid care work including routine household work such as cooking, cleaning, collecting water, and home maintenance as well as direct caring for children and aging relatives (p.12). This meaning is the same as housework in this research.

<sup>5</sup> *The Guardian* (02-09-2015) “Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer's minimal maternity leave plan prompts dismay”

<sup>6</sup> In this sense, the recent term ‘father friendly policies’ has been employed, paying attention to the different policy interests when it comes to meet different focuses on child well-being, work family conflict, and gender equality in work family/life policies (Sullivan et al. 2009: 4). This appears to be progress towards finding gender equal solutions in the work family conflict. Because in this research the main focus is on housework rather than on work policy, I did not review the literature about father friendly policies.

# 3

## Vertical Consistency: Epistemology, Theories, and Methods

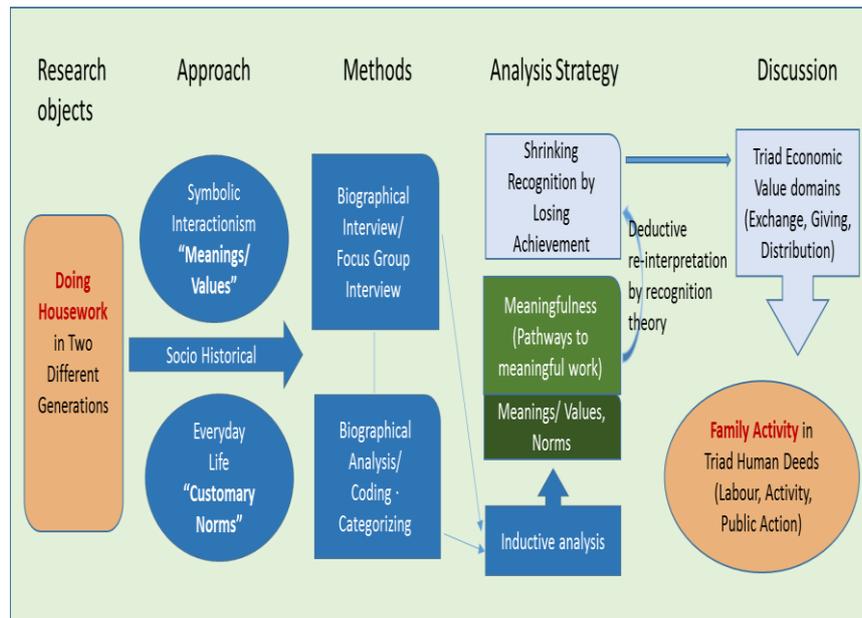
In the previous chapter, three gaps in the existing literature of housework studies were reviewed: the incongruity between theoretical valuation of housework and the everyday reality of doing housework, including the conceptual fallacy inherent in valuing housework by market value; the discrepancies between gender attitudes, ideology, and practices; and the neglect of housework issues in work-life balance studies. In order to resolve these gaps, this research will focus on actors' perspectives, such as how they feel or enjoy the market and non-market value generated by housework in everyday life, the meanings they assign to doing housework in relation to own identity, and the role of housework for human life, rather than for political economics.

Focussing on actors' perspectives does not mean investigating on a subjective, psychological level like many gender attitude studies, reducing all social matters to pure subjective tastes. Instead, this research will look at the interactions of actors to construct the social structures that generate their everyday practices, comprehending the social structures through the lens of actors. That is, even though this research investigates the actors' perspectives on doing housework, the analytic focus is at the social level of interactions and everyday practices, namely the dynamics of negotiation for conducting specific housework practices. This will be supported by the epistemological foundations for this research, as explained in the following section.

Before moving to the next section, an overall picture of this research is presented here, so as to visualize its composition and vertical consistency. In this chapter, following the epistemological foundation in the next section, four more sections address research questions. First, to respond to the first research question of *identifying the values and social meanings of housework generated by actors, and thereby customary norms*, section 3.2 offers methodological points. In figure 3.1, this section corresponds to 'approach'.

The approach combines three theories: symbolic interactionism for meanings, everyday life theory for customary norms, and generation for socio historical change. As approaches, these do not demand specific content to analyse actors' perspectives. Indeed, they show the road to inductive reasoning as a way to fully understand actors' perspectives from their own view point.

**Figure 3. 1**  
Graphic overview of this research



Next, for the second research question, *what the dynamics are that provoke the loss of meaningfulness of doing housework from the elderly to the young*, section 3.3 provides theoretical resources. In the section, the framework of pathways to meaningful work (Rosso et al. 2010) combines with recognition theory (Fraser and Honneth 2003), which correspond to the upper side of the analytical strategy in the above figure. The theories employed enable new interpretations and understandings of actors' perspectives of values, meanings, and customary norms. Third, to respond to the third research

question of *identifying the housework needed for a thriving family and self in current Korean society (where the value of housework is, what kind of values from housework people can enjoy, and how to enjoying housework value)*, a framework of ‘triad human activities in respective value domains’ generated by the mixture of two theories of Van Staveren (2001) and Arendt ([1958] 1998) will be offered in section 3.4. This corresponds to the discussion part of the above figure. This framework will help to newly conceptualize housework, resolving the mentioned conceptual fallacy of market oriented valuation. The last section of the chapter describes the biographical methods and analysis shown in the methods part of figure 3.1.

### 3.1 Knowledge Constructed by Interactions

Social science is essentially the study of human-dependent realms, which is very broad considering its suspicion that knowledge is always socially contextualized (Kasavin 2015: 434-436)<sup>1</sup>. Within social science, qualitative research, “a commitment to seeing the social world from the point of view of the actor” (Bryman 1984: 77) is a fully accepted method, and given that the initial aim of this study is to fully comprehend actors’ perspectives on housework, an appropriate one. Thus, turning to qualitative research is not merely a matter of choosing methods; rather, the epistemology of the qualitative reflects an ontological paradigm (Becker 1996, Guba and Lincoln 1994) that contrasts to the positivist paradigm.

The positivist paradigm assumes a single objective reality (Petty et al. 2012: 270) which exists outside of the mind and can be grasped by rigorous and systematic enquiries in which the principles of generalizability, validity, and reliability are fundamental. This objective reality can be achieved by following statistical principles like randomised controlled sampling to select representative samples in which generalizability emerges (Cutcliffe and McKenna 2002: 612). Herein, there is clear demarcation between researchers and the researched, and this distance is required to affirm objective knowledge. Within this paradigm, only researchers can be knowers, and they discover value-free knowledge of the external world. This positivist paradigm also rejects lay language (Guba and Lincoln 1994). It has problems in developing new knowledge contextualized in everyday reality.

Discourse on the limitations of the positivist paradigm has led, in recent decades, to the development of qualitative research, but while its methods are widely used (Richie and Lewis 2003: 8), little qualitative research appears in family-research journals (Goldberg and Allen 2015: 3-4), and qualitative research is not as common as it could be.<sup>2</sup> This may reflect resistance to its non-explicitly developed methods, which are designed to understand the world by analysing words and images and naturally occurring data, and through hypothesis-generating research (Silverman 2000: 8). These methods can include opaque analytical processes, which can be criticised in terms of the validity, reliability, and generalizability of findings (Cutcliffe and McKenna 2002).

In order to circumvent the possible limitation of qualitative studies, this section clarifies two points; recognizing all of us (researchers and researched) as knowers, and re-thinking the demarcation between objectivity and subjectivity. That is, knowledge is produced by interactions between the researchers and the researched, as actors produce knowledge by interacting with their external conditions in everyday life. This contextualized knowledge becomes generalizable not owing to the representative status of samples by random sampling, but due to enormous (vertical and horizontal) superposed interactions. In this vein, the following two subsections discuss the issues of generalizability and objectivity in the qualitative paradigm.

### 3.1.1 Co-constructing knowledge with researchers and the researched

An apple fallen from a tree has a totally different reality than a thrown apple. In former case, the unchangeable rule of gravity defines reality: the speed and energy of a falling apple are proportional to the weight of the apple. However, for the latter, because an actor threw the apple, inquiry into reality requires consideration of the actor's power, intent, purpose, emotional status, and possibly even relationship with a target. Reality in former case can be discovered through the application of rules, through which the reality is always replicable. In contrast, in the latter, the reality would need to be constructed by an inquiry including all kinds of contexts, and replicability would be rare.

Thus, for this research, scrutinizing the reality of doing housework, the ontological position is constructionist. According to constructionism,<sup>3</sup>

knowledge of social phenomenon is constructed by interactions under certain conditions (Charmaz 2008). In other words, reality is socially constructed, and cannot be analysed without understanding the process that creates it (Berger and Luckmann 1991: 13). To capture constructed reality, it is necessary to access the process of occurring reality, the above-mentioned interactions.

Symbolic interactionism is then relevant not only as methodology but also in clarifying the main role of interactions in generating reality. According to symbolic interactionism, actors act based on perceived meanings, with the meanings formed through interactions with other beings and external conditions (Blumer 1969). In this rationale, meaning occurs not only at the level of individuals, but also at the level of relationships (in the same vein as constructionism) (Gergen and Gergen 2004). This means that while accessing and analysing the meaning of doing housework, actors generate new interactions with social economic structures around housework and related phenomena, and this can indicate the meanings of housework in changing social, economic, and political contexts as well as in the centre of people's lives. These meanings would be the locus from which to grasp the reality of housework.

But, who constructs reality? As shown in previous chapter, the epistemological impetus behind my desire to re-read housework dilemmas connects to my interactions with family members, friends, children, and interviewees. Here I have interacted with my interviewees to generate a co-understanding of housework in the Korean context of rapid economic, social and demographic change. But, how can I fully embrace the understanding of housework my interviewees hold? Is it enough to interview and then make quotations from what they said, organized through a pre-existing theory? Here, I need to consider the issue of the relation between a researcher and the researched in qualitative research: who has an authority to construct knowledge.

Social epistemology suggests an interdisciplinary approach to the question of knowledge that also appreciates epistemic group agents (Fuller 2012, Palermos and Pritchard 2013). Of these two factors, appreciating epistemic group agents relates to the afore-mentioned relation between knower and known. That is, to recognize agents who have their own epistemic judgement implies that all of us are knowers in certain contexts. This means that a researcher is also a knower, and in this sense is equivalent to other informants.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), of the four different epistemological paradigms (positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism), it is the constructivist paradigm that sees a researcher as a passionate participant and facilitator of the research process. In contrast, in critical theory, the researcher has a more authoritative role in research than do those being researched. Even though both critical theory and constructivism use value-laden and value-mediated knowledge, the different role of the researcher means that the way in which each accesses and deals with data will differ.

A researcher within a critical theory paradigm has a more authoritative role, and since the researcher might hold a personal, strong perspective based on a particular theoretical bent, this could affect the processes of collecting and analysing data. Such a perspective could suppress the perspective of the researched, and preclude some analytical possibilities. For example, in the domestic labour debate, the Marxist perspective leads all debate to the matter of how to see unwaged women as members of a class, giving no room to the actual lived experience of women. Such emphasizing of a specific factor similarly affects feminist epistemology. I also believe that analytic social epistemology, like feminist epistemology, might be a theoretical lens rather than an epistemology (Poutanen 2001: 36-38).

Essentially, to follow constructivist paradigm is to respond to serendipitous occurrences in the research process, and more basically this is supported here for three reasons. First, doing housework consists of everyday activities connected with all of us, thus all of us have specific knowledge about housework. This means I may miss certain points due to, for example, my socio-economic position. Here, my interviewees may fill the gap, but if a theoretical lens has been settled at the outset, the research may lack room for the perspective of my interviewees. This would give me the authority to generate knowledge, and to manipulate interview texts to support my intentions. Second, more practically, while to have a feminist perspective might be necessary to gain an understanding of the social and political contexts of unequal sharing of housework, this perspective<sup>4</sup> would colour any interpretation of the text of an interviewee who has a strong belief in conventional gender roles. Judgement according to the preconceived perspective would come before full comprehension of an interviewee's point of view. Third, doing an interview about an individuals' life experiences is work in sensitive environments. Thus, if interviewees feel the different perspective of interviewer, to tell their stories

from own perspective may not be comfortable. This would reduce the richness of the data.

Although these reasons operate at the very practical level, they are not a matter of interview skills or attitude. Indeed, the basic rationale is still to recognise the researched as equivalent knowers, with the researcher fully opening the door and embracing knowledge from informants. Then, in that an actor's life resides in all dimensions (politics, economics, culture, and natural environment), the interdisciplinary lens should be inducted throughout the analysis process. Only then can the whole experience, the whole interactions throughout actors' lives, have a role in constructing knowledge. This should produce a wide-ranging understanding of housework, and re-conceptualize housework not only based on the logical reasoning in the academic world but also in response to the actors' need for a way to see it as part of an enjoyable life. Such a theorization could involve all dimensional knowledges, from structural contexts to actor's intentions, wishes, and meanings.

This theorization process, involving the vertical level of diversity starting from actors' experiences, leads to a different rationale of generalizability. In a qualitative paradigm (unlike positivist paradigms in which representational generalization is prevalent) at least two additional methods of generalization exist: inferential generalization and theoretical generalization (Richie and Lewis 2003: 263-286). Inferential generalization means that the finding from a particular study would be considered to be applicable in other settings or contexts, and theoretical generalization is used to draw theoretical propositions, principles or statements from the findings of a study, for more general application (Richie and Lewis 2003: 264). Unlike conventional understanding of qualitative research in which the findings are not applicable for generalization, these two methods show possible ways to generalize qualitative findings.

No social system is fixed or without change. Societal change is created through the negotiation of members, in a process of interactions. This means that theorization must take account of actors' desires, intentions, and the meanings they have given to things they wish to change, in addition to systemic dynamics. Such a theorization is not limited to measuring individuals' propensity, as in methodological individualism (Hodgson 2007) but goes further to involve lay knowledge, seeing actors' as equivalent knowers. In this way, theorization in qualitative research can consider finding to be general knowledge, not because of representative sampling,

but owing to a deep vertical range of human experiences where culture, social system, history and subjective desire intermingle.

### 3.1.2 Intermingled objectivity and subjectivity by interactions

It is unsurprising that objectivity is an issue in qualitative research. Qualitative research rejects positivist, value-free principles, and value-mediated findings are commonly expressed using subjectivity or inter-subjectivity (Cutcliffe and McKenna 2002, Di Paolo and De Jaegher 2015, Fowers and Lefevor 2015, Griffiths 1995, Harding 1992, 2015, Letiche 2013, Petty et al. 2012, Roulston and Shelton 2015). This occurs through a rejection of the possibility to be objective while researching. Instead, by situating one's subjectivity inside the research process and showing reflective self-examination of its influence on findings, subjectivity is then used to generate contextualized knowledge (Roulston and Shelton 2015). In this regard, the knowledge is not biased; rather, according to feminist standpoint epistemology, it would be strongly objective (Harding 1992, 2015).

Although I completely agree with this approach to subjectivity when generating contextualized knowledge, I think there remains a need to go further for epistemological clarity. We need to think more about whether or not the perspective of individuals can be automatically denoted as subjective. For example, as the previous chapter has shown, I assume that priority is given to paid work rather than housework, and that this may be considered to be an individual choice. However, such a judgement is not equivalent to other individual choices, such as the colour of the clothes a person chooses to wear. Four different judgement domains have been identified in a study on epistemological understanding: personal taste, aesthetic, value, and truth (Kuhn et al. 2000). In my research, questions in value domain address responsibility for the self or others, lying, and the government's role or family choice in population control (Kuhn et al. 2000: 317). Here, the judgement about those issues, while a choice, cannot be simply put down to individual taste.

Within the four domains, the choice of a colour might belong to the domain of personal taste, and could be largely subjective. Yet this would not be true, for example, for a question about the extent to which you agree that children of working mothers have difficulty, which is a common question in gender attitude studies. Actually, the knowledge we wish to generate in the social world is mainly in the domains of value or truth. In

these domains, socially constructed perspectives have a strong influence, resulting in the embeddedness of objectivity into subjectivity. That is, the answer to the above question depends on the social support system for child care, social norms on gender, individual conditions for getting help for child care, and so on. Because peoples' perceptions of the question are anchored in their socially constructed perspectives, the reality that the research aims to grasp is constructed in the interactions between objectivity and subjectivity, rather than at the level of subjectivity alone.

Symbolic interactionism, which explains the co-constructing of mind and society, would explain this intermingling of subjectivity and objectivity as the basic condition of the human environment. Symbolic interactionism, founded in the early 1900s by George Herbert Mead (Jeon 2004: 245), was originally distinguished from behaviourism as "social behaviourism", with the focus being on the effect of external stimuli on individual behaviour (Longmore 1998: 45). The intention, to accentuate the role of the actor's interpretation of external stimuli, exactly fits for the term symbolic interactionism, later coined by Blumer. According to Blumer (1969), symbolic interactionism is a theory about collective human life and human conduct.

Within symbolic interactionism, there are two main concepts: symbols and interactions (Mead and Morris [1934] 1967) which show how human beings are social. They make a clear demarcation between objective knowledge and subjective opinions impossible. This can be seen by examining these concepts. Firstly, symbols are tools for communication between human beings as well as with external conditions and the inner self. In communications, symbols already involve some meanings in common for communicators. One representative symbol is language, "a stock of ready-made symbols" (Klunklin and Greenwood 2006: 34). When two people communicate with the word "housework", they already share some meanings of housework made by epistemic group actors throughout history in specific temporal and spatial contexts. Thus, any utterance, even a single word, intermingles objective knowledge and subjective opinion.

Secondly, in the process of interaction, there are two different roles: "I" and "me". The "me" has a function as "a censor in a certain sense" (Denzin 1969: 210) creating objective conditions for a reaction by the "I", albeit, not determining the response. The "me" and the "I" can generate different responses to outward stimuli by means of reflective interpretations using symbolic language. This reflective interpretation entwining others' points of view with the "I's" specificity is the core vehicle for the emergence of

the self, which is not unerringly determined by the “me” or the “I”. This means that without others, or external stimuli, there is no self, and therein resides the integrity of object and subject.

To elaborate a bit more: the “me” cannot be generated without perceptions of others, of which there are two general groups (significant others and the generalized other). Significant others are organizations or individuals such as family or friends, while the generalized other is the wider society in which dominant culture or norms have been spawned<sup>5</sup> (Mead [1934]1967: 158). Using these concepts, the dilemmas in housework would be, for actors, related to the generalized other. This generalized other would come to actors as common sense, as norms or via significant others (that is, they are reinforced when parents or friends follow them). In these encounters, an actor has had endless interactions with all three parts (the dilemmas, significant others and the self) and in the process generates actions.

If an actor fully accepts dilemmas around housework, the dilemmas cannot be dilemmas to the actor: thereby the actor acts to support the dilemmas. That is, the dilemmas had once been common sense generated by actions of, possibly, the majority of people in a society. Later on, the majority of people who generate actions supporting common sense would interact with new situations, new people, new socioeconomic conditions or new thoughts. At this point, some people would keep their prior common-sense knowledge, while some might accept new knowledge causing them to act differently than they did in the past. For larger groups, common sense is more problematic. It becomes dilemmas, generated by modified actions in line with modified knowledge of epistemic group actors. As a result, a demarcation between objective knowledge and subjective opinion is doubtful; instead there would be always contextualized knowledge.

### 3.2 Methodological schema

As mentioned, this methodology responds to the first research question, to discover: *the values and social meanings of housework generated by actors, and thereby the customary norms*, so as to fully comprehend actors’ perspectives of doing housework. Based on the above-described epistemological stance, initially there is no specific analytical framework. Instead, apart from

meanings discovered through the symbolic interactionism approach, the analytical points are generated from the initial analysis of interview texts, the main data for this research. While I analysed the data to discover the meanings of doing housework, the other methodological points have come out. That is, I found that the different generations, rather than genders or classes, show remarkably different perspectives and without understanding customary norms, that they perceived and generated an understanding of the meanings and perceived values is unlikely. Hence, I added two more lenses to the analysis: everyday life and generation. In the next section, bearing in mind this inductive analysis, three methodological components (meanings/values, customary norms, and generation) will be explained.

### 3.2.1 Meanings/ values and interactions

#### *Meanings*

The meaning of doing housework is the initial analytic focus for comprehending collective practices of everyday housework. As discussed, contextualized knowledges are generated by practices of epistemic group agents via interactions with others, external conditions and the self. Then, for generating practice, human beings need to have meanings. As Blumer points out, human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings the things have for them (1969: 2). In the same vein, Mead ([1934] 1967: 89) wrote that meaning, the object of thought, arises in experience through the individual stimulating himself to take the attitude of the other in his reaction toward the object. That is, “human action is based on meaning derived through interaction with one’s self and others” (Burbank and Martins 2010: 27). In this research, meaning, the motives to do housework, is generated by actors in the everyday practice of housework. These meanings have arisen through the process of interactions with socio-economic structures, the generalized other (social dilemmas above mentioned and social conditions), significant others, and the self. The influence of meanings on doing housework is then relative to other deeds. For example, a mother would have her own meaning for taking care her baby in person, but she would also have a meaning of having a job or doing voluntary work. In the interactions among those meanings, she will determine her everyday activities, and these may not focus only on caring for her baby.

In this sense, the extent to which a specific interaction influences the generation of concrete meanings differs by context. For example, a woman would reflect the social dilemmas of housework when generating her practice of housework. In interaction with the devaluation or gendered division of housework, she may have negative feelings toward doing housework. If her mother persuades her to do housework in the name of her gender, in this interaction, her negative feelings toward housework could even increase. Nevertheless, in her inner interaction she could feel sorry for her mother (struggling with the bulk of the housework for all family members) and wish to help her mother. By these complex interactions, her action in reference to housework can arise with specific meanings, some of which may include reducing her mother's burden. When she marries, her husband may have gender equality attitudes, and then would prefer to share housework, which might mitigate her negative mind-set on housework. Then through positive interaction with her husband enjoying the output of shared housework, she may generate the meaning of housework in relation to family well-being, a view that would allow her to do housework proactively. If, however, her husband has traditional gender ideas, the meaning she has might be different depending on interactions from all dimensions of their married life. As such, in this research, meanings are the basis for generating housework practices.

#### *Values*

In Rosso et al. (2010)'s study, value is one of the main factors connected to the self for generating meanings, and then, in that values are the "products of cultural, institutional, and personal forces acting upon the individual that in turn have consequences of their own" (Brief and Nord 1990: 24), which kinds of values can be enjoyed by actors by doing housework would vary depending on the shift of external conditions.

In this research, as mentioned, values are the benefits of housework that actors take enjoyment in, by which everyday life can flourish. Housework has material, moral, and emotional (love and gratitude) value. Material value focused on its material usage. For example, if there are few alternatives, when making clothes by housework, the material value of the clothes in everyday life would be significant. If there are many alternatives and if the amount of money needed for them is below that of the raw material cost of the clothes made by housework, the material value of homemade clothes would be very low. Second, the moral value of housework can be taken enjoyment by being recognized as a person who keeps

the social norm in relation to doing housework. Given that to be recognized by others is one of the basic condition to be oneself (Honneth), to take enjoyment in the moral value can help one to flourish.

Third, to reckon emotional values, to look at the thoughts on positive emotions by Fredrickson would be useful. According to Fredrickson, “positive emotions broaden the scope of attention, cognition, and action, widening the array of percepts, thoughts, and actions presently in mind” (Fredrickson and Branigan 2005: 315). In this sense, the value of positive emotions is to benefit one’s physical and mental health (Fredrickson and Losada 2005). Among representative positive emotions, gratitude and love are the main values of housework doers and receivers can take enjoyment in daily life. “Gratitude emerges when people acknowledge another person as the source of their unexpected good fortune... [and urge to develop] new skills for expressing kindness and care to others” (Fredrickson 2013b: 4). “Gratitude opens your heart and carries the urge to give back – to [do] something good in return, either for the person who helped you or for someone else” (Fredrickson 2009: 41). This is different from being indebted. “Gratitude gives back freely and creatively... doesn’t play by rules” (ibid). In this sense, the emotional value of gratitude would at first correspond to one who receive housework. When a person receives the outcome of housework with the sense of gratitude, to take enjoyment in the emotion can help the person to flourish and expand care to others.

Then the doer has the opportunity to get back, in creative ways, what was given, that it, the doer can take enjoyment in value of own housework from expressions of gratitude by the receiver. At this moment of sharing positive emotions, they (the doer and the receiver) share and take enjoyment in the value of love. Love “arises when any other of the positive emotions is felt in the context of a safe, interpersonal connection or relationship” (Fredrickson 2013b: 6). “Love allows you to really *see* another person holistically, with care, concern, and compassion. Within each moment of loving connection, you become sincerely invested in this other person’s well-being, simply for his or her own sake. And the feeling is mutual” (Fredrickson 2013a: 10). That is, by housework when two parties share the emotion of gratitude the emotion of love arise and they also share it. This generates care for each other. Like any other emotion, this is always a short-lived experience and transient (Fredrickson and Branigan 2005: 313-315), a micro-moment experience. Nevertheless, “although

positive affect is transient... experiences of positive affect can spark dynamic processes with downstream repercussions for growth and resilience” (Fredrickson and Losada 2005: 679), and so the transient moment of sharing love is the loci to enhance social bonds, interpersonal connection, or relationships. To have these micro-moment experience of love and gratitude frequently makes one flourish and care for others more. “Beyond feeling good they’re also *doing* good – adding value to the world” (Fredrickson 2009: 17).

Adding to illuminating the locus of care value by Van Staveren (2001), one focus will be of clarifying how to enjoy the value of housework in everyday life. Recalling the academic significance awarded to measuring housework value (reviewed in previous chapter) it is worth paying special attention to how actors perceive and enjoy the value of housework, which would be key to comprehending their point of view about doing housework. This would address the conceptual fallacy of valuing housework by only its market value. Further, depending on the change of socio-economic conditions, the need which value actors desire to enjoy may differ: in economic difficulty, the material value of housework would be the fundamental in life while in affluent society, sharing emotional value can be more desired.

### 3.2.2 Customary norms in everyday life

All interactions generate meanings with concrete commitments to specific values, and this shows how the collective practice of doing housework has happened in everyday life. To focus on everyday reality, as a crucial impetus to the development of everyday life sociology, is to move away from the excessively passive and constrained view of the actor in macro theories in both positivist and critical sociology (Adler et al. 1987: 218). The main aim of everyday life sociology is to stimulate micro-macro syntheses among sociology’s subfields such as symbolic interactionism, dramaturgy, labelling theory, phenomenology, ethnomethodology and existential sociology (Adler et al. 1987). As in symbolic interactionism, in which human beings, society, and mind are formed by interactions (Mead and Morris [1934] 1967), human beings and society are reproduced by everyday activities in everyday life (1984). In Heller’s philosophical frame of everyday life, this could lead (for example) to acceding to the spirit of Marx while rejecting ‘historical materialism.’ Hence, the concept of everyday life in her

frame is not the naïve terrain of private life full of love and affection. Rather, everyday life is a field of social change that co-constructs human attitudes and macro systems in the process of reproducing the self and society.

In this sense, in line with the epistemology in the previous section, the two theories (symbolic interactionism and everyday life) both enable a grasp of the macro aspects of a society using the origin of micro everyday activities/interactions, but have a different focus. The former focuses on the formation of macro structures by interactions with the micro level of the human mind and the latter sheds light on the reproduction and transformation of macro systems by the consistency and change within everyday activities. The two theories thus seem complementary when used to investigate the formation of everyday practice of doing housework and its transformation.

“The ‘everyday’ includes not only what I learned about life’s fundamental rules from my father, but what I teach my son as well” (Heller 1984: 6). This transfer of the external world (by reiterating everyday activities) reproduces the person and the society. At the same time, this reproduction is not the duplication of the exact same practices. It relies on the ability of a person to synthesize within the self “the contingent singularity of particularity and the generality of the species” (Heller 1984: 20) that one’s everyday experiences interpenetrates in the reproduction process (Kang 1994). This ability has as its basis the concept of the person who has ‘particularity’ or uniqueness from the time of birth and ‘individuality’ as a conscious species-being (Heller 1984: 8- 27). Thanks to the synthesis of particularity and individuality, one’s everyday practices generate the possibility of change, but within certain boundaries. As the key to generating different practices of doing housework by individuals, this particularity, built from, for example, gender, class, area of living, the order of birth, etc., influences individual practice, so there is both this level of particularity and a wider boundary of doing housework set within a certain time period.

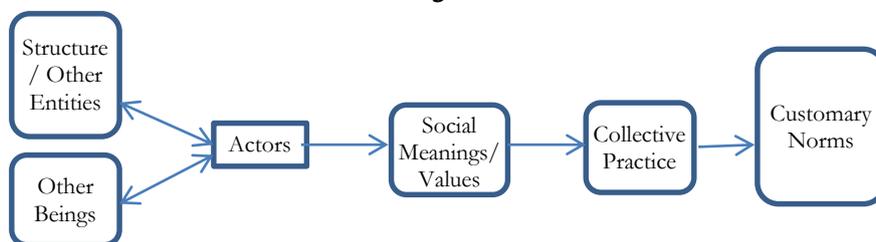
In everyday life, there are many apparatuses to reproduce self and society, and these govern and articulate “an extremely wide spectrum of the most heterogeneous activities” (Heller 1984: 165). A person would be joined to this world via apparatuses such as knowledge, science, religion, politics, morals, customs, etc. Among these, the apparatus of custom, where customary norms reside, deserves special attention in this research, because how a society allocates housework is directly through its norms.

In fact, the study of gender role attitude or gender equality ideology must include gender norms around housework. Even though “customs in the modern world are looser [and] the connection between a custom and its ostensible function is less and less rigid” (Heller 1984: 135), their change is definitely affected by shift in gender roles and norms.

Further, according to Heller, there are the primary customs and particularistic customs. The difference between these two customs is the fact that infringement on particularistic customs, unlike infringement on primary customs, is not inevitably nonsensical or irrational. Instead, the particularistic customs may be valid at a given time in a certain group of people. Thus, “total infringement of a particularistic custom goes to show that the infringer no longer recognizes the validity of the given custom” (Heller 1984: 155), and a change in the specific custom-norms comes about. The change would be based on the mismatch between social structures and the corresponding, particularistic custom-norms. In this sense, maintaining the norm would not provide significant meanings for actors.

In this research, in the process of analysis of interview texts, interviewees show when they are generating their meanings of doing housework through its intermingling with social norms. The social norms are explicitly expressed in the interview, while meanings or values are implicitly conveyed. This is because, actors use perceived meanings and values to decide on practices, and the collective practices create customary norms that then confront actors. In that most social norms are fairly stable, significant change in customary norms appear less in a person’s life and more when comparing different age groups. In my research, this point is connected to the next section (about generational change).

**Figure 3. 2**  
*Methodological scheme*



The relationship between the above-mentioned methodological points is shown in figure 3.2., Drawing upon the rationale of symbolic interactionism, meanings and values actors generate in interactions with others and external conditions (thereby conducting collective everyday practices) are schematized in the figure. In it, customary norms are formed by collective everyday practices. Although in the figure the flow seems to be linear, this is only for clarity. In everyday life, as mentioned earlier, the interactions are superimposed and intermingled with countless reflections that actors make regarding their practices, perceptions, and customary norms.

### **3.2.3 Generation: change of practices in socio-historical contexts**

In this research, I accessed information from two different age groups: old and young. Initially, I expected to find common meanings between the age groups on why actors do housework despite the social dilemmas. However, I found noticeably different meanings, in line with interactions within different socioeconomic conditions. To explain this precisely, I needed a concept of generation, which grasped the changes in collective practices and customary norms, in accordance with variation in socioeconomic conditions.

In Mannheim, the notion of generation beyond age groupings in society is most fully developed, locating generations within socio-historical contexts (Pilcher 1994). Going beyond age groupings restricted by biological demarcation, the concept of generation has emphasised social factors, whereby a generation has a distinctive historical consciousness or knowledge in experiencing the certain pattern of social and cultural phenomena (Pilcher 1994). Even though actors' practices are not determined by social structures such as "culture", "social systems", "social stratification" or "social roles," there is no doubt that the structures must be conditions for their actions (Blumer 1969: 41). Hence, different socio-historical contexts would relate to somehow different experiences and consciousness. For example, in experiencing factory life in their 20s, two generations in Korea (one in early industrial conditions and the other in post-industrial conditions) will differ in their consciousness of factory life.

How a generation is distinguished from another generation can be explained in two reverse channels: first, from experiencing objective common social events to having generational consciousness, and second, from having generational consciousness and adopting a similar social event (Chun 2004:43-44). One clear point is that a generation can be identified as a historically configured unit occupying similar social locations by having common consciousness and experiencing common social events (Mannheim 1952). Relying on this, the concept of generation is, like the concept of class, a useful frame to study social change.

Of course, mostly due to the continuous emergence of new participants and the disappearance of former participants, as well as to continual interactions between generations in transmitting the accumulated cultural heritage, a clear line between generations is impossible (Mannheim 1952) and this practical difficulty makes the use of the concept difficult in an empirical research setting. In this research, a major historical event was used to mark a significant change in society as a condition to distinguish a generation. This is preferable to simply “age”, even though, as Mannheim notes, experiences in adolescence are significant in forming generational consciousness (Mannheim 1952). Still, it is not age alone: experience would differ depending on the characteristic of the social environment, the societal event and the topic of research.

**Figure 3.3**  
*Methodological scheme by generation*

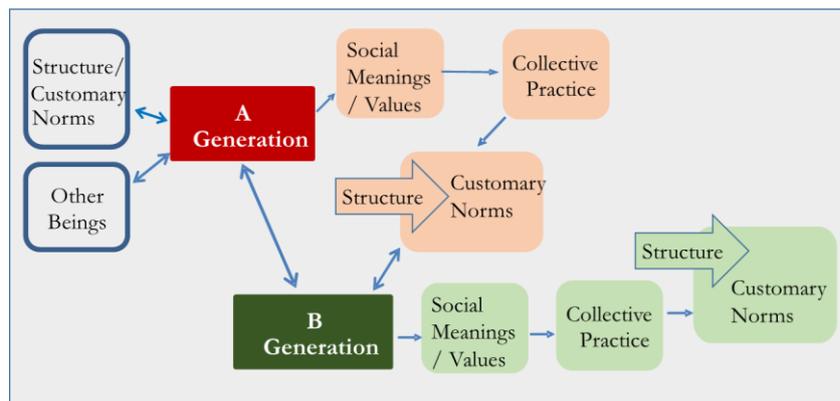


Figure 3.3 depicts the relation between meanings/values, collective practices and customary norms across two generations. In this schema, the different colours indicate the different generations. The A generation has its own structure, customary norms, and so on, with which they interact and thereby produce their own meanings, practices and customary norms. The things the A generation forms are things with which the B generation must interact. However, in addition to the things the A generation forms, the B generation must interact with socio-economic change as well, so another structure will emerge. The mismatch between the changed social structure and the norms generated by the A generation can be an impetus to shifts in meanings/values, collective practices, and norms by the B generation. Apart from these interactions, the lasting feature of customary norms means there is partial consistency and partial change between the customary norms the two generations produce.

### **3.3 Theoretical Resources 1: meaningfulness of doing housework**

The process of understanding actors' meanings revealed the diminishing meaningfulness of doing housework. Thus, to analyse the dynamics of diminishing meaningfulness of doing housework, my second research question, I have employed a framework using both the pathways to meaningful work (Rosso et al. 2010) and recognition theory (Honneth 1996, Fraser and Honneth 2003). These two theories are effective in understanding meaningfulness in connection to 'the self' due to their social psychological background. Thus, this will, in particular, assist in the investigation of (gender) identity, which is related to enhancing comprehension of the mismatch between gender ideology and practice (Kroska 2000).

#### **3.3.1 Pathways to meaningful work by social psychological lens**

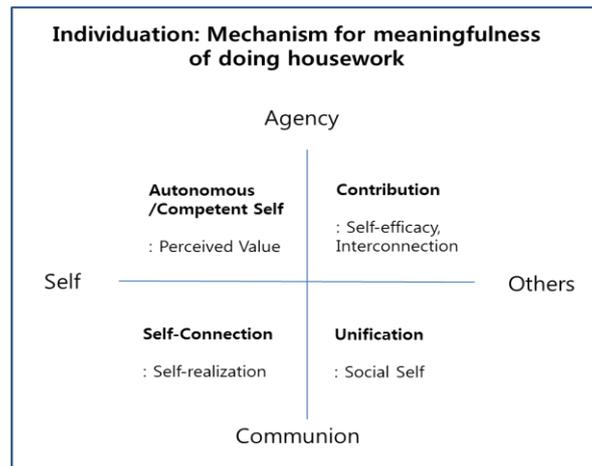
Reviewing the literature on the meaning of work across many disciplines, Rosso et al. (2010) put forward four sources of meaning of work and four pathways to meaningful work. The target work area in that research is occupational work, in which the operational reward system differs from the one operational in housework. Yet, except for the financial reward, there may not be much difference in the meaning making scheme between paid work and housework. In the four pathways to meaningful work by Rosso

et al. (2010), two mechanisms (desire for agency and desire for communion) operate with respect to the self or others. Employing these mechanisms, the authors illuminated four pathways: Individuation (self-agency), Contribution (other-agency), Self-Connection (self-communion), and Unification (other-communion). If an actor feels an enhanced sense of individuation, contribution, self-connection, or unification through doing specific work, that work will have more meaning. Or, there could be a change, for example, from contribution to individuation, depending on the priority in specific spatiotemporal contexts. If a society gave more priority to contribution, then when it comes to fulfilling a sense of contribution by doing specific work, the actor may feel more meaningfulness toward the work.

Overall, I accept this framework, and yet see that the factors in the four categories, having been collected from many research projects dealing with paid work, are too diverse. This may be a problem for my research, because I deal only with housework. Furthermore, individuation, the first category, would not be linearly toward oneself, but must include seeing the self through the lens of others. The term “individuation” can include both the self as separate from others and the embedded self into a community (Davis 2013). That is, individuation from a psychological perspective stands for an individual who is both separate and cannot exist without others (Fordham 1958). Another way to see this is the human ontological characteristic of being social beings yet having particularities (Heller 1984). Thus, the meanings, values, and norms they generate are “open-endedly social” (Venn 2010: 135).

To reflect this slight difference, I modified the Rosso et al.’s (2010) framework (see figure 3.4) to show individuation as a mechanism to boost the meaningfulness of doing housework. In line with the original framework, the mechanism for boosting meaningfulness of doing housework has inevitably travelled through the self. Then, “the self” denotes individuation rather than the totality of the self, and to fulfil the self in the directions of agency and communion is the mechanism for the meaningfulness of doing housework. In this mechanism, the four pathways for boosting meaningfulness of doing housework consist of autonomous/competent self, contribution, self-connection, and unification. These four pathways reveal via concrete factors the meaning of performing housework.

**Figure 3. 4**  
*Framework for meaningfulness of doing housework*



The autonomous/competent self is revealed via the character of housework as production, namely through its perceived value. If the perceived value of housework is big, an actor would become a ‘competent self’ relying on the value generated, thereby getting more meaningfulness from doing housework. Second, when the contribution of housework is recognized by one who did it or by one who received it, the person who did it would feel a sense of self-efficacy or interconnection, and this also boosts its meaningfulness. Third, for self-connection, the ideas of gender equality and self-realization as basic goals of life are sub-factors that influence self-connection. Finally, the extent to which their social identity can be supported by doing housework is related to the factor of unification (being unified into a society/community). Overall, in this research, relying on these pathways, the shift of meaningfulness in doing housework in an early industrial society is compared to that in a (post)industrial society.

### 3.3.2 Recognition

For the meaningfulness of doing housework, the mechanism of individuation is operative for both generations in this research. It revealed that for the social self, for woman in the older generation, doing housework is connected to fulfilment of the social self, while for the young generation

it is not. Both generations perceived the gender inequality of doing housework, but this was acceptable for the older generation and not for the young. This difference may be interpreted in terms of individualization, by focusing on the separation from tradition at the outset of modern society (Dawson 2012: 307), but the cause of acceptance or rejection of the tradition is less clear. In order to unravel this puzzle, I employed recognition theory, which presents the shifting of factors to get recognition in terms of historical contexts. According to recognition theory, human beings “always owe their normative justification to principles institutionally anchored in the historically established recognition order” (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 137). As a result, the psychological pathways toward individuation would have different beacons for the two generations, depending on historical context.

The theory of recognition put forwarded by Honneth stems from Critical Theory, which focuses on social conflict and emancipation. In modern society, this perspective, originally largely from Marxism, theorized the primary area of social conflict and for emancipation as the economic area, based on the conflict between labour and capital. Since the decline of Marxism following the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the idea of economic determinism in social change has been questioned. The practice of giving priority to economic conditions has also waned in the face of other factors that cause social conflict, such as large migrations, racial conflict, gender conflict and so on. As sources of social conflict diversify, the focus on redistribution as a solution to all social conflict has waned.

Instead, the theory of recognition has been put forward to examine varied social conflicts, in which “being disrespected” by misrecognition is as significant as economic inferiority caused by maldistribution. For example, the conflict regarding homosexuality is the struggle for recognition and is not directly connected to patterns of distribution. Without respect, emancipation does not come. This new direction was first presented in Honneth’s book *The Struggle for Recognition*, in which three forms of disrespect were theorized: the violation of body, the denial of rights and the denigration of a way of life, which pair with inter-subjective recognition of love, rights, and solidarity (Honneth 1996).

Honneth later refined his recognition theory with three spheres of recognition (love, law, and achievement) using historical differentiation (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 130-150), in which the distribution sphere has been more fully clarified. This clarification is important for my research.

The general idea is that in pre-modern society, recognition occurred through legitimately being a member of society and getting “the honour or status conferred on him or her by all other members of society within the framework of an established prestige order” (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 139). This single sphere for recognition fractured with the advent of bourgeois-capitalist society.

Now, recognition can come in many ways. Firstly, in addition to care for children as progeny, recognition is part of the connection of love and marriage in the bourgeois ideal: reciprocal loving care for each other’s well-being (ibid: 139). Secondly, the normative principle of legal equality for all members in a society has become a new foundation for recognition as the pre-modern hierarchal status order breaks down. Third, “‘individual achievement’ [has] emerged as a leading cultural idea under the influence of the religious valorization of paid work” (ibid: 140) and this has become the most significant sphere of recognition. This triad of spheres of recognition clarify merit based achievement in various jobs in the work hierarchy, the salient phenomenon of modern society. In this sense, the valuation of housework by only market value would be compatible with the recognition of the sphere of achievement but incompatible with the sphere of love.

In this study, even though all interviewees have lived in modern capitalist society of Korea, due to the strong legacy of pre-modern life, the different historical spheres for recognition from pre-modern society to modern capitalist society can be employed. Furthermore, the missing recognition in the sphere of love would be the loci of the conceptual fallacy of calculating housework value by its market value. This conceptual fallacy was a conventional way of understanding social conflict in early capitalist society, where any social conflict was reduced to the matter of maldistribution. In this research, for a deep and broad comprehension, the comprehension of interviewees’ perceptions of doing housework will be re-interpreted by the lens of recognition theory.

### 3.4 Theoretical Resources 2: Triad Human Practices in Respective Value Domains

As mentioned, the theoretical resources in this section are for responding to the third research question of *what constitutes the housework needed for a*

*thriving family and self in current post-industrial Korean society.* To think about this question, two theories will be employed. First, within behavioural economics, the market is only one of three economic institutions, each of which involves different values (Van Staveren 2001). Their respective values are enjoyed by human beings via corresponding human practice. Second, connecting respective values in economic domains with corresponding human practices (modified from Arendt's theory) ([1958] 1998), clarifies the room for re-conceptualizing housework. Indeed, this theoretical composition was available only after interpreting the meaningfulness of doing housework. Through the interpretation, the harmful effect of the conceptual fallacy of measuring housework by market value was empirically revealed, and the need to redefine the value of housework in terms of "thriving life" has obviously come out. This re-conceptualization of housework will be completed in the chapter 9. Here, two of the theories used for this re-conceptualization will be explained.

#### 3.4.1 Balance of triad values in three economic domains: by behavioural economics

After observing diverse economies among tribes as well as archaic societies, Polanyi put forward his tripartite economic domains (exchange, redistribution, and reciprocity) ([1944] 2001, 1957, 1977). Arguing against economic solipsism (Polanyi 1977: 14-17), Polanyi clarified the embeddedness of market economy in society, revealing the misconception of market-oriented modern economics: self-regulating markets and the human propensity to value trade over exchange activity (Polanyi [1944] 2001: 45-80). In the era of pre-exchange activity, under the conditions of the absence of both the motive of gain and the principle of labouring for remuneration, the two main principles of behavior for distributing goods and services are reciprocity and redistribution (ibid: 49). The domain of reciprocity contains housework, which belongs to the institution of household economies and of family reproductive strategies (Mingione 2000: 27).

Each of these tripartite institutional arrangements (exchange, redistribution, and reciprocity) has corresponding manners and personal attitudes in its operation (Polanyi 1977: 35-43). Firstly, in the case of exchange, the operating pattern is the movement of goods and services between any two dispersed or random points and includes the bartering attitude of individuals in higgling and haggling. In redistribution, the movement is toward

centre for collecting and away from it for distribution by virtue of custom, law, or central decision (Mingione 2000: 26) with the cooperation of individuals. In reciprocity, goods and services, as a form of gift and counter-gift, move in symmetrical arrangements within relatively small groups and between individuals, showing reciprocal attitudes.

Here, symmetry can be explained in two dimensions. One is unidirectional movement among symmetrical subgroups in a chain of reciprocity; thus, without mutuality between two parties all members of subgroups can get analogous goods and services (Polanyi 1977: 38-39). One example would be care by parents of children: parents received care from their parents and give it to their children. In this circle, all children can in theory receive the care they need. Another is the symmetry of gift and counter-gift. While gift and counter-gift move neither coincidentally nor with the same goods or services, they still use the give and take principle. For example, between tribes or friends, for a commemorative event one party would give a gift; in the future, the counterpart will give back analogous yet not exactly the same counter-gift. As has been shown (Lee et al. 2006), there is a symmetrical feature in resource exchanges between mothers and their adolescent children. The asymmetric positive exchange is counter-balanced by putting a high value on the resources received from children, thereby making the exchange symmetrical. In this vein, putting unpaid housework into the category of reciprocity must be very appropriate. This distinguishes it from paid care-work, which would belong to exchange domain.<sup>6</sup> This distinction will be dealt in chapter 9.

Here, I am mainly interested in the triad values in the tripartite economic institutions of exchange, redistribution, and reciprocity, and the balance of the three values in human lives, as discussed by Van Staveren (2001). Pointing out the possibility to have a reciprocity relationship in the market, she uses the term *giving* instead of reciprocity (ibid: 62). Then, she illuminates the different values in the three institutions of economic behaviours. By arguing against the monistic concept of rationality of neo-classical economics, she opens the door to clarify plural values with ethical dimensions in economics. Given that all the three values are fundamental to allowing human beings to flourish, she emphasized balancing the three values from an Aristotelian perspective. This balance necessarily includes the market, since while following the decay of the former Soviet Bloc (contemporary with Polanyi) opposition to market capitalism was still trendy, in post-industrial society life without a market is no longer imaginable.

Where Polanyi's work reminds us our reciprocal or cooperative attitudes in economic behavior, Van Staveren insightfully points out the balance needed in three value domains, a momentous step forward in comparison with other care theories (Engster 2007, Himmelweit 2000, Sevenhuijsen 1998). According to Van Staveren, the triad of values and domains are "freedom" in an exchange/market, "justice" in redistribution/state, and "care" in a giving/care economy. While all three domains are distinct with respect to their roles and their manners of operation, the domains are also interrelated, via ongoing institutional mediations (Van Staveren 2001: 58-87). The value domain of freedom in an exchange/market is related to pride, autonomy and self-esteem and enables human beings to be independent. Freedom here would include freedom from restriction by nature as a basic life condition to achieving individual autonomy, and the free self, including expanding choices in the market. The value domain of justice, the primary virtue in political life, is based on the sense of correctness and fairness, by which members in a political community voluntarily follow social rules and show solidarity. As well, justice is the basis of enabling freedom in the market to prevent exploitation (Van Staveren 2001: 86). The value domain of care is based on interpersonal values with a sense of affection enhancing relationships, in line with the core concept of care theory (Himmelweit 2000, 2007). While the emotional value of gratitude and love is at the psychological level of individuals, care value is at the ethical level. That is, taking enjoyment in the emotional value of daily life can be a personal resource in becoming a caring person with an ethical commitment. That is, unlike moral value that resides in social norms as external force for individuals, care value comes out in sharing experiences of caring at the interpersonal level, supported by experiences of the emotional value of gratitude and love.

Unlike the operating formulas in the realm of markets (where exchange is mostly in monetary value) or in the realm of redistribution (where following rules for rightness/fairness is central), in the realm of giving there is room for one to choose the way to reciprocate. This aspect of the giving domain allows human beings to relax the tension that could result from taking, that is, dis-benefit or dishonor. Since receiving affection or care is neither by debt nor by rule, people are willing to give back the gift of care in a symmetrical way. In this sense, what makes care of value is not the kinds of goods and services given or produced, but is the way of giving. This distinguishes care from exchange or redistribution, and is important

when rectifying the conceptual fallacy of measuring housework value by its market value.

### 3.4.2 Triad of human practices: Action, work, activity

In order to see the triads of values and value domains in linkage to everyday human practices, it is useful to employ the classical concept of three fundamental human activities (*labour, work, action*) that originated with Hannah Arendt (Arendt [1958] 1998). Like Van Staveren, who went against the monistic idea that rationality in neoclassical economics produces a good life, Arendt argued against the reduction of all human activities to labour. “Since the admission of household and housekeeping activities to the public realm” (Arendt [1958] 1998: 45) by Christian thought on labour (Elshtain 1981: 55-92, Taylor 1989: 234-247), the “glorification of labour as the source of all values” (Arendt [1958] 1998: 85) had engendered the idea that there is productive and unproductive labour. This division “despised unproductive labour as parasitical, actually [as] a kind of perversion of labour, as though nothing were worthy of this name which did not enrich the world” (ibid: 86). In this way, Arendt tried to illuminate the different human activities that add new objects such as tools, artworks or dignity to the human world.

In the three human activities in Arendt’s theory, first, “labour is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body” (ibid: 7). “To labour meant to be enslaved by necessity and this enslavement was inherent in the condition of human life” (ibid: 83-4). In this sense, physical life consumes the production of labour, and production vanishes in a short period. Second, work “corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence” (ibid: 7). The products of work that are for use rather than consumption make up the human-made world and have durability in the stabilization of human life. Finally, action corresponds to the human condition of plurality, relying on the character of equality and distinction, which is the condition of all political life. “With word and deed, we insert ourselves into the human world and this insertion is like a second birth” (ibid: 176). In this sense, action is connected to natality and earning political life, thereby gaining eternity via human history. In sum, the function of each activity is that labour is for biological life, work for cultural/societal life, and action for political life. It follows that the reduction of all human activities to labour is no more than being enslaved as earth-

bound creatures, since all three forms of activity are indeed fundamental to *vita active*.

Despite the significance of illuminating respective function of different human activities, there are some complexities to iron out before using it in this research. First, in contrast to glorifying labour, Arendt anchored labour in the animal world. According to Arendt terms, the concept of men as *animal laborans* follows the ancient Greek distinction, indicating those who, like slaves and tame animals (livestock), cannot be makers of their own lives. However, this concept does not clarify working life in current society, where (at least in law) there are no more slaves. Second, Arendt's distinction of private and public realms corresponding to an animal and a human world is based on a dualistic, hierarchic concept of private and public realms, itself corresponding to feminine and masculine spheres. This hierarchic concept has already been criticized by feminist scholars (see, e.g. Elshtain 1981, Van Staveren 2001: 88-90). Third, as Arendt mentioned, the distinction between labour and work is not usual "in either the pre-modern tradition of political thought or in the large body of modern labour theories" (Arendt [1958] 1998: 80). Indeed, the usage of the two terms in current everyday life is hardly distinguished. In this sense, to modify the two terms (labour and work) is not only understandable, but also necessary when actualizing the theory in current everyday life of human beings.

Thus, to clarify, I adjusted the boundary of each activity, by modifying the terms Arendt used (labour, work, and action) to "work, activity, and action" to pair them to the values and value domains of "freedom/markets, care/giving, and justice/state" put forward by Van Staveren. When it comes to links among the three value domains, to link "action" to the realm of redistribution/state as political arena seems unproblematic. In this realm, by action, human beings can enjoy the value of justice.

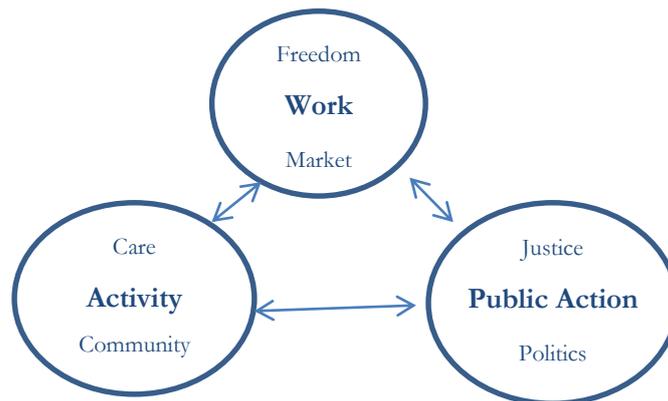
Before linking the terms work and activity to the other two value domains, I need to modify Arendt's original terms: labour and work. The core of 'labour' for Arendt belongs in the private realm (namely for living, for the fundamental activity of physical life). In current society, to sell labour power in the market is one of the basic means for living. Then according to Arendt, to participate in the market is "work", the deed of *homo faber*: "his public realm is the exchange market, where he can show the products of his hand and receive the esteem which is due him" (ibid: 160).

This implies that to join the public realm is to already belong to the human-made world because, in the animal world, there is no public realm. In fact, as the main area of production moved from the family to the public realm through modern industrialization (Cho 1986), practice for living no longer belongs to the private realm. Hence, to use the term “work” to denote the practice of living in the market would be reasonable. This, in terms of Van Staveren’s theory, suggests that through work, a human being can become “an autonomous self” enjoying the value of freedom.

But in Arendt’s work concept, there is a part that belongs to neither action nor work in the modified terminology, e.g. the work of artists. To reckon with this, considering the activity of hobby seems relevant. For Arendt, hobby activity is compared to the work of artist “who, strictly speaking, is the only ‘worker’ in labouring society” (ibid: 127), granting playfulness to the artist in working. Despite her awareness of playfulness in art, Arendt disregarded playfulness within the individual, namely in the private realm. Instead, she focused the worth of artwork in the process of thinking as the highest worldly productivity of *homo faber*. Similarly, due to the character of being in private realm and the huge price for elimination of life’s burden, Arendt disagreed with the perception of hobbies that claimed that “socialized men” would enjoy spending free time in highly productive society, as suggested by Marx (ibid: 117-125).

However, unlike the period of Arendt or Marx, in current post-industrial society, the highly productive society, activities which are basically for playfulness become significant. To think about *homo ludens* would be a useful way to address activity which is for the sake of itself, yet still adds something to the society. *Homo Ludens*, “(hu)man as player” is the character of a human being who creates culture through play (Brown and Thomas 2010: 328). Play for fun is the opposite of work, but nevertheless a significant deed. Creativity is key to the process of solving riddles and finding and filling the gaps between what we know and what we want achieve (ibid: 329), thereby adding new things which become cultural assets. The core of clarifying the differences between “work” and Arendt’s “labour” is thus to illuminate the worth produced by so-called unproductive labour. Practices like hobbies or art work are relevant here, because on one level they are play, but they are still embedded in and add worth to society. It thus makes sense to call a deed an ‘activity’, which can provide joyfulness, satisfaction or something positive.

**Figure 3.5**  
Triad human activities in respective value domains



Source: modified from Figure 2.1 in Staveren (2001)

In line with Van Staveren's work, giving does not belong to the market for exchange or state for (re)distribution, so presents no disbenefit or dishonor. Instead, by giving in communities, human beings can gain the joyfulness of affection, or develop relationships enhancing emotional bonds. The development of relationships is a core concept of care (Himmelweit 2000). To be sure, to clarify how far the two categorizations, activity and giving, can work compatibly requires a more delicate discussion. For example, it is unclear whether the enjoyable value from all activity is care, which is the main value in the giving domain in the theory of Van Staveren. Nevertheless, when it comes to connecting to housework, the activity (housework) would certainly have an aspect of enjoyment of relationships and care value.

The tripartite naming of human practices in respective value domains is presented in figure 3.5. Like the interrelated value domains, the triad practices are not absolutely separable. Products of art activity would be sold for a living by artists, but artists would still get joy from the activity itself, which could be the main impulse to do it. Then in art exhibition, there is an opportunity to enjoy artwork that can be redistributed by this welfare system. In any case, there is balance among the triad practices in everyday life, thereby producing diverse values for the thriving human life.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.5 Biographical Methods and Analytical strategy

Because this research focused initially on accessing actors' meanings of doing housework, it relies on the logic of qualitative research to understand the world from actors' viewpoint. For this, I employed biographical interviews and focus group interviews to generate data. To analyse interview texts, I utilized biographical analysis and open coding. This section corresponds to the methods and inductive analysis in figure 3.1. In inductive methods, the fundamental focus is on the ground as the departure point for exploring social reality, not on *a priori* assumptions that are logically deduced (Barney and Anselm 1967, Rosenthal 2004). In this section, I will explain the merit of biographical interview as my main method for generating data, and my strategy to integrate vertical and horizontal analyses, which is absolutely in line with inductive analysis.

#### 3.5.1 Biography as the locus for studying social reality

Distinguishing the research approach for human sciences from that of natural sciences, biographical methods follow Dilthey's subjectivist tradition (Rustin 2000), in line with a phenomenological approach. In phenomenology, experiences are the main vehicles for grasping the world through actors' consciousness and their reflection on their experiences. Through self-conscious reflection, experiences become temporal and special loci for the self to coexist with and to interact with others. The concepts of relationality and inter-subjectivity also reside here (Letiche 2013). In this regard, along with the epistemological stance of intermingling objectivity and subjectivity as stated in section 3.1, individuals' experiences are not situated at the level of the individual; instead objectivity/subjectivity and macro/micro are always intertwined in experiences (Yi 2005). Thus, "biographical methodologies enable societies and cultures to be studied from the individual 'upwards', rather than from the social structure 'downwards'" (Rustin 2000: 45).

To scrutinize the meanings of housework, to access actors' interpretations and understandings of life including the choice to draw a trajectory of the past, is the initial point. In addition, to find how and to what extent actors can enjoy the value of housework rather than recognizing it as work

could be significant in analysing its meaning. In the centre of these concerns, the self, namely what an actor thinks about her or himself may influence the meaning of doing housework. This corresponds to the idea of investigating identity so as to unravel the mismatch between increasing gender equality attitude/ideology and the becalmed gendered practice (Kroska 2000). Above all, as stated in section 3.3, the findings anchoring at 'the self' can be re-interpreted using Rosso et al.'s (2010) framework, which focused on the embedded and distinguished self in meaningful work. In this context, considering that self-concept is constructed and reconstructed by interactions throughout life (Mead and Morris [1934] 1967), to access varied life stories instead of direct opinions about housework is a better method to reach a well-rounded comprehension. Bearing in mind the centrality of the self in meaning making, given that the focus of biographical interview is to access one's whole life history, I have employed biographical interview to generate data.

Despite the compatibility of biographical interview with this research, conventional criticism (regarding the vagueness of sampling strategy and the usual small sample size) of the method are also considered. First, in contrast to grounded theory methods, which suggest a theoretical sampling strategy (Barney and Anselm 1967), in biographical interview there is no specific way of sampling. Second, concentrating more on depth rather than breadth, a small sample size of around six to eight is sometimes recommended (Pietkiewicz and Smith 2014: 9). To respond to this criticism concerning sampling, this study has employed a relatively large sample size, with a purposive sampling strategy. But more importantly, I believe that the twofold merits (narrative identity and interview order) of biographical interview actually outweigh any weak points. By narrative identity, the construction of 'the self' can be clearly revealed. Through the interview order, an interviewee is likely to have the initiative to lead the interview, enhancing the co-constructing of knowledge. This is consistent with the stated epistemological stance of this research.

Considered in detail, a narrative will have a plot that confers structure, meaning, and context to the selected events (Maines 1993: 21). Thanks to the narrative, doing biographical interview is totally different from using structured questions. Doing a biographical interview is telling a story, in which the plot an interviewee composes always comes out. When interviewees tell their own biographies, they select concrete life events and tell these with a specific plot in mind, and in this the teller has generated the

self (Fischer and Goblirsch 2007). This is in line with the concept of “narrative identity” of Paul Ricoeur (Pucci 1992). In narrative identity, the self, reflecting on past events from the present standpoint and from a desired future, is formed through the process of narration. Each of us want to be a “who” for someone (Pucci 1992: 193), which is the core of the individuation concept, wherein the meaning of life and the meaning of work are located. As an actor, one’s own interpretation of how far doing housework is useful for oneself and the external world would produce a specific response towards housework. This has an influence on the self as the person who does housework. Thus, “the kind of self-reflexive construction of self-identity” (Erel 2007) is the key for analysing the meaning of things, and biographical interview must be relevant to investigating the meaning of housework.

In biographical interview there are three stages: open question, initial narrative questions, and external narrative questions. The open question is about biographers’ life histories. The researcher does not ask any specific questions at first, hence the interviewee has the right to choose the topic and the specific point where they start. Telling a story with no specific question is not that easy. However, this is significant in giving the initiative to biographers to lead the interview. It allows the story to be their own, preventing them from being led by the interests of the interviewer. Interviewers cannot interrupt or intervene in story-telling, only support the memories that surface and flow. Only in this way will the narrative identity be formed and revealed. Only when the teller is immersed in telling a story will the story come out with a plot. As the biographer is immersed in telling this story, specific memories and their attendant emotions will rise and flow, allowing the narrative identity to be seen. This “opens up new fields and thematic connections to our research question that we had not previously suspected” (Rosenthal 2004:51). Furthermore, the first story a biographer tells usually has a significant personal meaning. Thus, the reason they chose to tell it in that specific way is one of key points in analysing a story.

Second, initial narrative questions are narrative-generating questions related to an issue the biographer has already mentioned. “A narrative question does not mean asking questions about opinions or reasons (‘Why did you...?’, ‘Why did you do that?’, ‘Why did you want to ...?’)” (ibid: 52). Until this stage, the focus is on encouraging the telling of a story with a rich narrative. Rather than obviously adjudicative thought, rich narrative

stems from a biographer's discursive emotions and episodic memories, in which embodied knowledge can arise.<sup>8</sup> For telling clear thoughts, one needs to arrange the core of events or issues, in the process likely deleting thick descriptions and emotional expressions. Furthermore, to provide comfortable space for the biographer to tell a story without the pressure of the interviewer's interests, the topics of follow-up questions will be determined by what the biographer told in the first stage. In the last stage, the researcher now adds his/her topics of interest and issues that have not been mentioned, and can ask 'why' questions. "Keeping the narrative-external questions for the last phase of the interview is important so that the interviewer does not impose his/her own relevance system upon the narrator (ibid: 53).

This interview sequence gives this method a large capability to generate rich and fully descriptive data. In particular, it gives time to create mutual understanding on which issues the interviewer wants to listen to and which ones the biographer wants and is willing to tell. Keeping the order of the interview is likely to open more space for sharing stories on the basis of the trust. In line with the stated epistemological stance, it allows the researcher access to data that was not previously suspected, thereby making new thematic connections to researcher's research question (Rosenthal 2004:51) and this is the loci of co-constructed knowledge. Further, the two research questions that emerged from the initial analysis show exactly this inclusion of new thematic connections.

### 3.5.2 Analytical strategy: Integrating of vertical and horizontal analysis

As shown, biographical methods have as a strong point the ability to generate rich interview texts. However, the analysis of interview texts, is complex. There is no clear method to link multiple narratives of participants in analysis. Thus, when it comes to large sample sizes, the risk is that more participants mean that more data would be missed. Therefore, in this research, to integrate rich data and make sense of multiple narratives, making and comparing codes (which is part of grounded theory) has been employed together with biographical analysis. True, I do not use the entire grounded theory method, and due to the contradictory way the two methods reach social reality, I will need to briefly explain the basic logic of this.

The logic of these two analytical methods is somewhat opposed in qualitative analysis. Biographical analysis would be a vertical digging into one's life history, linked with the outside world to go beyond subjectivity while open coding and its categorizing is horizontal integration of all interview texts, which also goes beyond subjectivity. Even though the process of analysis in these methods is fairly opposite, the departure point and the aim are actually the same, namely to travel from individuals' subjectivity to constructed social reality. In this sense, one can be complementary to the other, since to employ both methods would generate more rigorous findings that integrate vertical and horizontal analyses.

Biographical methods accept the idea of generating social reality driven by even a single case, using thick description in connection with social macro-structures (Aritzsch and Inowlocki 2002). The logic in this is that in a single life all social cultural factors are embedded, and vertical analysis can find the social roots of a phenomenon. In this sense, even though subjectivity might be the starting point, a biography virtually resides at the social level.

This method also inhibits relying on excerpts from interview texts, which could lose the inner connections in a life story. Biographical analysis focuses on using respondent's full stories. Further, the main strategy in analysis is the logic of abduction, which means to infer any possibility of different choices in every single stage of a biographer's life. This should reveal life strategies and trajectories, in which the meanings of doing housework would be anchored.

Finally, comparison of the life trajectories of the respective biographers should provide a deeper comprehension of biographers' choices (Rosenthal 1993, 2006). At this point, similar life trajectories may be identified, depending on individual particularity (Heller 1984), and this can organize meanings and allow presentation of the findings. That is, the interactions with external conditions or cultural norms might generate meanings, yet in the interactions with particularity such as education, job position, gender, individual economic condition, etc., those meanings would be diversified. Relying on the similar particularity, the meanings can be categorized yet at the same time circumscribed by generality.

Compared to this, the method of making code has a different set of strong and weak points. Firstly, coding is based on excerpting, which may fragment the whole story. Actually, in coding, getting the whole life story

is not the main objective. Instead, in a grounded theory, theoretical sampling strategy, the sample should be collected until there are no more new answers. In this regard, from the stage of generating data, this method focuses more on pre-set issues in a specific research. Secondly, grounded theory methods obviously aim at theory building, responding to “why” question by categorizing toward an abstract level to build theoretical statements (Charmaz 2008). Thirdly, this method has a clearly presented systematic procedure for analysis. For example, the tools for data analysis consist of coding (creating qualitative codes and categories grounded in data), constant comparison (comparing data with data, data with codes, data with categories and so on), and memo writing (writing down ideas about relationships between codes, other theoretical ideas and memo sorting (comparing and sorting memos) (Thornberg et al. 2013:5), and diagrams (depicting relationship among concepts) (Anselm and Corbin 1998). It then uses basic logic to create conceptual groupings, whereby the broad range of data can be convergent (LaRossa 2005). It is clear that the strong point in this method is its ability to offer a clear analytical procedure and to make horizontal convergences from a variety of data, thereby going beyond the subjective level.

Nevertheless, criticism of objectivist assumptions in grounded theory methods (Charmaz 2008) can apply to the ways coding and grouping are done. The method has similarities to generating findings with numbers. Above all, even accepting that deconstructing data is artificial but necessary to comprehend the logic behind the data and creates space to re-examine data (Anselm and Corbin 1998), it carries a heavy risk of breaking down the entirety of interviewees’ stories into a neat set of separate factors. In this sense, the logic of deconstructing data is inconsistent not only with biographical methods (the main method in this research) but also with the epistemological stance of this research. Thus, I will use open coding and categorizing codes only as an auxiliary analysis to compare general trends between generations and sample categories. However, the comparison of codes does enable enhanced comprehension of the overall horizontal systematic dynamics. The empirical application of these methods will be presented in the next chapter.

In this chapter, I presented an overall picture of the research, from the epistemological stance to specific methods for enhancing its vertical consistency as shown graphically in figure 3.1. The research seeks to unravel

the discrepancies between empirical housework dilemmas and suggested academic solutions, including conceptualizing housework (as stated in the previous chapter) and connecting individuals' experiences to theories about housework. This is the core of vertical consistency. In enhancing comprehension of vertical consistency, there are five points that deserve special attention. First, the epistemological stance of co-constructing knowledge and integrating objectivity into subjectivity supported by symbolic interactionism is the basic rationale of beginning at the experiences of individuals and travelling from there towards the theoretical discussion. Second, responding to the serendipitous occurrences (Bryman 1984: 78) presented by unanticipated life stories and their initial analysis caused the second and third research questions to be added and refined. Third, these emerging research questions led the move from the concrete (specific life experiences) to the abstract theoretical discussion. Fourth, clarifying this move, the inclusion of inductive analysis, a common way for qualitative research to deductively re-interpret the findings, allowed the analytical use of theoretical frameworks. Five, on the grounds that the theoretical framework was generated by the need to interpret further the inductive findings, this differs from pre-selecting a theoretical framework on the basis of a literature review. That is, to employ highly abstract concepts as a dominant framework would bury concrete understandings about everyday reality by actors. In this sense, the analytic strategy of amalgamating inductive and deductive analysis has a twofold aim: to use the knowledge from the bottom to build theoretical abstraction and to retain the totality of the concrete everyday realities of actors. Through this strategy, analytic generalization of a particular set of results could lead to a broader theory (see Firestone 1993). I believe that to clarify this vertical coherence by presenting epistemology, theories, and methods for this research should effectively reduce the vagueness in the research procedure (see Staller 2013), thereby enhancing its credibility.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> As shown, for example, when Pluto, in 2006, lost the status of a normal planet due to a decision of the astronomical community (International Astronomical Union, Circular No 8737) (Kasavin 2015: 437), even the knowledge about planets is constructed by people; no knowledge is human-independent.

<sup>2</sup> The scanty research using qualitative approaches is not only in housework studies. For example, only 2.1% of the publication *Manual Therapy* used qualitative approaches in 2011 (Petty et al. 2012: 267)

<sup>3</sup> In this research, social constructionism is considered to be compatible with constructivism in that both are focusing on reality, which is socially constructed.

<sup>4</sup> Here, a feminist perspective implies having a standard to investigate housework, in which reflexivity would help to understand the actors' perspectives. Even so, I think this is actually an interpretation of the actors' perspectives using a standard, and not full comprehension. In this research, external perspectives are used at the stage of interpreting the knowledge actors engendered.

<sup>5</sup> In a more sociological sense, the generalized other would correspond to the term structure "as a powerful metonymic device" (Sewell Jr 1992: 2). Though emphasising different points, the two terms are in the culture and material scheme; the main point is the connection with wider, hardly changeable society where actors/agencies reside.

<sup>6</sup> In fact, there are important studies that deal with care-work in the redistribution domain as part of social welfare policy, and this perspective is more common in academic research than putting care-work in the reciprocity domain. Fully appreciating the urgent need to deal with care work in the policy area, it is noteworthy that without rigor, conceptual distinction among care work appears in different domains (exchange, redistribution, and reciprocity), and thus the term "care work" used in this intermingled way seems to cover the care-work in reciprocity domain.

<sup>7</sup> To clarify the importance of activity as the basic human condition does not downgrade work, whatever one's critical view of activity theory (refer Gasper 2009). Nevertheless, I fully appreciate the complex status of balance, which needs further empirical and theoretical research.

<sup>8</sup> "Knowledge itself is always composed of both an explicit dimension and a tacit dimension. In that sense, to view knowledge as an object, divorced from experience and embodiment (the central element of the tacit dimension) is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of knowledge" (Brown and Thomas 2010: 324-5).

## 4

## Generating Data and Analysing Data

As explained in the previous chapter, to generate and analyse data, I employed both biographical methods and coding methods. Because the main focus of this research is to capture the meanings and values of housework constructed by ordinary people in the middle of their interactions with others and external conditions, the data collected included rich stories not only about how people think about or do housework but also episodic memories related to the roles and norms of genders, parents, or friends. To present all episodes is not only impossible but indeed useless. Hence, how to transparently and concisely present the processes of generating and analysing data, to convincingly demonstrate each author's interpretation of the hidden dynamics of those episodes in which the dynamics may not be explicitly uttered would, not be easy. In this chapter, as far as possible, I will explain the process of biographical interview and the analysis of interview texts.

To do so, firstly, including reflection for the whole process of managing interviews, I will explain the general conditions about doing an interview and meeting interviewees. Secondly, using the case of JunSik<sup>1</sup> as an example, I will explain the process of doing a biographical interview and analysis. In that the life story of JunSik revealed the explosion of breadwinning consciousness, this is a significant case for discussing the change of gender division of labour in Korea. Thirdly, I will explain how to employ the coding method to group aspects of individual stories.

### 4.1 General information about sampling

To elaborately understand the meanings and values of doing housework in the context of housework dilemmas, the original sampling strategy was to access diverse housework conditions. To do so, purposive sampling was

employed in the elderly and young groups. However, in the initial analysis of the interview texts, the original focus changed. By inductively clarifying two generations, the focus moved to the shift of meanings and values of doing housework between the two generations. Drawing attention to this shift, this section describes the general characteristics of samples and the inductive clarification of two generations.

#### 4.1.1 Purposive sampling and popping up of unexpected concepts of two generations

##### *The strategy of purposive sampling*

For this research, in 2013 I conducted 79 biographical interviews in 8 categories (elderly couple, single female elderly, single male elderly, paid domestic worker, full-time housewife couple, dual earning couple, single mother and co-housing couple), and also with a full-time house-husband couple and I carried out 3 focus group interviews (male with paid work, female with paid work and full-time housewives). In all categories, I in general interviewed about 7 individuals or couples (for details, see appendix 1). In the paired sampling, a husband and a wife were interviewed separately, based on the conventional expectation that their attitudes on housework would, due to their gender, differ. In addition, this paired sampling was beneficial to looking at the interactions in a couple, in which a share of the meanings of housework have evolved. To name interviewees, I use pseudonyms if I present their whole life stories; otherwise, I use assigned signs consisting of the initials of the category name (see appendix 1), assigned number, and H or W for husband or wife. For example, DIC 1-W means the wife of the first couple in the dual income couple category.

The intention in the initial sampling was to access the meanings of doing housework across various life conditions: old or young, single or married, husband or wife. Then there are three points to be explained in relation to sampling. First, at that time of interview, the broad and basic standard for sampling was that the elderly interviewees were over 65 years of age and the young has children under the age of high school enrolment. In the case of the elderly, to focus on their own housework, those living with married adult children were excluded. Thus, the three-generation family was excluded, which might make this study unable to consider the complex relations among different generations in a family. However, three

generation families as they currently exist in Korea would be excluded on other grounds. Their current composition would be old grand-parents, over middle age parents, and adult unmarried children. The over middle age parents who would be in charge of housework would not belong to the older (over 65) generation, nor would the young currently raising children be in charge of housework. Thus, these families were not considered here.

Second, to focus on Korean contexts (not only contemporary situations but also historical cultures), the category of those who have immigrated to marry or work in Korea (such as foreign brides or foreign domestic workers) were excluded. Third, while this research focuses on the unpaid housework at home, and the discussion in chapter 2 about migrant and paid domestic work argues that for some families the strategy is to dump dirty work onto the marginalized and this clearly reflects the meanings they attach to doing housework, I have excluded migrant domestic workers from this study. They are excluded while paid Korean domestic workers included, to see more clearly how people are viewing their own housework at home at the same time that they earn money doing the same tasks for other households. Any of these subjects and situations could be the focus of additional studies.

Apart from the paid domestic worker category, in which some lived with single adult children, all households in the young generation had children, and children ranged in age from 1 year old to university students. Of the 27 households, seven had small children (not yet in primary school), 5 had primary school children (aged 7-12), and 15 had secondary school children (aged 13-18). Considering that when a household has small children, it has an extreme amount of housework, it is somewhat problematic that the composition of households included far more households with secondary school-aged children. However, in that they have already passed the period, thereby already embodied the meanings of housework with small children and given that in each category carries a different level of housework, this should not greatly affect findings. Further, and more importantly, in Korea providing good schooling is a main family goal, so the period with secondary school children does not imply a natural decrease in the housework burden. As one study (Park 2008a) has shown, this characteristic of Korean housework is part of the management of educational success for children in the middle class.

The sampling categories were based on the anticipation of accessing different meanings generated from varied life conditions. For example, the categories of full-time housewife couple, dual earning couple, and single mother might have focused on the struggle for work-family (or work-life) balance. That is, depending on the different life conditions the way or resources of dealing with the work-family (or work-life) balance would diverge, and these would emerge in their stories. Similarly, drawing attention to the position of those who do dual housework, in paid work and then as unpaid wives in the family, I expected to get somewhat delicate meanings of doing housework from the category of paid domestic workers. In the same vein, from the full-time house-husband, performing a so-called reversed gender role, the possibility to generate somehow ambivalent meanings was expected.

Compared with clear expectations for sampling of the young group, for the elderly group, the expectation was more vague. Initially, rather than having an idea what kinds of meaning would be revealed, the elderly were included merely to provide a richer sample. This was basically because there has been little study or discourse about the housework of the older population. However, more frankly speaking, the reason to include the elderly group despite no clear idea of the outcome could have been a romanticised perspective on authentic values or meanings. Even though I never thought this, one case did give me a chance to think that I might have wished to find authentic values or meanings of doing housework through the elderly group.

*Epistemological openness and inductive clarification of two generations*

I must mention the case of a man who offered to be an interviewee as a house-husband. I interviewed him, but due to his tricky situation and the refusal of his wife to be an interviewee, I finally excluded him from my paired samples.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, there was something to share. In the interview, he was very serious and I felt that he had something that irritated him. In the end of the interview, he asked to me to e-mail him the main questions, so that he could answer after thinking deeply. He replied to my e-mail with an expression of his embarrassment rather than real answers to the questions. He expressed his embarrassment to call the things his mother had done for him work (namely, 'housework' which is the term I used in interviews). He could not accept the rationale that he is the result of housework of his mother. Even though he completely knew that the

common term in contemporary society to call the work is housework, he confessed that he felt intrinsic tension during our interview.

Reflecting on his intense irritation, two points can be discussed here, firstly regarding the epistemological stance of not having an analytic social epistemology (Poutanen 2001), and secondly regarding seeing a mothers' housework as different from work. As for the first, he expressed his disagreement with the stance I have (to see housework as work), which prevented him from fully revealing himself in the interview. Actually, when I interviewed young male interviewees, I sometimes felt tension indicating that interviewees were uncomfortable, possibly either due to their suspicions about my stance or the normative superiority of the egalitarian man. That is, at least in the young generation, male interviewees believed that the researcher must be a feminist and that the egalitarian man is right or good. Then, confronted with a feminist researcher and their lack of housework sharing and what that implies vis-à-vis their view of themselves as egalitarian men, their openness to telling their stories would shrink. That is, the stance produced by a researcher's analytic social epistemology could, implicitly or explicitly, come out in interview, and this could cause interviewees who disagreed with that stance to speak less openly, resulting in poor quality interviews. Hence, rather than presenting an analytical social epistemology in the interview and the initial analysis stage,<sup>3</sup> I tried to sympathize with the hidden suffering and experiences of the researched (Yi 2011)<sup>4</sup> and intentionally took distance from any existing knowledge or stance, to fully embrace and comprehend the researched.

Regarding his second point, the special value in mothers' housework, I was initially stunned by his negative feelings about the term housework. However, even though their manner of expressing this would be much weaker than his, he is not alone in hesitating to call this work. Those who hesitated seemed to be mainly men, and they put more value on it as a special thing between mothers and family/children. For example, in the focus group interview with men with paid jobs, although they knew that housework is the common term for it, three of the four interviewees hesitated to call it work. Instead, they expressed it as volunteering or sacrifice for family. In this distinction, volunteering was connected to sacrifice while work could imply external reward. They also expressed their belief that when it came to managing a family harmoniously or raising children well, the volunteering or sacrifice would be internally rewarded as an achievement of the person who did it. However, the exogenous feature of

this view point has very well revealed by a man in focus group interview. This man clearly mentioned housework as work, criticised the perspective of those who do not do housework as their duty: *“We as people who do not do housework hope that full-time housewives feel the sense of achievement via my achievement or children’s achievement, but we don’t know that housewives feel like this”* Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to think that the thing some of my interviewees saw as the core of housework seemed to be that the value of care would not be externally rewarded. I will revisit this in chapter 9.

More interestingly, when I asked about the term “care work” to some of my interviewees, only domestic workers positively accepted this as a way to describe their paid work, but again not for their housework. This usage to some extent would affect my reading about the term care (see chapter 2), by which the worthiness of housework is successfully admitted yet the burden on women is not released. In the other categories, even though most of women in the young group have heard the term, they feel uncomfortable calling housework care work. This situation could be interpreted as a reflection of the fact that people who do the work for pay are at the bottom of work hierarchy, and thus would reveal the positive value they attach to the work to overcome their damaged pride as well as to enhance negotiating power for economic exchange. However, for housewives this exogenous valuing could be no more than the pressure to do more or with less complaint. That is, those who do housework as their duty are unlikely to express its authentic value or meaning.

Consequently, in my sample, using the conventional ideology of voluntarily sacrificing for children or family as a mother to differentiate meanings between genders within a generation would be too limited. Instead, the main difference in housework meanings was found in the colossal gap in environment between two generations, which has produced different practices. Hence, consistent with Mannheim’s (1952) concept of generation (see chapter 3), the two generations were formed by different life experiences under different life conditions, rather than by mere age. The colossal gap between life conditions in the two generations will be elaborated in the next chapter. Here, an inductive clarification of the two generations is briefly depicted through the main factors that determined this difference, which are rooted in social circumstances.

In comparison to the generational gap, the other factors such as gender, class, or educational background do not motivate people to have same meanings of doing housework. Only when it comes to customary norms,

is gender an axis to show distinct practices. However, as for meanings, values and meaningfulness, generation is a further axis to distinguish groups. That is, young men with tertiary education did not generate the same meaning as old men with tertiary education. Or, young women in working class did not show the same meaning with old women of the working class. Within a generation, gender, class, or educational background would occasionally motivate differentiation in meanings but not significantly. In young generation, having gender equality ideas had a significant effect on meaning-making (e.g. not many with the meaning of well-being of family), in which education influenced to have a chance for accessing the ideas. Class background may affect through enhancing the possibility to get university education, but not greatly, do to the developing Korean economy when they were growing up. In this sense, this research did not raise the issue of intersectionality.

Among the elderly, all except one (EC 3-W) – who was born in 1950s and uniquely mentioned the idea of gender division of labour which will be discussed in detail later – were born in 1930s and 1940s. Thus, most of them experienced Korea as a Japanese colony (1910 to 1945) and lived through the Korean War (1950 to 1953). This seems to be engraved on all of them as national poverty through their life experience. They would have naturally also experienced Korea's industrialization (from 1965) as explained in the next chapter; thus, in line with other research (Hwang 2009, Park 2007) that considers this generation, I have called them 'the industrialization generation' rather than merely the elderly generation.

In the similar vein, as mentioned, apart from the categories, originally for the young group of interviewees the only qualification was to have children. This was because that the bulk of housework would vary between families with children and those without children. I expected to meet different meaning of housework in accordance with categories. However, when it comes to analysis, the main generator of different attitudes toward housework was the idea of gender equality. Moreover, the key to having this idea was their experience in joining a social movement. Apart from the fact that many of my interviewees have had the experience of joining a social movement (see appendix 1), this cannot be separate from the democratization of Korean society since 1987. Thus, drawing attention to this specific context, I named them 'the democratization generation'. While a few of them were in their 30s or 50s, most were in their 40s, and thus raised during Korea's industrial and economic development

in 1960s and 1970s and so experienced Korean political democracy since the 1980s as young adults.

As for the paid domestic workers, according to the year when they were born, some of them belong to the democratization generation while some do not. They also have had different experiences in terms of social movements. None had tertiary education. Nevertheless, they also showed the relation between having the idea of gender equality and joining social movements in their experience of joining the domestic workers association. Further, they show distinct subgroups. For example, rather than seeing some of them as simply part of the democratization generation, it was interesting to see them in terms of a discussion comparing their jobs (domestic work with payment) to their housework at home without payment.

#### 4.1.2 Recruiting interviewees via gate-keepers

To recruit interviewees, I mostly employed third parties with connections in the groups targeted. There were effects provoked by the characteristics of these third parties. As for the category of househusband couples, I was unable to find a third party to help, and recruited only one couple. In this case, the difficulty in locating a suitable third party affected the characteristic of my sample. Hence, I will draw attention to the characteristics of these third parties, as I describe the general features of my interviewees.

##### *Sampling of the industrialization generation*

Firstly, to do interview with the elderly, I came into contact with two senior centres (Jongno Senior Welfare Centre and the Senior Welfare Centre of Seoul) in Jongno-gu, Seoul. Jongno-gu is the centre of Seoul, and thus I expected to recruit interviewees from all districts of Seoul with some variation in economic backgrounds. This expectation was on the grounds of distributional differences in economic wealth. However, somehow different from my expectation, when I analyse the interview texts I found that the biggest difference in economic background was between the single elderly and elderly couples; most of the single elderly received government support, while the elderly couples had no economic difficulty.

In the case of the single elderly, despite their economic difficulty, most had no regular economic support from their children, even when the children had decent jobs. This was quite different from the case of my young

interviewees, who supported either their parents entire living costs (FWC 1, DEC 2, 5, CH 2) or at least a part (FWC 2, 5, DIC 1, 4). Indeed, the economic condition of the single elderly was inadequate for decent life. Aside from two single men and one woman, the single elderly without extra income receive a government subsidy ranging from 100 USD to 480 USD. This was not enough to maintain their household, given the minimum living cost in Seoul of around 572 USD in 2013.<sup>5</sup> From that subsidy, they pay rent (around 100 - 300 USD) and hence those with no pension, no saving, no connection with children and no support from their children, have scanty economic resources that must generate substantial difficulties.

This characteristic of prevalent problematic life conditions for elderly interviewees could be due to the way elderly interviewees were accessed, namely via a senior centre. That is, under welfare system of Korea, to take services from a senior centre could be a mark of belonging to a group experiencing severely difficult economic situations. However, the condition of elderly couples is actually not in line with this possibility. With the exception of EC 1, all couples own their own houses and give economic help to their children, so have no economic problems. To put it concretely, the statistics on poverty among the elderly in 2011 are: 48.8% in relative poverty, 36.1 % in absolute poverty, and 66% under the poverty line (Yun 2013: 9-10), so the economic condition of the industrialization generation sample in this research would be not far different from that of the general elderly population. The case of a single elderly household in this research seems to be to some extent more economically serious than is generally the case for single elderly households. This all needs to be considered when it comes to interpreting the meaning of housework to the industrialization generation.

#### *Sampling of paid domestic workers*

To find paid domestic workers, I accessed the National Domestic Workers Association (NDWA)<sup>6</sup> which was established in 2004. Its members are Korean, live-out domestic workers. The NDWA is a branch of the Korean Women Workers' Association (KWWA) established in 1987. The KWWA has a sister organization, the Korean Women's Trade Union (KWTU), which was established in 1999. I was a member of the KWWA and worked in the KWTU, and was thereby able to interview members of the NDWA.

Actually, even though these are three different organizations, they operate as one organization for women's rights: they use offices in the same building, and easily move workers from one to the other, often doing workshops with the workers of all three organizations. Cardinaly, the year of establishment of these three organizations corresponds with Korean democratization and the deteriorating working conditions of women. The establishment of the KWWA originated in the explosion of Korean democratic movement in 1987, while KWTU was founded due to the Asian economic crisis in 1997, in which women had been fired to make jobs available for men (Kim 1999b). Lastly, the NDWA formed as an increasing number of middle aged Korean women began work as paid domestic workers due to the economic downturn that began in 1997. On its website, the NDWA objectives are given as follows: first, revitalizing jobs for the economic self-reliance of middle aged women; second, claiming social support for housework and care work, thus positioning domestic work as a professional job; and third, reevaluating housework and care work by changing the social recognition of it. In particular, the NDWA identified as a social economy organization, not as an agency mediating clients and domestic workers.

Thus the NDWA, a civil organization, has a clear link to social movements. This explains the awareness of new perspectives shared by most interviewees, not only about paid domestic work but also about their housework. Thus, compared to other paid domestic workers who are not members of this organization, my interviewees had an enhanced gender equality idea, and this may have given them somewhat different ideas about doing housework.

#### *Sampling of the democratization generation*

To recruit interviewees from the democratization generation, I asked my third parties to introduce me their friends. Then, the condition of my life experience, particularly as a member of a social movement myself, would have influenced the characteristics of interviewees. From the first stage of recruiting interviewees, I was conscious of this, and thus I in fact tried harder to get interviewees who lacked experiences in social movements. Nevertheless (and there are no comparative statistics for the whole Korean population in that age group, and excluding paid domestic workers) it is likely that the percentage of interviewees (24 of the 44 interviewees, or 56.8%) with social movement experience (see appendix 1) is relatively

high. Further, considering that many interviewees turned out to have accessed social movements in university, their educational background is atypical. Among the 51 interviewees in this generation, 34 (66.7%) finished university or above. This is higher than the national averages of 49 percent in age 35-44 and 28 percent in age 45-54 reported for 2011 (OECD 2013a: 37).

In the full-time house-husband category, only one full-time househusband couple was interviewed, basically because of the difficulty to recruit them as they are relatively rare. Even though there is an increase in numbers of full-time house-husband and a decrease in numbers of full-time housewives, the percentage of full-time house-husbands was still only about two percent of single earner households in 2016.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, the recruitment difficulty would be also due to the socially unacceptable reversed gender role. During my interviews, some interviewees mentioned full-time house-husbands around them. However, when I asked for introductions, they dared not ask them to be interviewees as house-husbands, so I failed to recruit an intermediary. Even though they consider themselves to be house-husbands, this was never openly expressed. The house-husband I did interview is well-known as a house-husband. He appeared on a TV programme as a house-husband and published two books based on his experiences doing full-time housework as a man. For him, to appear as a house-husband would be a purposive event in his life process, so he could accept my request. Incidentally, he has generated a unique meaning of housework, which will be presented in the section on the well-being of the family in chapter 7.

Lastly, I was able to add the category of co-housing, as I unexpectedly met an intermediary, a friend from a period when I worked in a factory to establish a company-based trade union and he was an activist in the industrial area. For a long, time we had not been in touch, and then he became CEO of a building company, constructing the first community housing in Korea. He is also working on a doctorate, on co-housing in terms of its architectural structure and living culture (co-housing as a new phenomenon in Korea). Co-housing denotes living together as a loose community in a building with places in common such as a common dining room, a shared storehouse, and a rooftop garden. In such living spaces, there could emerge diverse ideas and experiences of housework. It is worth mentioning that including this category increased the proportion of interviewees with social movement experience and tertiary education.

In order to understand the characteristics of the co-housing category, looking into the creation of the house would be a first step. The house is called ‘*SoHaengJu*’<sup>8</sup> denoting the happy house with communication, a challenge to the usual lifestyle in Seoul, in which most people are living as islands in a big capital city. The goal of the housing is to retrieve community, looking back to the culture when the current residents were children, able to play with others outdoors and to communicate with neighbours. At that time, they had shared their lives in all circumstances, and they currently aim to create similarly intimate relationships with co-residents.

With this aim, beginning in 2008, several people met to begin planning, and in 2009 made a place for discussion both online and offline. The first co-housing house was built in 2011 in *Sungmisan* village<sup>9</sup>. And then, in 2013 at the time of interview, there were two co-housing houses and a third was in process. In fact, *Sungmisan* village is the most community culture in Seoul.<sup>10</sup> There are many things there that run through cooperation – a café, restaurant, bakery, bookstore, organic market, day-care centre for children, alternative school from primary to upper secondary, clinics, a second-hand shop, and even a radio station. All of these shops and organizations started from a cooperative childcare centre built in 1994.

In this village, everybody uses nicknames instead of their real names, to create equality among residents. This is in contrast to Korean culture, in which adults can address children by name but children should not address an adult by name. Instead, they should use the title that shows their relationship: mother, uncle, aunt, teacher, etc., and also a further hierarchy, usually age. Children are expected to use formal language, but these hierarchies are not only meant for children. They are used between adults, where the hierarchy by age remains significant. Thus, if there are two women, there is always a younger sister and an older sister though they might have a tiny age gap. Using nicknames sidesteps this, and expresses equal relationships regardless of gender, age, previous relationship, etc.

Members of *SoHaengJu* not only inhabit the house as consumers, but also participated in designing and building it, even before the stage of purchasing land. They have communicated how large a space they need, how much budget they can afford, the most important things they want to put in the house, and then they negotiate among future residents and with the architect and the builders. In the process of these preparations, the future residents build positive relationships, even if they did not know each other before. In the first *SoHaengJu*, half of the residents knew each other in

*Sungmisan* village and the other half joined for the housing (KyungSuk). Most residents in *SoHaengJu* chose to live in this house to raise children in the culture of community, also using nicknames instead of real names, as in *Sungmisan* village. The point of departure of these two, *Sungmisan* village and *SoHaengJu*, is connected to housework in terms of raising children in the way of they wish away from the mainstream. This certainly gives specific characteristics to the category of co-housing in this research.

So far, I have explained the original expectations of my purposive sampling and the rearranged final research. That is, the original expectation was to access diverse meanings according to specific housework conditions, focusing on the younger generation who are in the centre of current housework dilemmas. In the rearranged central axis, the difference between generations could be linked to the rapid shift of life conditions, national poverty and Korean democratization. This shift shows historical perspectives on doing housework, and despite the discrepancy between what was originally expected and the new axis, it is a strength, not a weakness, of the original sampling strategy. In fact, such shifts are a natural process within qualitative research and one of its merits (Kleining and Witt 2000).

Similarly, the unique characteristics of my samples due to the choice of intermediaries are not really limitations. Instead, these are points to note for analysis. In quantitative research, they would likely be covered as a minor characteristic of the data. However, here a minor point must be an indication to dig out the understandings beneath, which could drive social change. That is, the minor point could be the reservoir host of a conflictive past and future; analysing its inner dynamics to generate a social change might be fruitful.

For example, even though co-housing has never been a dominant life style in contemporary Korean society, it obviously reveals the current unacceptable situation in childcare generally, by presenting an endeavour to find an alternative. Moreover, although co-housing has been criticised as a middle class activity (in the interview with KyungSuk) a shift to middle class social activity is actually in line with the economic socio-political changes in Korean society, which has grown from one of the poorest countries into an emerging industrial society, one able to spawn co-housing practice. Likewise, the unique characteristics of the samples is not a limitation likely to show a biased view on a social phenomenon. Rather,

this is indeed the cornerstone of understanding change and producing a well-rounded understanding of a social phenomenon.

As for positioning myself in this research, as seen the characteristic of my samples in young group, my husband and I are somewhat typical members of the democratization generation. Both of us become involved with social movements in university and worked as activists for certain period after university. As mentioned in chapter 2, a main goal of my married life is gender equality, and thus for me, the meaning of housework (despite having a desire for the well-being of family) is, in practice, that is an obstacle in everyday life (similar to the case of YoungHee in chapter 7). When I worked in the women's union, some married women activists had unequal relationships with their husbands, e.g., no equal sharing of housework or pressure to alter behaviour. I did not understand why they accepted this. Similarly, in my village, there is a local NGO, but it was usually the women activists who shared child care. I criticised them saying *where is the husband?* When I came to the Netherlands with my children, the housework was shared among us (they were then lower secondary school students). The part my husband mostly did in Korea, such as cleaning, washing dishes, and laundry, my children shared while I did the cooking. I saw that my children calculate their equal sharing of housework and that this equality has become the most immutable principle. However, this provoked conflicts rather than feelings thankfulness towards each other, and I began to think there was something missing in terms of why we do housework. This question why we do housework is the inner question to me for this research.

## 4.2 Biographical Interview and Analysis

Even though I did three focus group interviews, the main way of generating and analysing data was through individual and linked biographies. Unlike the focus group interviews, in which I prepared several interview questions around housework in advance, a biographical interview has a unique way of interviewing, and a unique way of analysing interview texts. In this section, I will explain this method, using the case of JunSik in the democratization generation. This will show the process of doing biographical analysis, focusing on the consolidation of breadwinning consciousness among men. The breadwinning consciousness is one of the main sites for

elaborating the gender division of labour, since its consolidation in the democratization generation implies a bifurcation of gender roles between the two generations in the Korean context.

#### 4.2.1 Doing biographical interview

As stated in chapter 3, according to biographical interview methods (Rosenthal 2004), the interview started with an open question, *could you tell me about your life story?* that was followed by initial narrative questions and external narrative questions. In external narrative questions, I asked a question to mostly all interviewees: *if you measure housework by monetary value, how much it could be?* Given that biographical interview focuses on the individual's life history, all interviews were conducted as in person interviews, with the husband and the wife of each couple interviewed separately. Mostly depending on the characteristic of the individuals, an interview could take from 1 to 4 hours. Usually the interview with elderly men took less time than it did with others.

Generally speaking, the quality of interview might also have been influenced by the rapport between an interviewee and an interviewer. In this sense, even though there would be a degree of trust thanks to my intermediaries (who had relationships with interviewees and with me). With no time to develop rapport, my interview would have some difficulty generating rich stories. Even had such rapport developed, to start private stories in front of a recording device and a stranger with no specific questions is unsurprisingly not easy, and a common question from many interviewees was: where do I start? In particular, those who have had extremely harsh life experiences (never having had decent jobs, having a runaway partner, lacking contact with children, etc.) sometimes did not want to recount this, because it was too painful (SME 1, 5, SFE 1). As has been said before elsewhere, sensitive topics in interviews can provoke emotional distress and raise ethical issues for researchers (Corbin and Morse 2003: 344).

Nevertheless, some interviewees who had severe life experiences did open up and tell their stories, experiencing a sort of catharsis which resulted in their expressing undissembled thankfulness to me (SFE 6 and JunSik). This shows the possible benefits of qualitative interview (Hutchinson et al. 1994), which can include catharsis, self-acknowledge-

ment, a sense of purpose, self-awareness, empowerment, healing, and giving voice. To maximise these benefits, to give the initiative for leading an interview to the interviewee, as explained as one of merits of biographical interview in the previous chapter, must be important. As Corbin and Morse (2003: 340) explained, this is a feature of unstructured interviewing, in contrast to semi-structured or close-ended interviewing. It allows initiative, so that interviewees can enhance their empowerment and express with own voice. As well, having catharsis is helpful for emotional healing. While there is no doubt that there are both risks and benefits in qualitative interviewing, one way to maximise the benefits is to maintain the order of the biographical interview (open question, internal narrative question, and external narrative question) (Rosenthal 2004), which keeps the initiative with the interviewees.

In the case of SFE 6, bad events seem to have come one after another. As a war orphan, she had no memory of her age, name, siblings or parents. She had to do all kinds of work without schooling and received the worst physical abuse from her step-parents. When she lived alone in Seoul, separated from her step-parents, she was made pregnant by rape. After giving birth she was able to save money by starting a small business and finally she ran a big restaurant while bringing up her son alone. The son got married and had two children. In this period, she met a man (a gangster) and was robbed of her all property by him. Several years before the interview, her son died in a bad car accident and now she cannot meet her grandchildren, because her daughter-in-law does not wish it. Nowadays, she cleans and kisses her grandchildren's pictures daily, with tears. For more than one hour she talked through this life story, sometimes crying and sometimes showing emotional trauma. In her story, there was no story connected to the issue of housework.

However, as an interviewer, there was nothing for me to do except careful listening, for four reasons. First, this is the time for constructing rapport, because by showing the ability to listen very carefully, the interviewee can trust the interviewer as a person to whom the interviewee can frankly tell things. Second, this is the time for an interviewee to immerse themselves in their own stories, enabling the researcher to gain rich data. What a wife of a dual earning couple said proved this: "*my husband said to me yesterday, in the interview you will start to tell everything unintentionally; then it is really true. I don't know why I'm telling this, but anyway*" (DEC 4-W). That is, when they are immersed in telling a story, the story triggers another story

sometimes before the decision to tell it. As mentioned in chapter 3, this is one of key merits of biographical interview. Third, this is a kind of gift I can give to my interviewees. As a lay person, everyone has their own stories and wishes to have someone to tell. In particular, those who have lived a harsh life wish to tell more, but are unlikely to have someone to listen. Then, the time of our interview can be helpful for both of us, maximizing the benefits of qualitative interview.

Last and most importantly, in this kind of narrative there are sources for analysing the interviewee's life strategy and turning points that would be the key to revealing the interviewee's perspective on the world. This can indeed later be seen to relate to the interviewer's issue. For example, her (SFE 6) current meaning of housework was revealed: to keep human dignity. In her case, she rejected receiving a free lunch box service, because for her a free lunch is similar to begging. Even though her economic conditions are such that she has neither a rice cooker nor a washing machine, she does housework for her decency, as a way of keeping her dignity as a human being. Apart from whatever underlies the rejection of her daughter-in-law, she also does not contact her daughter-in-law to meet her grandchildren because she does not want to be given pocket money.<sup>11</sup> This would damage her self-esteem. For her, both receiving a free lunch box and getting pocket money equate to begging and would impair her dignity. This interpretation would not be possible without analysing her life story and her way of telling it; it would have otherwise been difficult to understand how important dignity was for her. In this sense, her life story must be a basic source for deeply understanding her meaning of doing housework.

The ability of biographical interview to elicit rich stories does not mean that all interviewees tell their stories in great detail. The way of telling one's own story depends on each individual's character, their inner desire to tell, and cultural influences, as well as on rapport and the interviewer's skills.

#### 4.2.2 Analysing interview texts by biographical methods

How the interview text is analysed, going beyond the likely limitation of being restricted by individual factors (Lamont and Swidler 2014) is completely dependant on the researcher rather than on interview contexts or

the interview methods. In line with the epistemological stance of co-constructing knowledge (see section 3.1) for the sake of remaining opening to serendipitous occurrences (Bryman 1984: 78), initially no concrete analytical framework was used. Instead, analysis began with the first step of transcribing the recorded interview. The total interview time was 10,121 minutes, or roughly 2 hours per interview.

As explained in the previous chapter, my main focus was to understand each whole story without fragmenting it. To do so, I used four steps of analysis.<sup>12</sup> First, while spending about three days to transcribe a typical two-hour interview, I was immersed in the interview text, and arrived at an initial comprehension. Second, in order to understand individuals' life strategies and their manner of presentation, the next stage was to read the interviewee texts that related to the open question line by line and take analytical notes. Third, I repeatedly read the whole interview text, comparing the story to the open question to finally confirm an interpretation of individuals' meanings. Fourth, I compared the interviewee's life story with that of others, focusing on similarities and differences and thereby identifying several different meanings of doing housework. According to circumstances, these four steps were not linear processes.

These steps are different from the conventional analytic steps in qualitative research, such as making codes by themes and categorizing these. These conventional methods may fragment a biography, making it less likely that the whole dynamics an interviewee has managed in the life paths can be discerned. Hence, even though I also followed the conventional steps (as explained in the next section) at this stage the goal was to understand an individual's life in its entirety without disassembling biographies into themes. This is because the disassembled part, even when obviously linked to the issue of housework meanings, could give a different idea when situated in the whole life story.

*JunSik; being a competent breadwinner in the interactions with his father*

Here, with the case of JunSik, I will describe the significance of understanding the whole life story in generating the meanings of housework and the way to contextualize an individual's life into the social cultural milieu. However, to present his story is not only as an example of biographical analysis. To present his story here is indeed because his biography, to a

remarkable extent, exposed the consolidation of breadwinning consciousness in Korea. That is, the male role in the industrialization generation relied on the consolidation of breadwinning consciousness in the democratization generation, and this differs from the conventional gender division of labour (women for housework and men for paid work). This would be one of the main points to understand the different meanings of doing housework between genders. To understand this case could be the basis for understanding the analysis of empirical chapters.

In existing Korean literature, without scrutinizing the breadwinning role in its ideology and reality, the gender division of labour has mostly been considered to be a phenomenon of the whole industrial period. Some literature has even used the concept to analyse gendered sharing of housework in the *Chosun* dynasty (Kim 2000, Kim and Lee 2007, Park 2002). Recently, some literature has clarified the shrinking of the male breadwinning role in the economic downturn (Shin 2014, Choi and Chang 2012) or as a theoretical possibility (Kang 2011). However, unlike, for example, Britain, where a study scrutinized the origins of the male breadwinning role (Secombe 1986), no such study reveals either or origins of the male breadwinning consciousness in Korea, nor its practice. This scarcity of existing literature makes it difficult to interpret the meanings of housework in the industrialization generation. In this context, the case of JunSik clarifies the bifurcation of gender roles to a certain stage of industrial society.

His story for the opening question (*could you tell me about your life story?*) lasted two and half hours without stopping, in which the core content has shown two issues. The first was how seriously his father, an incompetent and violent patriarch, tormented family members throughout his life, and even his wife after their marriage. The second was how far he has achieved a successful life in his job to date. After two and half hours answering the open question, we finished the interview on another day.

He was born in Busan in 1969, as the first son with three siblings, and moved to Seoul when he was the last year of elementary school. His story started with an episode of being regularly summoned by his teachers for not paying the tuition fee for his schooling, in a period he remembers as dismal and suffering. The story continued to the story of getting a job in a bank after high school, which allowed him to be a substantial breadwinner for his original family even in his military service period.<sup>13</sup> He used the word “escaping” for the move from Sanggye-dong (where had lived after

moving from Busan). At least until 2004, when illegal shacks were demolished, Sanggye-dong was the symbol of a poor village in Seoul.<sup>14</sup>

At the end of his story, he listed the years he had received promotions or awards as a good employee in detail, and ending with his promotion, in 2010, to be president of a branch office in the bank. He said *“among 71 people who joined in the bank with me, 24 still work there, and only three are in the branch manager position.”* He emphasised the fact that he received most promotions faster than others. Furthermore, due to his schooling background, with no university education, he also studied in the Open University and did an MBA (Master of Business and Administration). He is in charge of leading several social gatherings related to the MBA program or the bank.

Unlike his first interview, in the second interview, when it came to the stage of internal and external questions, he expressed himself as a family man. Outside working time, he has spent free time with his wife, driving, listening to music, sharing all kinds of episodes in work and talking about TV dramas, movies, etc., which are the happiest moments in his everyday life. Even though, as his wife is a full-time housewife, he does not share much housework, he thinks the value of housework is the same as that of occupational work. The most important thing in his life is his family, while having a job means earning income to support family life. He said, *“I don’t think that to be successful in my job is the success of my life, I think that the essential meaning of life is my family rather than my job.”* Considering all of this together, the meaning of housework for him is well-being for family.

Looking at his two stories, there is somehow a discrepancy between his way of presenting his life as a person who pursued a successful career and his thoughts about what a good life for a man is. In fact, in this he is quite different from others who pursue successful careers. In Korean culture, those who are successful in jobs mostly neglect family matters, as the case of the husband of Dual Earner Couple 2. He has the same position as JunSik in another bank and always focused on his occupational success, mostly coming back home around midnight. For him, the meaning of housework is merely necessary labour, thus to outsource housework as far as it can be is the best way to solve the problem of work-family balance. Actually, he does not know that his wife, who has worked in the same bank, has difficulty finding a work-family balance. Having hired a domestic worker, taken help from his wife’s mother, and purchased a dishwasher, he presumes that little housework remains for his wife, and that this could

not be problematic. However, in our interview, his wife blamed her husband for not sharing housework and confessed her abandonment of a promotion in the bank.

Comparing these unmatched stories, I initially suspected that Junsik wished to show himself as a good man. However, the story his wife gave about him was all the same as his. The stories of both not only covered the same events but also the same feelings. Even though the wife quit her job in the bank after having their second child following a suggestion of her husband, and now hopes to work again, she made no complaint about that decision and believed that her husband was a family man. After this comparison of the couple's stories, owing to paired sampling strategy and consideration about others who are in similar situations, I had to think again about the genuine meaning of a successful career to him. Then I found the link between his two discrepant stories, in which his father resided.

His life story had been interactions mostly with his father, who had not fulfilled his responsibility as a breadwinner. His qualification for becoming a competent breadwinner had been weak (in terms of schooling background, family background, and leadership having grown up emotionally injured). He had made up his mind: *"I will not live like my father."* In this regard, his successful story in his career has principally shown his on-going struggle in overcoming his drawbacks to be a competent breadwinner, rather than individualistic success as a first-rate man. As such, his strong consciousness of his breadwinning role was not understandable without grasping his interactions with his father. And then, relying on his strong consciousness as a breadwinner, for him having a job and doing housework have the same value and meaning for family well-being. Even though the meaning has been founded on the basis of gender division of labour, in his family, the couple shared decision making power for allocating money and managing family, as well as for children. Thus, the gender division of labour is not a synonym for gender inequality.

In short, in line with the rationale of symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969, Mead and Morris [1934] 1967), the meaning of housework for him was generated based on his interactions (mainly with his father who was significant). It also relied on the interactions with his wife, who agreed with this meaning of doing housework. Then in this couple, the gender division of labour was consolidated in everyday life, in which women do housework and men do paid work, both for family, consistent with the

customary gender norms presented by Heller (1984). In this couple, their particularity and individuality around housework are harmoniously matched as they willingly accept a gender division of labour.

The point to draw attention to here related to methods is that without understanding his life history, his meaning of housework could not have a core, instead likely hovering as a vague wording; he says that housework is very important, yet he does not share housework. If his story was analysed with the method of making codes in terms of different themes, his story about the open question would very probably have been concealed. That is, with no direct link between his life history and the research theme of housework, the story about his career would be lost and only what he thinks about doing housework would be coded. In such a process, the dynamic that made his thought a reality is unlikely to be revealed. Thus, to focus on the life strategies or biographical turning points which would be the core for understanding the whole life context (Rustin 2000) must be significant in finding the meaning of doing housework.

#### *Breadwinning consciousness in Korean context*

Further, in that the life strategy or biographical turning point was in fact rooted in social factors as well as individual life paths, it is logical to go further to think about the social background of his strong breadwinning consciousness. As mentioned, in Korea, there have been no studies showing how men started to have breadwinning consciousness. Nevertheless, the shrinkage of male breadwinning consciousness in line with economic downturn (Choi and Chang 2012, Shin 2014) would reveal its changeability. That is, unlike conventional argument about the idea that men must naturally have breadwinning consciousness, recent studies show the economic shrinkage is opening room to think about the starting point of that consciousness.

Returning to my interview, compared to JunSik, the prominent feature of the male interviewees in the industrialization generation is considerably different. Despite a severe national material deficit, which means a serious challenge to the breadwinning role, not a single case revealed a strong struggle due to the discrepancy between his breadwinning consciousness and its practice. Only HyunJa, who was born in 1952 (and thus at that time of interview was under standard cut-off age of 65 for this research) revealed her strong belief in the gender division of labour as an ideal life

mode. She married dreaming of living like a woman in a movie, in a two-story house as a full-time housewife. She made a decision to marry when she saw a doorplate with her husband name,<sup>15</sup> imagining it as a sign of the possibility to be a housewife in the middle class. After marriage, while her husband focused on music and Chinese chess, she was a substantial breadwinner. However, she believed that her life with paid work has been wrong due to reversed gender norms.

Actually, her belief in the gender division of labour is in line with the influx of new ideas in 1920s-1930s about the “new woman” who married based on romantic love, and did housework in a scientific way by herself for a lovely family rather than leaving it to a servant or *Sikmo* (kitchen maid) (Kim Keongil 2012, Kim 2010, Kim 1999a). These new ideas included that men should work not only for family but also for society and the nation (Hong 2005). This new mode of life was praised as modernization and Westernization. While the Japanese colonial authority employed this idea to denigrate Korean culture and justify colonialization, the propaganda introduced by colonial elites was at the same time a way of enlightening people for the sake of retaking their colonized sovereignty (Kim 1999a). Even though at that time of colonial *Chosun*, this new family discourse had been restricted to elite groups, it gradually spread to ordinary people (Kim 2012) via women’s magazines, mass media (Kim HyunJu 2007), and literature (Seo 1997).

The birth of the ‘housewife’ as an institution in Korea was researched by Kim HyunJu (2007), who analysed the contents of 1950s Korean magazines. In terms of the epistemological discussion in chapter 3, the 1950s would be the time for conveying this new idea to epistemic group agents (Fuller 2012, Palermos and Pritchard 2013). And then HyunJa, born in 1952, has, like Junsik, accepted the idea by interacting, implicitly or explicitly, with the epistemic group agents, thereby gaining a strong belief in it as the natural order in life. The literature reveals the concept of the ‘new women’ or ‘housewife’ arising in the early 20th century, and presumably the male breadwinning role, paired with housewife role, was introduced to elite groups in Korea in about the 1920s-1930s. This idea spread to lay people like HyunJa around the 1950s, and then consolidated, as shown the case of JunSik, beginning in the 1960s.

Commitment to the struggle around the gender division of labour undoubtedly varies depending on concrete life conditions, which contribute to the ‘particularity’ of a person (Heller 1984). If HyunJa had not grown

up in Seoul, she might have had little chance to hear the new idea. Or, if Junsik's father was a competent breadwinner, he may have had a different life strategy. Nevertheless, in the mentioned overall flow, the new idea of gender division of labour would be met as a form of 'individuality', which seems to be general for everyone, generating everyday practices through epistemic group agents. This role has now become a customary norm in the Korean context.

In that attitude toward gender division of labour would be one of the core ideas forming the meaning of housework, comprehending the patchwork emergence and spread of this idea is important in understanding the social meaning of doing housework in historical cultural contexts. That is, without the socially generated idea of gender division of labour, Junsik may not have had such a strong breadwinning consciousness, his life strategy would have been different, and his turning point would also be different. The life strategy of Junsik, based on the socially constructed idea of breadwinner as 'individuality' and enhanced by his father's irresponsibility as his 'particularity', has been to become a competent breadwinner. This ideal attained reality from the turning point of getting a job in a bank, and in his successive promotions.

As seen so far, biography is entwined both in social contexts and in the biographies of others, where the meanings and values of housework are produced at the social level. In other words, as Heller predicted (1984), the loci of everyday life is the point of integration of particularity and individuality, which is the basis to engender meanings and values. And then, by particularity, actors possess their own colour; yet by individuality, their practice reaches to the social. Further, as mentioned with regard to the epistemological stance, the meanings and values of doing housework are within 'the social.'

*Paired sampling: intertwined biographies*

In the case of JunSik's couple, their particularities are well matched to those of another couple, that of YoungHee, co-housing 4. YoungHee's case is based on her particularity of no economic difficulty, from a middle-class family background, with a lack of emotional care by her mother (who enjoyed her hobbies), and strong gender equality idea supported by joining social movement activity. She revealed a strong rejection of the individu-

ality of gender division of labour. However, the particularity of her husband is in line with the individuality of gender division of labour. Even though her husband also has experienced social movement activity and agreed with the gender equality idea, he is based in a somewhat different particularity: he is the first son in a rural area, had a particular relationship with his mother (who experienced much difficulty in raising children) and sees the breadwinning role through the lens of his father's debt. Given these particularities, he has a strong breadwinning consciousness. Yet his breadwinning consciousness is not well matched with YoungHee's particularity. As a result, this couple experiences everyday housework practices as an obstacle for everyday life. The life story of YoungHee will be elaborately presented in the chapter 7 as a life story that exemplified the meaning, 'the obstacle for everyday life.' However, for comparison with JunSik's couple, I here briefly introduced them.

JunSik's couple, reliant on a similar particularity, generated consensual housework practices under the same meaning, while YoungHee's couple generated conflicting housework practices, based on different meanings from different particularities. The meaning of doing housework for YoungHee's husband is well-being for his family, which will be revisited later. Likewise, it is actually very natural that after marriage the individual biographies of a couple become entwined. In this regard, paired sampling is inevitably a more reliable analytical method. The merit of interviewing husband and wife separately to get better understanding about marital/family life has been described elsewhere (Hertz 1995). Compared to an interview with only the wife, which offer single perspective, or a couple together, in which any disparity in power relations can distort the story, paired sampling in separate interviews enhances the reliability of data.

However, as Hertz points out, there is a difficulty in dealing with inconsistencies when stories are compared, and this can engender large complications when probing the story. Indeed, this is the thorny point of paired sampling. For example, in my sample, the stories of EC5 are very different. When I interviewed the husband, he mentioned that they shared housework because they had worked as street vendors together for their whole married life. He said that because he is good at cooking, he also cooked special foods for their children when they were young. Since stopping work, they travel together using their car. Even though the sharing was not half and half, according to what he said the couple should have a

good relationship and he would be a good husband, in particular, considering his generation. However, the wife's story is totally different. The husband was violent and had not supported the family economically. Considering her ambivalent emotions about him (harbouring quiet resentment yet praying to forgive him), their marital life must have serious problems.

At first, to confront these completely different stories was very embarrassing for me. However, the discrepancies in their stories do not mean that one of them lied. Actually, while the husband also recognized that his behaviour in his marital life was not proper, he also had some fragmented good memories, based on which he told his story. The emotion he displayed regarding his wife included a sense that he was sorry, while that of the wife was anger. Neither lied. Rather than being true or false or right or wrong, indeed, the discrepancy is the point to understand their respective perspectives about life, decision making, behaviours, etc., as well as the on-going miscommunication between them. In my sample, intra-couple, the stories are more similar in the democratization generation than in that of industrialization generation. This implies better communication in couples in the democratization generation, which also denotes more gender equality. Overall, this difficulty with paired sampling is not a drawback of this methods, but rather, a point at which to deepen interpretations and elaborate understandings.

With the case of JunSik, I provided both a biographical analysis and the consolidation of male breadwinning consciousness in Korea. That is, in order to show how to understand social backgrounds of a life history, I have depicted a way of rooting an individual's life into a social context in biographical analysis, intersecting other interviewee's stories and literatures. As previously discussed, it is important to interview husband and wife separately, to allow cross-analysis and enhance the reliability of the researcher's interpretation. In this way, individual stories are likely to go beyond restricted individual matters, finally representing a piece of social reality. As stated in the previous chapter, biographical analysis has own way of reaching collectivity, digging out the root of a social phenomenon starting with a biography. Here, a biography is not merely a starting point; indeed, we should understand it as something that includes all of human history and culture, even while representing a specific moment and context.

### 4.3 Analysis with codes

I began to make codes employing the ATLAS.ti programme, but, frankly speaking, took no further steps to categorise and re-categorize codes in constant comparison with categories, leaving several codes that could not be integrated (Anselm and Corbin 1998, Thorn-berg et al. 2013), and I stopped coding. The main reason to stop was, as explained in the previous section, that for generating the meanings and values of housework, digging into the biographies produced more insight. Nevertheless, while making codes, I did find several analytical points.

Reading the whole interview texts line by line, I performed open coding. I felt that comparing the frequency of some codes by generation and category would reveal overall features in my sample. Thus, this section will explain the generation of codes and present the overall features of my sample regarding gender equality and role engagement by showing the frequency of corresponding codes. While this presentation would be more in line with positivist stance rather than the epistemological stance used in this research, it has been done only to make reference to overall trends as auxiliary understanding, rather than to analyse meanings. This is not to suggest that this thesis overall is using positivist or mixed methods.

#### 4.3.1 Generating codes

I initially had several ideas about useful codes, including gender equality, engagement, economic condition and self-esteem, but the codes used were not restricted by these. While reading interview texts from the first to the last, according to contexts I generated more than 40 codes. Among these codes, frequent things found included belongingness, caring for children, caring for oneself, caring for parent(s), choice, doing own housework, low gender equality, intimacy of relationship, meaning, high role engagement, and work engagement. To make better sense of how these were generated, I will present a few quotations together with their coding.

Firstly, since in this research role engagement means following orthodox gender roles and conducting gendered practice, the code “low role engagement” implies weak conventional gender role practices. For example: *“actually I’ve not thought to earn money; rather I’ve wished to do good things. Because to work in a cooperative has a better condition than working in the other social organizations, I’ve got married with the woman who has earned money”* (CH 1-H).

This husband said he chose a woman who earns money because, instead of earning money, he wished to focus on social movements. This is unlike the conventional role of a man to support a family materially.

By contrast, the code of “high role engagement” means practices in line with conventional gender roles:

*I can share it, However, in the situation that she does not work in the same conditions with a normal job, like going to work early in the morning and coming back late evening, I thought my share would be 20 %; for me in a week day it is not possible, so only in weekends maybe 20 % of sharing. In weekdays my wife should do all the housework. This would be my rule at that time (FWC 4-H).*

This shows the conventional role engagement of the husband, based on a breadwinning role for men and housework for women. That is, as a breadwinner he thought that, even though his wife did do something (actually she worked in a women’s organization at that time) because her work is not like a normal job, she should have the primary responsibility for housework. This is coded as high role engagement.

As for the code “low gender equality”, if people follow conventional gender roles, there would be weak gender equality. This is similar to the code of high role engagement, but has more focus directly on the idea of gender equality, on gender attitudes or ideology. In the focus group discussion with full-time housewives, I asked a question; “*when you do housework in your family-in-law’s house, if there are brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, and they both do not do housework, which one do you dislike more?*” Then, all of the interviewees answered “*I hate more the sister-in-law than the brother-in-law.*” Even though, while answering to the question, they had realized the absurdity in this thought, they frankly confessed their real mind. This is not connected to their role engagement, yet still revealed their gender equality idea. Despite their gender equality idea in a couple, they subconsciously accept the idea that doing housework is for women. In this sense, this was coded as low gender equality.

The code ‘high gender equality’ is also, to some extent, different from the code of low role engagement. Here is a telling quotation; “*housework is not the work of women. Men and women should share it. In particular I also have my job. My husband has the same opinion on it and we share our housework*” (DEC 1-W, BoMi). This quotation obviously shows her high gender equality idea, yet not her specific role engagement as a mother, a wife, or a daughter-in-law.

These are just a few examples to show how codes were generated. To explain all the codes is unnecessary, but as these examples are strongly connected to the meanings of doing housework, I choose them as exemplars. However, as pointed out in chapter 1, the literature often fails to separate beliefs and roles. Instead in much of the quantitative literature, gender role attitude, gender equality ideas and role engagement are employed interchangeably (Chung 2008, Kroska 2000, Seong 2011). However, as shown, a gap exists between gender equality attitude and sharing housework practices (Lee et al. 2012), so for a person or in a society, an idea and its practice are not always matched. It thus makes sense to think separately about the idea of gender equality and its practice in conjunction to role engagement.

#### 4.3.2 Analytical points between generations or categories

In generating codes, certain analytical points came to mind. Firstly, generating codes exposed significant differences between generations. The industrialization generation had little coding for value or monetary value, although when it came to analysing their meaning for housework, the meaning was actually very substantial. This seemed quite extraordinary. Compared to the democratization generation, this incompatibility shows a complex dynamic. In the democratization generation, most interviewees recognized the monetary value of housework, one of the goals in housework studies (Moon et al. 2002, Mullan 2010, Yoon 2014). However, despite this, their sense of the meaning of housework was precarious, and they frequently mentioned unwillingness to do housework. Thus, presumably, recognizing the monetary value of housework was not enough to generate positive meanings for it.

Similarly, in the case of the industrialization generation, no mention of the value or monetary value of housework might mean not feeling a need to measure it. This would imply that the situation of doing housework was, despite harsh physical conditions that produced large quantities of housework, not seen as problematic. This could happen for two main reasons. First, this is the collective acceptance of gendered work: women should do housework, as shown in the high frequency of coding in high role engagement as well as clear expression of this idea among the industrialization generation. This would be in line with the conventional ideas that

housework is devalued, women's work, and that to measure its value is unthinkable.

However, this intentional devaluation is actually challenged by the fundamental meaning of housework. This fundamental meaning relied on the harsh economic conditions in early industrial society. That is, the harsh economic conditions that made the housework substantial in their economic life. Housework was essential for survival, and this would be the second reason not to mention it: it was as omnipresent as the air<sup>16</sup>. That is, air is essential for our life, yet is easy to forget its value as we take breathing for granted. Thus, the socially structured devaluation of women's work confronted their physical memories about the value of housework as enabling their lives. This combination of harsh economic conditions and gender inequality, the main dynamic generating the meaning of doing housework in the industrialization generation, will be dealt in chapter 6.

**Table 4. 1**  
*Gender equality and role engagement by having social movement experience*

| <i>Codes*</i>        | <i>Groups</i> | <i>Yes (Social Movement Experience)</i> |          | <i>No (Social Movement Experience)</i> |          |
|----------------------|---------------|---|----------|--|----------|
|                      |               | <i>Times**</i>                          | <i>%</i> | <i>Times</i>                           | <i>%</i> |
| Low gender equality  |               | 21                                      | 30.9     | 48                                     | 70.6     |
| High gender equality |               | 47                                      | 69.1     | 20                                     | 29.4     |
| Low role engagement  |               | 24                                      | 21.8     | 2                                      | 2.0      |
| High role engagement |               | 86                                      | 78.2     | 97                                     | 98.0     |

\* The codes in this column paired with low and high, thus there are two pairs of codes (gender equality and role engagement). And the total percentage in a pair is 100 percent.

\*\* 1 This is the number of codings in a certain category of code according to how many times a topic is mentioned in interviewees' statements.

Secondly, whereas for the industrialization generation, the code for high gender equality never appeared, for the democratization generation it frequently did. Therefore, this correlation needed exploration, since for the democratization generation, the sense of gender equality could have a significant role for meaning-making on housework. In addition, consider-

ing the point of higher gender equality in the group of having social movement experience (see table 4.1), the social context of democratization in Korean society could also be a key in varying the meaning of housework. This also justified the demarcation of the two generations.

**Table 4. 2**  
*Gender equality and role engagement among CH, FWC, and DEC*

| <i>Codes</i>         | <i>CH</i>    |          | <i>FWC</i>   |          | <i>DEC</i>   |          |
|----------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|
|                      | <i>Times</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Times</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>times</i> | <i>%</i> |
| Low gender equality  | 13           | 32.5     | 37           | 58.7     | 18           | 66.7     |
| High gender equality | 27           | 67.5     | 26           | 41.3     | 9            | 33.3     |
| Low role engagement  | 26           | 66.7     | 3            | 2.9      | 10           | 13.9     |
| High role engagement | 13           | 33.3     | 100          | 97.1     | 53           | 84.1     |

Thirdly, the above mentioned analytical point is again verified by table 4.2, which shows that all members in co-housing who have had social movement experience have the highest high gender equality and low role engagement. Another noteworthy feature in this table is in the gap between FWC and DEC. Despite the slightly higher gender equality idea in FWC, they have chosen a full-time housewife role, in line with conventional gender roles. This choice to follow a conventional gender role has been supported by their higher role engagement compared to that of DEC. Nevertheless, within FWC, compared to their high equality ideology (41.3%) their practice (97.1% of high role engagement) is very traditional, which should be taken into account when analysing the meaning they attach to housework.

Fourthly, in reference to table 4.3, synthesis between gender equality and role engagement would be the most problematic locus in the democratization generation. This is consistent with the phenomenon of increasing gender equality attitudes (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004, Chang and Song 2010, Na and Cha 2010) that barely change gender equality practice (Hochschild and Machung [1989] 2012, Joo et al. 2016, Statistics Korea 2016). While about half exhibit gender equality ideas, just under 90 percent have high gender role engagement. This perhaps causes some internal, emotional struggle. That is, the mismatch between what they think is right

and their daily practice might provoke a degree of distress in everyday life. In fact, this everyday distress caused interviewees to reflect on the unexpected duties they assumed with marriage and parenthood, which led them to be eager to have choices in living their own lives.

**Table 4. 3**  
*Gender equality and role engagement in democratization generation*

| <i>Codes</i>         | <i>Times</i> | <i>%</i> |
|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Low gender equality  | 69           | 50.7     |
| High gender equality | 67           | 49.3     |
| High role engagement | 183          | 87.6     |
| Low role engagement  | 26           | 12.4     |

Hitherto, the analytical points have relied on the frequency of codes. This led to the insight that, for the industrialization generation, harsh economic conditions and gender inequality would be the base to generate the meaning of housework. In contrast, for the democratization generation, gender equality ideas and its unmatched role engagement are key. Employing the frequency of codes at this stage of analysis is not using positivist or mixed methods. I do acknowledge that, depending on the research issue, mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) could enhance the validity of results (Blin and Siegmann 2006), but from the viewpoint of statistics, the frequencies mentioned in above tables have no meaning, and data generated by biographical interview is unlike that produced by structured survey. In a biographical interview, an interviewee could mention the same issue several times, depending on individual communication style or the importance the interviewee attaches to it. Thus, the numbers lack meaning in quantity, but are likely to have a meaning in quality. Further, I believe that the merit of mixed methods can only be achieved when the principles of both methods are kept from the stage of research design, and thus, the three tables merely give overall features of my samples.

### 4.3.3 Embedding codes into the whole life and the social contexts

As previously explained, using codes for analysis is completely different from biographical analysis. However, coding did offer some insight, and as shown below this can help to show links between attitudes, the whole life story, and social contexts.

In the previously mentioned coded quotations, it was relatively clear to which codes they would belong. However, owing to the nature of the connection between gender equality ideas and practice, many extracts may actually belong in more than one code. In addition, codes can be similar, making coding difficult because, basically, telling a story can be both non-linear and lacking in obvious logic, with numerous sudden stops and starts, changes in topics, intermittently continuing topics, and so on. As a result, a part segmented for coding could occasionally not show a clear idea. Only when it is linked with the whole story would the meaning of such a part become obvious. Furthermore, a part frequently shows mixed contents.

For example, this quotation:

*I think, before, there was a distance between my son and me, but nowadays we have become close. In former days my husband did many things and I was tired, so I took care of my son very little. That's why we were not so close. My son had not treated me the same as he had his father. My son even had different voices when he called his father and me (DEC 3-W),*

in some sense has belonged to the code of intimacy relationship and low role engagement. The quotation firstly shows that to do many things for one's own child would have enhanced the positive relationship between the parent and the child. Thus, intimacy relationship would influence the meaning of doing housework. However, a mother doing little for her child is likely to imply low role engagement. Then again, considering her reason ("*I was tired*") low role engagement is not such a clear interpretation.

For example, if she had a serious health problem, then the quotation could be not interpreted as showing low role engagement. In this regard, only when linked to her whole life story can the code be construed. Furthermore, the cause for her current, better relationship with her son is also blurred. It could be due to changes in the need to care or from her son's better understanding of his mother. The meaning of the quotation is not

revealed in isolation, but in context. All of this must be considered in the analysis of her biography.

Turning back to a quotation; *“Because to work in a cooperative has a better condition than working in the other social organizations, so, I’ve married the woman who earned money”* (CH 1-H) there is another point. Between two sentences, after “so”, he slightly changed his way of talking. The first sentence is a logical explanation, implying the possibility to support family by working in a cooperative, yet he did not finish the sentence. The second half was told slightly in the way of a joke. That is, rather than his genuine mind-set at that time of his marriage, the second sentence might be a reflection of his marriage life, e.g. that his wife has been an uninterrupted breadwinner compared with his interrupted but relatively small earning. Thus, even though this quotation would generally show low role engagement, the contexts in which he has low role engagement would be blurred.

Alternatively, there another direction in which his low role engagement would be reversed. In fact, what he said can be differently interpreted as showing the idea that men should do something for the whole society, namely in the public arena, rather than focusing on their own families and the private arena (Avdela 1999, Elshtain 1981). In this interpretation, the quotation would be an example of low gender equality. Moreover, in this sense, his idea is exactly in line with the gender role as a man. To be sure, this interpretation should be double checked, embedded not only in his whole life path but also in societal cultural change. By doing so, this would meet with the case of JunSik, as a piece of patchwork about having a breadwinner’s consciousness. Without this embeddedness, meanings are unlikely to be transparent.

In a similar vein, for the democratization generation, the mismatch between their belief in the idea of gender equality and their role engagement may be key to their understanding of housework. For men in particular, having a breadwinning role consciousness might be the key to interpret their role engagement. For women, it is somewhat different. When I read all the quotations coded “role engagement”, the role engagement of women (unlike the men) separated into mainly three parts: mother, wife, and daughter-in-law. Then, as shown in the earlier quotation of BoMi, as a wife, role engagement seems to moderately vary from the conventional mode in accordance with the strength of the gender equality idea. As a daughter-in-law, the most problematic role in Korean society, the conventional mode of role engagement has changed, starting with the ideology

around modern marriage (Kim Keongil 2012, Kim HyunJu 2007). The burden from two of these roles has converged as the idea of mothering as a professional child carer and educator (Hong 2014, Kim BokSoon 2007). For example, the high role engagement of FWC seems more connected to this “intensive mothering” (Hays 1998: 19) practice rather than to other roles.

This chapter has given examples of the method of analysis used in my research. The main foci in the analysis are twofold: to understand individual experiences within overall life of the individual, and to embed individual life experience into social contexts. Keen attention was paid to the interactions between the interviewee and others/society, to reach an analytical focus on the social. The analytical foci are as follows: First, key foci are the interactions between generation, economic condition and the idea of gender equality. Second, to have (or lack) the idea of gender division of labour as ‘individuality’ would significantly influence the meaning of doing housework. Third, women’s role engagement should be separated into the roles of wife, mother, and daughter-in-law. All of three roles are affected by changing social conditions and by actors’ interactions, and at the same time they are embedded in a spatial-temporal context.

Four, unlike some academic research that divides direct care work (for children or elderly) from everyday household tasks (cleaning, cooking, laundry, and etc.), in actor’s stories they are not divided. For example, a wife, SuYoung said clothes made by her for her children are different from clothes bought in market because she makes them herself (chapter 7). As a woman in the industrialization generation explaining how she took care of her children, she included the extent to which she prepared foods, even for children’s friends so that her children can stay at home (chapter 6). The husband of full time housewife 7 said he did all household tasks in weekend as a way of giving love to family (chapter 9). In fact, when the term of care was used, the division between care work and everyday household tasks become prevalent, whereas in the term of housework, or reproductive labour, care and other housework were not divided. The division would be effective in some research areas, for example in looking at the division of time spent in each work, but as shown in interviewees’ testimonies, in everyday life household tasks are all for caring. In this regard, the meaning of doing everyday household tasks necessarily stuck to care work, thereby no separately meanings analysed.

All findings of meanings, values, and customary norms of doing housework will be described in chapters 6 and 7. To show the detail of life stories, which is definitely helpful in comprehending the findings in context, I will present a number of life stories as examples, chosen from the 79 biographical interviews and 3 focus group interviews. Only limited quotations can be shown in this thesis. Nevertheless, they are illustrative. They show the practical effects of relying on the described epistemological stance of co-constructing knowledge and integrating objectivity and subjectivity. More importantly, like glimpses of a patchwork, they show how to link one's life story to other's stories and to the socio-historical context. I believe that in some ways, in these examples, all other stories already reside.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This name is a pseudonym. I interviewed 79 individuals; thus to make pseudonym for each would be confusing. Thus, I employ pseudonyms only for those presented through their whole life stories, while for others I use a symbolic tag.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of interview, he was under medical treatment, having stopped his work as a lawyer, which is the reason that he considered himself a house-husband. In contrast, even though to care him his wife had also stopped her work, his wife did not think of herself as a housewife. His wife rejected to do interview with the reason, "I'm not the person who used to do housework. I don't know much about housework, so I don't have anything to tell about housework". As a PhD in the area of dress and its ornaments in Victorian time, she was a researcher and a special director of performances. They have two children below school age and somehow shared housework at that time. Drawing attention to the point that under the same situation, the husband considered himself a house-husband while his wife strongly rejected being called a housewife, this case may have plenty of potential to show the attitude or consciousness of doing housework. However, their situation is too unique and does not belong to any category of my sampling, thus it has been excluded from my sample.

<sup>3</sup> Which epistemological stance is proper totally depends on the research focus and design. For example, in the case of action research, which may focus on specific problem solving in a community, to have the same stance with research participants would encourage them to tell honestly what they think. In this case, the feeling of

being empathized with would broaden and deepen the sharing between a researcher and the participants.

<sup>4</sup> This full embracing of the researched is also different from the representation of individuals' experiences from their perspectives by feminist narrative analysis (Sosulski et al. 2010). The representation in a paper is different from analysis and how and what will be present depends on the aim of research and the interactions between the researcher and researched. In this sense, Yi denotes the stage as *Aneignung* in German.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.mw.go.kr/front\\_new/al/sal0301vw.jsp?PAR\\_MENU\\_ID=04&MENU\\_ID=0403&BOARD\\_ID=140&BOARD\\_FLAG=00&CONT\\_SEQ=275848&page=1](http://www.mw.go.kr/front_new/al/sal0301vw.jsp?PAR_MENU_ID=04&MENU_ID=0403&BOARD_ID=140&BOARD_FLAG=00&CONT_SEQ=275848&page=1). Accessed 20 Oct. 2014,

<sup>6</sup> In 2017, the name of this association changed to National House Manager's Cooperative. I employ the name used at the time of my interview.

<sup>7</sup> *Yonhapnews*, (31-01-2017) "The biggest population since 2010, 160,000 full-time house-husbands" accessed in 11-04-2017.

<sup>8</sup> *SoHaengJu* is a kind of an acronym; *So* is from *Sotong* which means communication, *Haeng* from *HaengBok* means happiness, and *Ju* from *Jugeo* means house.

<sup>9</sup> *Sungmisan* village is not the formal name according to administrative districts. *Sungmisan* is the name of a small hill in the area, and the residences have been engaged in a long protest (since 2001) to save the hill, against a development project by the local government; the area gets its name thereby.

<sup>10</sup> In 2013, in a right-wing journal, *Sungmisan* village is explained as a training school for left-wingers. Accessed on 30-10-2014. [http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2013/07/26/2013072601666.html?Dep0=twitter](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/07/26/2013072601666.html?Dep0=twitter)

<sup>11</sup> Even though she does not have the intention to get pocket money, in her case, people would think that her daughter-in-law has to give some pocket money when they meet.

<sup>12</sup> Managing data in biographical methods is very problematic due to no systematic methods for it (Aspinwall 1992: 248). I referred the literature of biographical methods and narrative analysis for conducting the four steps of analysis (see Aspinwall 1992, Carr 2010, Fischer and Goblirsch 2007, Pietkiewicz and Smith 2014, Rosenthal 1993, 2004, 2006, Shantz 2009, Sosulski et al. 2010, Yi 2005, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> At that time, from the government, there was a small salary at the level of pocket money for doing military service. However, in his case, from his bank he had got the half of the normal monthly salary as an employee.

<sup>14</sup> Sanggye-dong was the area of illegally built shacks by 2004. In 2006, a children's book entitled *Children in Sanggye-dong* was published dealing with children's life in a poor village. Likewise, to live in Sanggye-dong implies a seriously poor family background.

<sup>15</sup> This means that her husband owned the house. At that time, in the house, her husband had lived with his parents and elder brother's family, yet the doorplate with her husband's name obviously showed the ownership of the house.

<sup>16</sup> In the interview with JunSik, he expressed this: housework like the air.

## 5

# Modern Korea Under Compressed Modernity

While a brief explanation about Korean circumstances appeared in the introductory chapter, a prerequisite to fully comprehending interviewee's life histories is to understand their temporal-spatial life conditions. Thus, this chapter will present the political socioeconomic conditions surrounding housework in Korea. A pragmatic start is to explicate the core aspect of the modern era: "compressed modernity", which has been driven by unusually rapid change in factors such as capitalist industrialization, political democratization and social structure (Chang 1999, 2010). As compressed modernity has created new social contexts, a discrepancy has arisen between generations in terms of perceived values and meanings linked to housework. Hence, this chapter will start by explaining the term "compressed modernity," and then use this to inspect features of the industrial period, the democratization period and so on.

For the elderly generation, compressed modernity is the discrepancy between political, cultural, and economic institutions: a modern political system, a pre-modern Confucian culture, and an underdeveloped economy. The discrepancies change for the young generation: a delayed welfare system, a strong equality ideology, a belief in a modern gender division of labour, and a post-modern family ideology. To understand the different contexts of the discrepancies is key to understanding the two generations.

### 5.1 "Compressed Modernity" and Generations

Through analytical induction, Chang (1999, 2010) coined the term 'compressed modernity' to characterise modern Korean society. Compressed modernity summarises several characteristics: (1) rapid movement from poor agrarian society to advanced industrial economy; (2) in major cities, a sudden replication of western cultures and institutions by external forces

(Japan and the US); (3) co-existence and competition among traditional, modern and postmodern elements, with no indigenous social revolution to eradicate the traditional structural and cultural order; (4) collision between and compounding impact from foreign/ multinational/ global elements and indigenous elements within a compact socio-historical context; (5) intense competition, collision, disjointedness, articulation, and compounding effects among all social phenomena and cultural elements (Chang 2010: 5-8).

Compressed modernity implies the spatial-temporal co-existence of traditional/indigenous and global elements ranging from pre-modern to modern and post-modern brought by rapid economic change and westernized modernization. This shows a systematic relationship with family-related issues, generating an accidental plurality of values and institutions involving traditional norms and Western culture. The result has been a simultaneous exposal of Confucian familism, instrumental familism, affectionate familism, and individualistic familism (Chang 2010: 8-26).<sup>1</sup> In this accidental and contradictory plurality, antagonistic relationships among plural elements is inevitable. These antagonistic relationships can co-exist within a single actor ambivalently, and more conflictually between generations.

For example, an elderly person who might have cared his/her parents in person according to traditional Confucian norms (by which that person found value and meaning in doing that housework). Now, the person in need may be independent, or receive state services, or be given monetary support from children in line with changed social norms, all of which may imply different meanings and values for their housework. Even if the actor has externally adjusted well to the new environment, they may feel contradiction and ambivalence in the suddenly changed norms. Then, in the relationship with one's children's generation, the contradiction or ambivalence would be in relation to reconciling compromises due to the different degree of acceptance of the changed norms. Investigating intergenerational ambivalence in terms of harmony and conflict in family studies has been suggested (Lüscher 2002). Yet in Korean contexts, the ambivalence would be better understood as driven by compressed modernity.

*(D)ifferent generations have developed strikingly dissimilar family ideologies, so that frequent inter-generational conflict and animosity are pronounced in family relations and domestic life. ... Consequently, the more South Koreans pursue family-centred*

*life, the more psychological burdens they have to confront within the family because of generation-based and other differences in family ideologies.* (Chang 2010: 14)

### 5.1.1 Compressed modernity in colonial time

The antagonistic relationship among factors is based on various ideas of family life born at the outset of Korean modern society. Modern Korea began in its Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), when a modern educational system, partial industrialization and the plundering of economic production began. In line with this forced yet restricted modernization project, a modern idea of the family as “the housewife model of the male breadwinner marriage” (Pfau-Effinger 2004: 378) was introduced to Korean elites by the Japanese colonial power. While the Japanese colonial power criticized the traditional Korean way of family life as uncivil in order to justify their colonial reign, nationalist Korean elites aspired to modernization as the main means of national independence (Kim 1999a). Thus, both the Japanese colonial power and the Korean elites strongly advocated the image of the modern housewife: efficient, hygienic, Westernized, and professional (Kim Keongil 2012, Kim 1999a).

According to a study of male education by Japanese colonials (Hong 2005), colonial male education taught that the man’s duty was to create prosperity in part for his family, but mainly for the nation, as suited the industrial society and had been imposed. This eliminated previous roles of men in the family, such as managing the household and being in charge of boys’ education (Hong 2005). Meanwhile, the common paradigm of women’s social function was based at home, between Confucianism and colonial education for women. This was a compromise, moving slowly from as ‘a daughter-in-law of the family’ to as a ‘wise mother and good wife’ (Kim 2010). That is, the role of women in Confucianism is based around a set of duties settles on a daughter-in-law (Hong 2014: 206) while in colonial education it was to serve husband and children as an educator and home economy manager (Kim 1999a, Kim Keongil 2012: 192-224). In this move, even though there was no conflict between Confucianism and colonial education for women, at least in ideology, the shift in the focus of women’s role, from extended family to two-parent nuclear family is obvious.

This imposed modern family changed social practice in family life. However, for the modern family model to take root as the dominant social practice is different from implanting its ideas. As Pfau-Effinger (2004) says, the modern family model does not inevitably result from industrialization (as conventional sociological thinking on the male breadwinner marriage suggests). Instead, its acceptance is largely based on two conditions: the social and political strength of urban bourgeoisie and general, distributed, societal prosperity.<sup>2</sup> While the former helps to generate the cultural idea of the male breadwinner marriage, the latter is the prerequisite for its dominant social practice, allowing at least one member of each family freedom from income-generating duties (Pfau-Effinger 2004: 393).

This was a problem in Korea. Despite incessant propaganda in favour of the modern idea of family life in magazines and newspapers (Kim Keongil 2012: 159-224) and even in feminist novels (Seo 1997: 27-32), during the time of colonial *Chosun* there was virtually neither enough socio-political power in the hands of the urban bourgeoisie nor sufficient societal prosperity. With regard to societal prosperity, according to one study (Heo 2012: 469-470), the GDP per capita and real wages show no relevant change between 1910 and the middle 1960s. Also, a *Chosun* man got half of a Japanese labourer's wage while a *Chosun* woman got half of a *Chosun* man's wage (Chung 1988: 72). These are features of retarded industrialization and modernization under colonization, and causes of compressed modernity.

Secondly, looking at education to guess at the power of the urban bourgeoisie, according to a rough analysis in a piece written of *Dong-A* newspaper at that time, around 95% of all *Chosun* men did not have enough property to send women to school, thus education to emphasize women's role as a 'wise wife good mother' was unworkable (Kim Keongil 2012: 263-4). Around 19.3% of *Chosun* people got some education yet 91% of these studied only 3-4 years (Heo 2012: 483-484). This suggests that only approximately 2% of *Chosun* people were schooled above elementary level. Considering the fact that the new family idea was introduced largely by education, few people would have accessed the idea. This shows insufficient conditions to create a modern family life in then-colonial *Chosun*.

Despite these unpromising socio-economic conditions, the new ideas about family life, and the new idea of marriage based on romantic love, appealed to highly educated people. This provoked conflict between traditional marriage arranged by parents and marriage as something chosen

by the couple (Kim Keongil 2012: 21-124). In line with the on-going incitement in women's magazines (Kim HyunJu 2007), the modern family idea had formed the desire in the 1930s-1940 in some women to become housewives, with affluent families in marriages based on romantic love (Kim 2012) or in the 1950s-1970s the desire to belong to the middle class (Kim and Lee 2013).

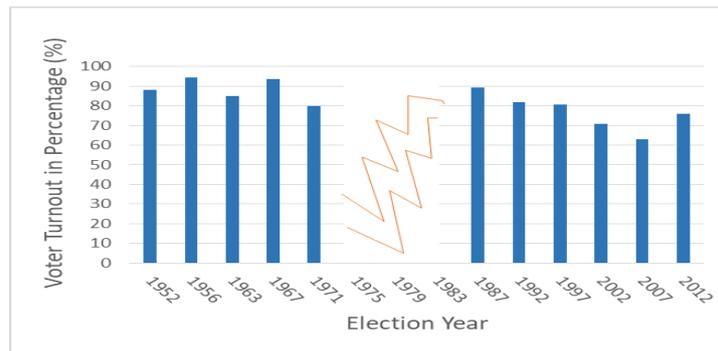
While studies have illuminated this newly-formed female desire to become housewives, as stated earlier there has been little study of men's attitudes or their mind-set in relation to the family breadwinner model. This could be mainly due to the conventional assumptions about the gender division of labour, as in industrial society, men are assumed to have this consciousness. However, given the above-mentioned inadequate socio-economic conditions, the extent to which Korean men had a consciousness as breadwinners is unclear.<sup>3</sup> This could be supported by recent studies, which show a crack of male breadwinner consciousness along with economic downturn (Shin 2014), or generational variation of male provider attitude (Lee and Lee 2001). These studies suggest a weak sense of breadwinner consciousness in men, possibly due to economic conditions. In practice, the occupational instability of Korean men born between 1932 and 1961 and the effect of this on the idea of men supporting families as a sole breadwinner has received some attention (Choi and Chang 2012). In this context, if men accept the gender role as breadwinners, there could be conflict between the idea and the reality, as is seen in women. Alternatively, if men do not accept the gender role, there could be conflict between men and women, at least in terms of the idea of family.

Thus, at the beginning of modern Korean society, there was a conflict between the transplanted family ideas which gradually permeated the ideas of ordinary women and the reality of the Confucian family system. Given that the former was based on romantic love and the latter emphasized the functional role of family and relied on gender roles in the community, this shows the simultaneous existence of Confucian familism, instrumental familism, and affectionate familism, in line with Chang's (1999, 2010) compressed modernity. This context is the given milieu for people born in the 1930s-1950s, with which they would interact to generate family ideas or systems.

### 5.1.2 Generations

After World War II, colonial Chosun became an independent country, yet divided into north and south, with separate governments established in each in 1948. Since the Korean War (1950-1953) the division between north and south has remained. The first president in the south was elected by indirect vote, but after the second election, the Korean people were suddenly given direct universal suffrage, a key feature of a modern political system.

**Figure 5. 1**  
*Turnout rate in the presidential election, % 1952-2012*



Source: Statistics Korea (2015b: 44)

Turnout has fluctuated (figure 5.1). Vote was again indirect between 1971 and 1987, with two military coup governments, thus in the figure the rates are not shown for that period. In 1987, direct universal suffrage was re-acquired through people power. This reacquisition revealed lay people's political awareness of modern political system. Thus, between those who was suddenly given the right of suffrage and those who acquired it by their activities, political awareness would differ.

Colonialism followed by war ruined the Korean economy, and in the early 1950s Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world. Change in the economy started with the Economic Development Plan in 1962, which resulting in rapid economic development after 1965. However, this rapid development was also the result of the sacrificial offering of the po-

litical economic rights of lay people. With developmentalism in production and Confucianism in reproduction, the rapid economic growth orchestrated by the authoritarian state-*Chaebol* (conglomerate) alliance came with harsh suppression of the political economic rights of workers, farmers, and the urban poor (Chang 1999). This harsh suppression lasted more than two decades, but finally cracked in 1987 in the June Struggle and was pulled apart by the Great Worker's Struggle from July to September 1987, which was the turning point of Korean society in terms of political democratization and social care (Kim 1996, Lee 1993). Supported by this change, since 1987, a variety of social care programs have been set up or amended.

In this content, in Korean public discourse, those who were in their 20s-30s in the 1960s-70s are called the industrialization generation, whereas people who were in their 20s in the 1980s are called the democratization generation.<sup>4</sup> Although to rigorously define these terms in academic usage would be not fitting, nevertheless, some studies have investigated generational differentiation in issues such as the work-oriented life of the industrialization generation (Shin 2011), mothering experiences in the industrialization period (Bae 2008), political identity of the 1980s generation (Park 2007)<sup>5</sup>, the generation gap in Korean politics (Hwang 2009), and different attitudes toward the social welfare among three generations (Lee and Kim 2013)<sup>6</sup>. The different generational experiences, attitudes, and political ideologies and behaviours shown in the results of these studies give the impression that distinction of these generations is fairly significant when investigating social change in Korea.

Importantly, as pointed out in the methodological section, this demarcation of two generations is in line with the concept of generation of Mannheim. By experiencing common social events and having common consciousness, a generation can be identified as a historically configured unit occupying similar social locations (Mannheim 1952). As such, in this research, the two generations are distinguished by experiencing same historical events in their 20s or 30s; industrialization, national poverty, urbanization, authoritarian state/ democratization, no national poverty, democratic system, globalization.

## 5.2 Industrial period and the Generations

In Korean society, the industrialization generation were contemporary with the transformation from agriculture to industry. This transformation involved several social phenomena. Firstly, it led to urbanization; the industrialization generation was the first to live mainly in urban areas from a relatively young age, living apart from their still-rural parents. This led to a decrease in three generation households from 25.8 % in 1960 to 23.2 % in 1970 and to 17.0 % in 1980 (Baek and Kim 2000: 33). The rise in overall prosperity engendered the development of hygiene and good nutrition, extending life expectancy. Finally, in 1948 the first Korean government was established, based on a USA-type political system. This suddenly provided institutional democracy, e.g. universal suffrage in a multiparty system, but without a free and active civil society (Chang 1999: 35).

Significant changes in family life mode would occur as a result of urbanization, the decrease of three generation households, and economic development. The shift from hierarchical relationships reliant on Confucianism to modernization that included individualization and emphasis on efficiency also supported the movement toward a male breadwinning model (Baek and Kim 2000: 26). For instance, in contrast to traditional families, where the male head of household had patriarchal power toward all family members, there could be relatively equal relationship grounded on the housewife's role as household manager. This could also include affection based on romantic love, as the colonial elites had desired. However, the features of family life were not remarkably changed, as Confucian norms were sustained and economic resources were insufficient. Instead, an authoritarian political culture prevailed, without the necessary time to generate or accept new ideas.

### 5.2.1 State-driven developmental capitalism

Rapid change in this early industrial period occurred only in the economic arena, driven by top down authoritarian rule that instigated nationalist sentiment and controlled private arenas for economic growth. By the 1960s, modernization (in Korean *geundaebwa*) was the Korean government's slogan for national economic development. (Kim and Park 2003). This was a turning point in Korean economic history.

By drawing upon economic and emotional nationalism, actively linking anti-Japan and anti-North Korea sentiments, the Korean government insisted on sacrificing individual interests to national growth. In order to boost the sense of nationalism, the Korean government coined terms for workers such as “export warriors” or “industrial soldiers” in line with slogans like: “enhance national prestige” (in Korean *gugwiseyang*), “increase exports” (in Korean *soochuljeungdae*), and “regenerate the nation” (in Korean *minjok joongbeung*) (Kim and Park 2003: 39-44). Under this propaganda for national growth, Korean workers worked as a cheap, flexible labour force, while government agricultural policy kept grain prices low (Koo 1990: 674-675).

Similarly, the authoritarian Korean government strived to control births. As shown in figure 1.4, Korea had a high birth rate, whereby a high proportion of young people by the 1970s. Based on the assumption that a high fertility rate could damage economic growth (Kim 2008), the Korean government wanted a family policy that could reduce it. They coined a series of catchphrases for this, for example, “Let us raise well only two children whether a son or a daughter” and “One daughter who is raised well is better than ten sons”. This family policy straightforwardly permeated into the culture, in part through emotional and economic nationalism but also through the widespread availability of contraception, and possibly also due to the Confucian idea of equating king with teacher and father.<sup>7</sup> The birth rate quickly dropped, from 4.53 in 1970 to 2.1 in 1983 (slightly below the replacement rate) (Chin et al. 2012).

In this state-driven, developmental capitalism, Korean exports increased from 55 million USD in 1962 to 24.4 billion USD in 1983 with 10% annual growth in gross national product (GNP) throughout the 1960s-1970s (Koo 1990: 672). The population in agriculture dramatically decreased, as the non-agricultural population grew (Heo 2012: 470). The proportion of the population that was urban increased from 27.4 % in the 1960s to 57.2 % in the 1980s (Baek and Kim 2000: 26). The number of wage workers increased from 2.4 million in 1963 to 4.8 million in 1975, and to 8.1 million in 1985, creating a 7.5-fold increase in manufacturing over these two decades (Koo 1990: 672). In 1985, the population in manufacturing finally surpassed that in agriculture (see Heo 2012: 470, figure 3). This caused large scale of proletarianization as well as urbanization. In the process of proletarianization, due to the increase of labour intensive light industries in 1960s-1970s, the proportion of female labourers in the

manufacturing sector was roughly half: 40 % in 1960, 50 % in 1973, and 46 % in 1985 (Koo 1990: 676).<sup>8</sup> This successful industrialization and economic development was Korea's 'economic miracle' (Kim and Park 2003).

### 5.2.2 Stuck in Confucian familism and instrumental familism

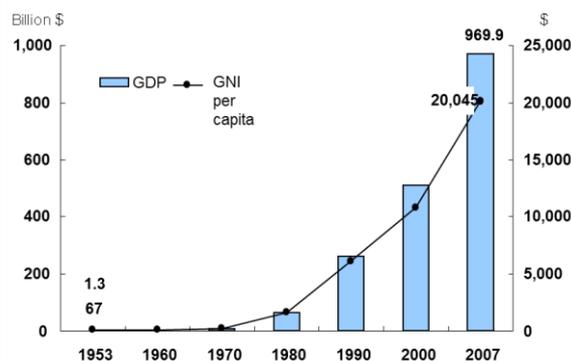
Conventional thinking equates industrialization with a male breadwinning system. However, no noticeable change in family structure (beyond the decrease in multi-generational households) came about, essentially for three reasons. The Confucian family order rooted in *hoju* (the head of family) system was still the major system of family life. In social policy, governments did not take substantial responsibility for supporting a shift in family life. Further, the fruits of economic development in this period were only enough to lay the foundation of the shift, not enough to fuel the shift.

Firstly, the '*hoju*' system, as the symbol of Confucian family relationships, had continued. In the *hoju* system, only men can head a family, and the oldest son (regardless of his age) is the head of family if his father dies, and then his mother registered under him. Originally, in the seventeenth century, the oldest person regardless of gender was actually registered as the head of family. This changed in the early eighteenth century (Jung 2002) after which a daughter could not take any inheritance, and the system's rules (patriarchal head of family system and little inheritance to daughters) did not noticeably change until the revision of family law in 1990s (Baek and Kim 2000: 19). The *hoju* system not was formally abolished until 2005. In the top-down women's movement, early feminists who had privileged status such as lawyers, educators, and law scholars, struggled for several decades against *hoju* without success (Nam 2010: 71-74).

Virtually all Korean people internalized this Confucianism family order and their everyday life reflected this, as shown in a 1984 survey, which found that 72.3 percent of daughters-in-law lived with their parent(s)-in-law if the husband was the first son in his family (Im et al., 1985 as cited in Chang, 1997: 33) In the meantime, in 1960, the Korean Civil Code based on the patriarchal clan system was enacted (Cho 1994: 431), and although it was amended in 1962 and 1970, there was no noticeable revision in terms of gender equality (Baek and Kim 2000: 20-22).

Secondly, in this period, by the principles such as ‘growth first, distribution later’ and ‘family-first welfare responsibility’ (Lee-Gong 2010), the Korean government rarely took a role in the domains of reproduction and care. In this regard, as Truong (1999) points out, the defect of the ‘economic miracle’ was its reliance on gender subordination. Nominally, sundry welfare schemes such as Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance (1963), the Child Welfare Law (1961), National Health Insurance (1963), etc. were legislated to justify the authoritarian regime, yet they were either not implemented or only for special groups (Kim DoKyouun 2012: 180). An example of the former is the National Pension Programme legislated in 1973, which was not implemented till 1988 (Peng 2009). An example of the latter is the introduction in 1963 (after the success of military coup of Park Chung Hee) of a pension scheme for military personnel (Lee-Gong 2010). Similarly, even though the Labour Standards Act was passed in 1953, it was only after the suicide of Chun Tae Il<sup>9</sup> in 1970 (he also set alight a book of labour law), that the law became known to the general public and to labourers.

**Figure 5. 2**  
Trend in real GDP and GNI per capita, 1953-2007



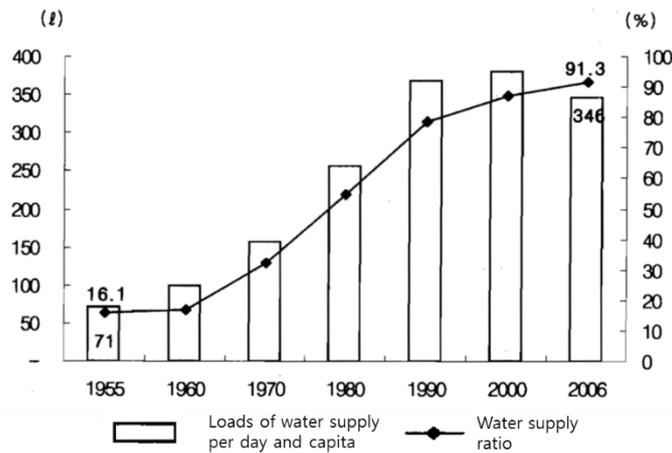
Source: Statistics Korea (2008: 8)

In connection with this negation of government responsibility for social care, the Korean government mobilized a state savings policy with the

slogan of ‘being a homemaker to effectuate a planned economy’ (Kim DoKyouon 2012). Under this mobilization, through saving and tax policy, by 1980 the tax burden was less than 5 % of family finance with no public insurance burden, and the ratio of saving had increased from about -5% in 1963 to slightly less than 25% in 1979 (Kim DoKyouon 2012: 180). This tax policy could be seen as the state’s response to its responsibilities regarding public care.

The extent to which the two conditions needed for modern family life based on a male breadwinning role (the strength of the urban bourgeoisie and general social property) (Pfau-Effinger 2004) have been fulfilled is not positive. Despite the country’s ‘economic miracle’ and the explosive increase in school attendance (Heo 2012: 487-490), as figure 5.2 shows, in the 1960s-1970s, when the industrialization generation raised its own children, the GDP and GNI are still low; in 1980: the GNI per capita is only 1,645 USD.

**Figure 5. 3**  
Trend in loads of water supply<sup>10</sup> and water supply ratio, 1955-2006



Source: Statistics Korea (2008: 28)

The fact that in the 1970s and 1980s about half of the labourers in manufacturing were women does not suggest a male breadwinner role.

Even though most female labourers at that time were unmarried, they normally supported their family by sending their earnings home. The family spent these earnings, sometime to educate the family's first male sibling, who was destined to become *hoju* for the family. In addition to this female role in supporting the family, there is also a need to consider informal work, which again does not match the sole male breadwinning family. For example, consider how households are supplied with water. This is one of basic needs for living, and a poor water supply infrastructure would imply poor social property. As figure 5.3 shows, the percentage of households with a water supply (the water supply ratio) was 32.3 percent in 1970 and still only 54.6 percent in 1980. This implies both poor infrastructure and a large housework burden.

As a result, despite jazzy flattery about the economic achievements of the industrialization generation, this industrial period was at a too-early stage of economic development to support its ideal of a modern family with a male breadwinner. The industrializing period seems only to have laid the foundation for modern family life. During this period, strong Confucian familism co-existed with instrumental familism and the sprouting of affection familism in a few middle class families.

In this industrial period, the two main discrepancies were firstly between modern industrialization generating remarkable economic development that barely changed the Confucian familial order supported by family law, and secondly between a mobilized political democratic system and a weak civil society under an authoritarian regime. These discrepancies influenced the hierarchical relationship between employers and employees as well as between authoritarian power and the power of common people, each sometimes permeating into the other's areas. That is, workers were not only in an economic relationship based on free contracts with employers, but also meant to be "export warriors" or "industrial soldiers" for the nation, and in that role having restricted rights as labourers.

Thus, the existence of equality as a modern value relied on the new constitution in modern politics but also on inequality based on Confucian culture and the authoritarian regime. Further, because the modern politics in this period lacked political awareness of a free and active civil society, these unequal hierarchical relations were likely prevalent in all arenas. Thus, like Confucian familism, this unequal hierarchy would influence the family, in particular in relation to gender. As a result, for this industrialization

generation, the everyday practices of doing housework would be structured by this set of existing hierarchies, by the poor social property, and by insufficient economic growth.

### 5.3 Democratic transition period and afterward

In contrast to the industrial period, in which there were no remarkable shifts in family life, in the democratic period, Confucian culture began to shrink and overall equality grew. This remarkable shift was based on socio-political movements toward democracy through the enhancement of civil society. This occurred firstly through the improvement of distribution: the outcome of economic growth began to increase the overall wealth of ordinary people. Per decade, the average wage increased by 22.1% (1974-84), 13.5% (1984-94), and 8.0% (1994-2004) (Kang 2005: 20). Civil society had been enduring authoritarian oppression since the 1960s as the counterpart power against the alliance of the government and the *Chaebol* (conglomerate), was highly resistant and was able to gain improved distribution (Kim 1996). The momentous and grievous sacrifice in 1970 of Chun Taeil (also spelt Jeon Tae-il),<sup>11</sup> substantially ensured that enforcement of the Labour Standard Act, passed nearly two decades before (in 1953) would be one of the main aims of democratic social movements. The unfair and abusive economic practice of the *Chaebol*, protected by authoritarian regimes, ensured that the democracy movement would be intimately linked to the labour movement (Chang 1999: 44).

In the decades that followed, political and institutional democracy noticeably improved, but this was not immediate. In 1972, universal direct suffrage for the presidential election was taken away for 16 years by the Yushin constitution, and a second military coup government suppressed the Gwangju<sup>12</sup> uprising in 1980, but this military government ended in 1987. This was achieved via the gradual growth of civil society from the April Revolution in 1960, through the Gwangju uprising in 1980, the June Struggle in 1987 and the Great Worker's Struggle from July to September in 1987, when Koreans finally achieved a democratic transition (Lee 1993). In the process of that democratic transition, the Korean Civil Code was amended to give equal rights for inheritance to brothers and sisters and for property after divorce for husbands and wives (Cho 1994, Kim 1994b). In 2005, the *hoju* system was finally abolished, a culmination of long lasting,

tremendous struggle by the women's movement that had begun in the 1950s (Nam 2010). These shifts led to the decay of the Confucian social order. Also, the substantial economic growth fulfilled the two conditions for the male breadwinning family, namely sufficiently strong social and political power in the urban bourgeoisie and general societal prosperity (Pfau-Effinger 2004).

Even so, the shift did not extend to enhancing certain aspects of the well-being of the Korean people, provoking the care crisis. Compressed modernity co-existing with modern public policy that supported a sole male breadwinning system was incompatible with people's understanding of an equal life style. The next section will deal with three important aspects of this. All of these shifted and constrained family life for the democratization generation in important ways: the decay of Confucian social order, the feature of gender equality, and the insufficient welfare regime.

### 5.3.1 The decay of Confucian social order and traditional family structure

#### *The decay of Confucian social order*

In 2005, the *hoju* system was abolished in line with revisions of family law. The process of abolishing the *hoju* system was lengthy, and has been analysed in terms of interactions between local, national and global structures (Nam 2010). The struggle against the *hoju* system started in the 1950s, when a shift in political power from conservative to liberal meant the issue could reach a consensus. This also had much to do with the ratification of several international treaties by the Korean government, when the United Nations urged the Korean government to abolish the *hoju* system, and also had to do with grass-root civil activities by the Citizens' Alliance for the Abolition of the *Hoju* System (hereafter Citizens' Alliance) which had been established in 1998,<sup>13</sup> and had submitted a petition to the National Assembly. In 2003, the Citizens' Alliance issued a statement claiming the unconstitutionality of the *hoju* system, and the Constitutional Court did finally rule that *hoju* system was unconstitutional, which led to its replacement in 2005 (Nam 2010: 83). *Hoju* had co-existed with the modern constitution for 57 years.

The system was not abolished from one day to the next. In 1990, a significant amendment of family law awarded women the right to share

marital property and legal custody of their children in divorce and also equal rights of inheritance (Kim, 1994). Before this, women automatically lost custody of their children in a divorce, even when the divorce resulted from violent treatment by the husband of wife and/or children. Moreover, by virtue of the Claim of Division of Property after Divorce, which prescribed that property during marriage should be shared between two parties, the housewife's housework was acknowledged as economically valuable work (Cho, 1994). Also, this has had an influence on practical improvement of the economic status of divorced women. Regarding inheritance, previously a female child was entitled to only one quarter of the male child's inheritance, and a married female child was entitled to even less than that (Kim, 1994). This followed the Confucian ethic that a married woman did not belong to her original family but was instead considered a member in her husband's family. The Family Law reform in 1990 rectified this unequal status for property inheritance in the family between brother and sister and unmarried and married women. And in 2005, gender equality in terms of divorce and heritage in law was added.

In sum, the change of family law weakened and then removed the *hoju* system and the inherited Confucian family order, both of which had supported inequality in gender. After 2005, this meant substantial gender equality in law. The effects were evident even in education, where women excelled. In 2008, 60 percent of Korean women aged 25-34 years completed tertiary education compared to 56 percent of Korean men in the same age group (OECD 2011a: 32).

#### *The shrinking traditional family*

In addition to shrinking Confucian familism, household structure and demographic factors also changed. As Chin et al. (2012: 54) summarized, the demographic change of Korea in the 2000s were: (a) rapidly decreasing fertility rates, (b) changes in marriage and divorce frequency, and (c) an increasing number of transnational marriages and multi-cultural families. As seen in figure 1.4, there was a sudden drop in the fertility rate between 1970 and 1983, a steady drop into 2001, and after 2001 it fluctuated around 1.2. As a result, by 2000, Korea was an aging society and by 2-17 an aged society. This took only 17 years, whereas it took 24 years in Japan, 40 years in Germany, 71 years in USA and 115 years in France (Kim 2008: 18). This rapid decline of fertility and a rising share of elderly has resulted in a re-

versed policy on birth control: from stopping births in the industrial period to producing more children. Also, as seen in table 5.1, there has been a decrease in two generation and three generation households and an increase in one generation and one person households.

**Table 5. 1**  
*Trend in households by generations, % 1980-2010*

| Year | (% ) By number of generations |      |       |               | One-person Households | Households of Unrelated Person |
|------|-------------------------------|------|-------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
|      | One Generation                | Two  | three | Four and over |                       |                                |
| 1980 | 8.3                           | 68.5 | 16.5  | 0.5           | 4.8                   | 1.5                            |
| 1985 | 9.6                           | 67   | 14.4  | 0.4           | 6.9                   | 1.7                            |
| 1990 | 10.7                          | 66.3 | 12.2  | 0.3           | 9                     | 1.5                            |
| 1995 | 12.7                          | 63.3 | 9.8   | 0.2           | 12.7                  | 1.4                            |
| 2000 | 14.2                          | 60.8 | 8.2   | 0.2           | 15.5                  | 1.1                            |
| 2005 | 16.2                          | 55.4 | 6.9   | 0.1           | 20                    | 1.4                            |
| 2010 | 17.5                          | 51.3 | 6.1   | 0.1           | 23.9                  | 1.2                            |

Source: Modified from Table 2-1-2 in Joo et al. (2016: 124)

This means an increasing number of elderly people live alone (Kim 2008: 20) despite the high poverty rate among the elderly (see table 5.3). The decrease in the number of three generation households may be one of the causes for deteriorating elderly care. In addition to increasingly living alone, the proportion of the elderly receiving financial support from their adult children decreased from 62.1 in 1994 to 53.3 in 2002 (Peng 2011: 908). This is not likely to improve, given the decrease in the crude marriage rate (9.2 in 1970 but only 2.3 in 2004) (Chin et al. 2012: 54) and the increase in the crude divorce rate (0.3 in 1960, 0.8 in 1980, 1.1 in 1990, 2.5 in 1999) (Baek and Kim 2000: 32).

All of these changes (enhancing gender equality in family and household and the demographic factors) challenge the Confucian order. This challenge not only has symbolic meaning but also practical meaning in weakening Confucian traditions in society. For example, in a 1991 survey, 18.3 per cent said the first son has a responsibility to support his parents and 46.2 per cent believed the responsibility was for all children (‘Social

Indicators of Korea', 1993 in (Chang 1997). This shows a significant change in beliefs regarding support for parents compared to of the previously mentioned 1984 survey, in which 72.3 per cent of daughters-in-law accepted the Confucian order. Further, Kim Uichol, et al.'s study (2005) shows a change in child value. In that research, mothers with infant children point out a sense of joy as the main reason to have children, while mothers with adolescent children saw having children as a kind of qualification for being a family member. Moreover, older mothers supported their children more and anticipate getting more back when they become old. This shows the transition from instrumental familism to affectionate familism.

However, despite this weakening, Confucian mores remain in terms of women's roles (Sung 2003) and this sometimes provokes emotional conflict. The symbolic phenomena of this conflict between the legacy of Confucian mores and their unacceptability is revealed in the name 'national holiday syndrome.' This means that around national holidays, such as New Year's Day and Thanksgiving Day, some Korean women feel physical pain due to the emotional burden of doing a bulk of housework in their in-law's house. In the media, there are periodic reports that after a national holiday, the divorce rate increases. For instance, the Korea Economic Daily (11 Sep. 2013) reported that by statistics of Statistics Korea in right after the month of national holiday (Feb., Mar., Oct., and Nov.) the divorce rate is around 11.5 % higher than in other months.

According to research by Han (2011: 80) using data from the National Welfare Panel Study in 2009, women who have a stronger traditional gender role attitude manifest higher scores on depression. Moreover, in the same study, those who show a stronger traditional gender role attitude have low satisfaction in family life but high satisfaction in their relationship with their partners. From this, it is assumed that the traditional gender role is supported more by men, while women have difficulty negotiating between the traditional social norm and their own goals. Moreover, it seems that the fading of Confucian family order may not be enough for the family ideology of Korean women, and that a gap between genders continues to exist.

### 5.3.2 Gender equality in paid work and overlapping the first and second modernity

#### *Increasing gender equality in paid work yet insufficient work-family reconciliation*

Until the mid-1980s, a societal rule that women should quit their jobs when they marry existed, with no consideration of work-family balance at the societal level. Moreover, with extremely poor working conditions for all labourers, the far inferior working conditions of women were taken for granted. In the middle of 1980s, rapid economic growth opened opportunities for married women to enter/remain in paid work (Shin 2007: 22), and in this way, the male-dominated culture in the work place was challenged by the Korean women's movement (Moon 2008). In this context, aiming to eliminate gender discrimination and improve the socio-economic status of working women (Kim Sangmook 2008: 465), the Equal Employment Opportunity Act was passed in 1987.

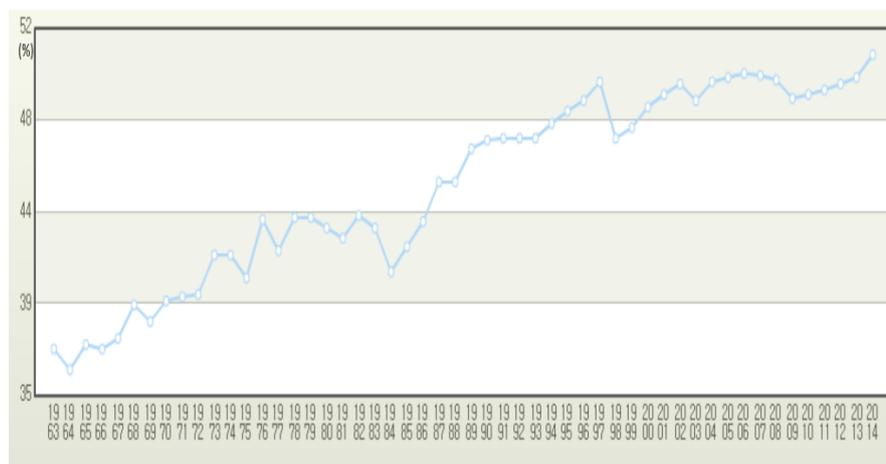
The main focus of this Act was to end the conventional dismissal of women at marriage (Moon 2008), plus a declaration of the principle of "equal pay for equal work". In 2001 this Act, for the first time in Korea, introduced maternal protection (maternity leave) for a period of two months, later extended to three months, with the benefit of 100 % salary (Sung 2003). The percentage taking maternal leave has increased from 76.5 percent of pregnant employees (2007) to 84.5 (2008) to 85.3 (2009) (Kim 2011: 126), showing 100 % satisfaction among government official respondents (Kim Sangmook 2008: 470). Re-coining the title as "Act on Equal Employment Opportunity and Support for Work-Family Balance", three days of paternity leave without leave benefit was added in 2008 (Kim 2011). Currently, the three days of paternity leave is paid and it will be extended to ten days by 2020. However, such a short paternity leave can neither support mothers nor allow men to share child care.

In 1987, a parental leave programme for raising a baby was introduced, at first only for mothers with a child under one year old and for a maximum of one year. In 2001 this was extended to fathers with some wage replacement, and in 2010 wage replacement increased to 40 % of monthly salary and in 2007 coverage expanded to include children aged up to 3 years; in 2010 this became 6 years (Chin et al. 2012). This sequence of benefits ignores the gender equality idea, giving care time for women first rather than imposing fathers' sharing. As it happens, in practice, the ratio of fathers taking parental leave has been very low, only 1.4 % of those

eligible in 2009 and 2.37 % in 2011.<sup>14</sup> Further, given the prerequisite of minimum 1 year unbroken working before claiming the leave, this programme is not available to many. It is probably worth noting here that apart from non-standard male employees, over 60 percent of working women are in non-standard employment and that three-quarters of female non-standard employees are married (Peng 2011: 915).

The Korean family-work reconciliation policy, while possibly good politics, was a bad deal for women (Peng 2011), who faced deteriorating work conditions, mainly due to labour market reform linked to economic globalization. From a different angle, this diagnosis was also shown in a study by Kim, SeonMi (2004) which indicated that some full-time housewives with good educational backgrounds and affluent husbands prefer not to be employed, due to the poor working conditions for women. To be sure, the rate of Korean women's participation in paid work has increased, as shown in figure 5.4. However, the rate is still far lower than the OECD average, and at the bottom for the tertiary educated women (OECD 2016a: 224). This supports above stated findings of Kim and SeonMi (2004).

**Figure 5. 4**  
*Labour force participation rates, female (% of female population ages 15+)*

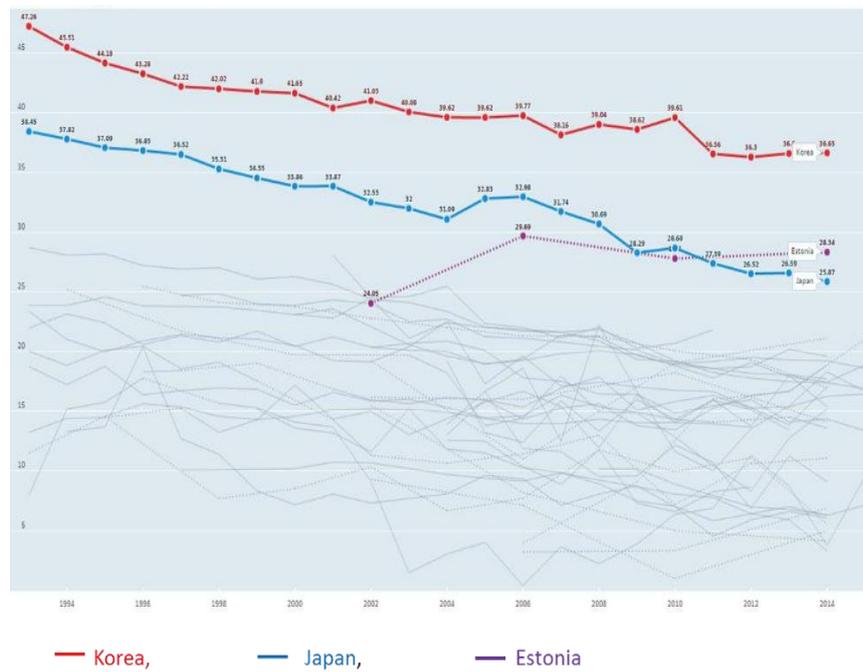


Source: Korean Statistical Information Service

This low female participate rate in the labour force could be partly due to the rarity of part-time work opportunities, which in 2009 amounted to

about 10 percent of total employment, and of that group, 59.3% were women. This is relatively lower than in highly developed countries (OECD 2011a: 153). However, regarding the harsh working conditions in Korean part-time jobs, as mentioned by Kim, SeonMi's (2004) analysis may make sense. Looking at figure 5.5, between 1993 and 2014, even though the gender wage gap in Korea fell, it remained the highest among OECD countries, with a remarkably big gap. In the figure, most countries are shown in lines without special colour while three are shown in colour; Japan in blue and Estonia in purple to compare with Korea in red

**Figure 5. 5**  
**Gender wage gap among OECD countries, 1993-2015**  
 (% of male median wage)



Source: OECD (2017) Gender wage gap (indicator). doi: 10.1787/7cee77aa-en (Accessed on 16 April 2017).

Considering that in 2008, in the 25-34 age group, more women completed tertiary education than men, and also considering that in the category of female top-quintile earnings, Korean women earned barely 60 percent of Korean men's earnings (OECD 2011a), the poor working conditions must be a main factor in the low women's paid work participation. At the same time, work family balance policies have imposed care responsibility on women as the "second earner", neglecting women's working conditions.

Undoubtedly, since 1987, there has been considerable improvement in gender equal treatment in workplace. However, this improvement is far from equal. Men are still treated as the main breadwinners while women are seen as the main care givers, and policy that gives opportunity for men to give care to the family is still not a priority. Of course, if women wish to have this lifestyle, like the Korean elites in the early industrial period, the direction of policy would please people. However, this does not seem to be the case.

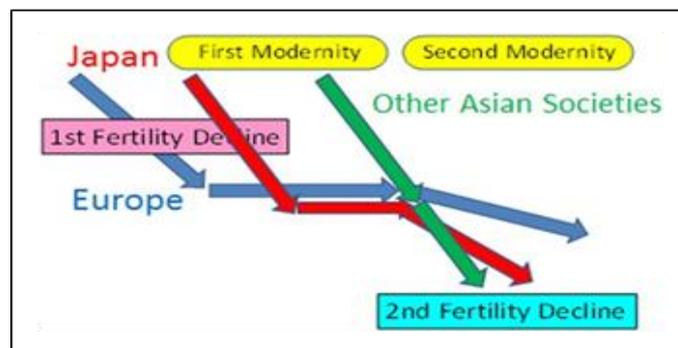
#### *Overlapping the first and second modernity*

According to a recent demographic study (Ochiai 2014: 210-211), there are two separate reasons for declining fertility rates: first, to give more love and money to each child in the period of housewifization, and second, as a value-driven lifestyle choice that generate dehousewifization. In early industrialized countries, the first depended on the industrial revolution, which generated social prosperity that made it possible to give more money and love to children. Indeed, this first modernity period is the time to set up the sole male breadwinning family. Then, in experiencing this new system, a new idea of lifestyle choice arises, reliant on family value changes, and that leads to the second type of fertility decline, namely the second modernity corresponding to post-modern/ post-industrial era<sup>15</sup>. Chang and Song (2010) called this defamiliation or somehow refamiliation which means to intentionally reduce the family burden by prioritizing individual desire.

However, in Korea, through compressed modernity, the first modernity and the second modernity partly overlapped, with no interim period between two. This phenomenon is shown very clearly in figure 5.6, based on Ochiai (2014: 217). In this figure, Korea is like other Asian societies, with no interim period, suggesting the possibility that social policies might

differ from those in countries where an interim period provided room to generate new ideas and room to adjust to new situations. In Korea, as seen in figure 1.4, the total fertility rate had by 1983 already dropped below the replacement level of 2.1, and it continued to drop. In 2005 when the total fertility rate dropped at 1.08, some institutional support for work-family balance existed (Lee 2015).

**Figure 5. 6**  
*Fertility decline in the first and second modernity*



Source: Ochiai, 2014: 217 figure 3.

However, if these policies are evaluated in terms of their goal to raise the fertility rate, they have not been successful. The harsh care-work burden on women has been repeatedly presented as for the reason for this barely increasing fertility rate, as has the male-centred work culture (Kim 2011, Lee 2015). This possibility is supported by a comparison of the level of fathers' leave for childcare among 15 OECD countries, Yoon (2006) reported that those countries with higher level of support for fathers' care work show higher total fertility rates and higher rates for women participating in the labour market. Thus, a male-centred work culture and little support for fathers' care work seem to be the most problematic issues in Korea's particularly muddled modernity.

It is possible that the economic downturn since 1997, in the middle of the overlap of two stages of modernity, make this more difficult to solve. This collision between modern and post-modern factors, enhanced by economic downturn, was also examined by Chin and Chung (2010), who interviewed never married people in 2005 and 2009, to investigate changes

in family values and traditional gender roles and their influence on marriage. Their findings show less than straightforward results: a decrease in family values and an increase of traditional gender roles (namely the male breadwinning role) in both genders. In some sense, the respondents show a post-modern feature of family value, while keeping the idea of gender division of labour as a symbol of “modern” family idea. Among respondents, women show higher rates of completing tertiary education than men and also of having a job. This might be interpreted to show the influence of economic difficulty, but the clearer point is the collision between ideas of different stages in compressed modernity.

Overall, under the overlapped two periods, apart from insufficient government policy, even individuals’ life strategies seem to stumble on the uneven mixture of modern and post-modern ideology. Then democratization in this research is largely under this mixture of modern and post-modern (roughly since the 2000s) period and ideology.

### 5.3.3 Toward a welfare regime, yet not enough

The economic downturn increased the demand for a welfare regime. As seen in Takegawa’s study (2009), the Korean welfare state emerged in the age of neoliberal globalization, when Western welfare systems were being criticised for economic congestion, and both welfare and workfare were adopted. However, with little thought to protecting the vulnerable who were unlikely to work (such as the elderly and the disabled) workfare policy is likely to delay provisioning for the needy. Workfare is similar to developmentalism in that both focus on economic growth rather than on the genuine needs of the marginalized.

Developmentalism has long history in the era of Korean dictatorship. It was a dominant and practical motive behind the Korean ‘economic miracle’, not only for political economic elite groups but also for ordinary people (Kim and Park 2003). Even in the period between 1987 and 1996, from the mentioned democratic struggles to just before Asian economic crisis, the Korean government continuously emphasised economic growth, minimalizing social service (Palley 1992). Then, in 1997, when the need to set up a welfare system became urgent, and was demanded under the IMF bail-out programme, the Korean government could still not free itself from the idea of economic growth.

In this circumstance, the establishment of the National Basic Livelihood Security (hereafter NBLs) scheme is considered a 'paradigm shift' in Korean welfare history (Lee-Gong 2010). It is referred to as the most representative of all social welfare reforms, and was implemented by the Kim Dae Jung government (Lee 2005). The Kim Dae Jung government began during the Financial Crisis of 1997 and was the first political power transition from conservative to liberal, supported by a rapidly growing civil society. Productive welfare and social investment by the state were on the state agenda from 1998 to 2007.

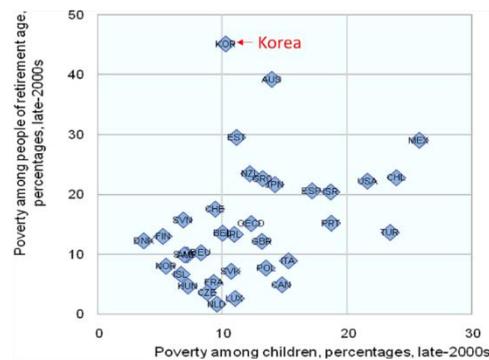
In the meantime, civil society organizations had had practical roles in welfare policy reforms such as the birth of the National Basic Livelihood Security System, National Pension Insurance reform, National Health Insurance reform, Maternity Protection reform, and the Welfare Budget Campaign (Lee, 2005). In these processes, a coalitional organizations of many civil society organizations had prepared the bill for NBLs, led by the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD). President Kim Dae Jung publicly made clear his intention to enact the NBLs Law, and the law was passed by Parliament in 1999 (ibid). NBLs is a public assistance programme for individuals and households with a minimum income threshold, and the percentage of the population who were beneficiaries in 2007 was 3.2 per cent of total population (Peng 2009).

The idea of NBLs, based on "workfare", forced all able-bodied citizens in conditions of poverty to participate in Self-Reliance Support Programs (Fiori and Kim 2011). Without doubt, this idea has good aims to remove poverty, with proper job training and jobs. However, due to the lack of proper regulation on being able to work, together with the discretionary power of welfare officials, some beneficiaries gave up the benefit rather than accept stigma as freeloaders (Lee-Gong 2010). This shows the discrepancy between the language of this program, which focuses on social rights as a tool for emancipation, and its realization, in which beneficiaries were treated as passive dependents (Lee-Gong 2010).

Essentially, many welfare programs have focused on family responsibility rather than state responsibility, including NBLs. There is an obligation that the 'family members ... are obliged to support' (Lee-Gong 2010: 890) in the Elderly Care insurance established in 2008 as well as in the Welfare of Disabled Persons Act. A family member cannot be a beneficiary if the person has an obliged family member who is over the minimum income level. For example, there is a woman who has lived alone without

being able to work after divorce; she has not met her adult children for a long time. Yet her children are over the minimum income level and are obliged by law to support her. She cannot be a beneficiary of NBLS. This is also the case of disability allowances.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the boundary of family members who are obliged to support has stretched from parents to grandchildren in law (Cho 2011). This is incompatible with practical circumstances in the conditions of increasing of single, and one or two generation households.

**Figure 5.7**  
*Poorer pensioners or poorer children?*



Source: [Source/(OECD 2011b: 69)]

In the meantime, old age benefit, introduced in 2008, covers about 60 per cent of the elderly population, but the benefit is only about 5 percent of the average wage (ibid). Putting aside the fact that the amount is far from enough to support decent life, the relatively high percentage of people eligible in fact shows the high percentage of poverty among people of retirement age. Around 45 per cent of the elderly were under the relative poverty line in late-2000s, the top level among OECD countries, as shown in figure 5.7. Compared to other OECD countries, elderly poverty is far much critical than child poverty.

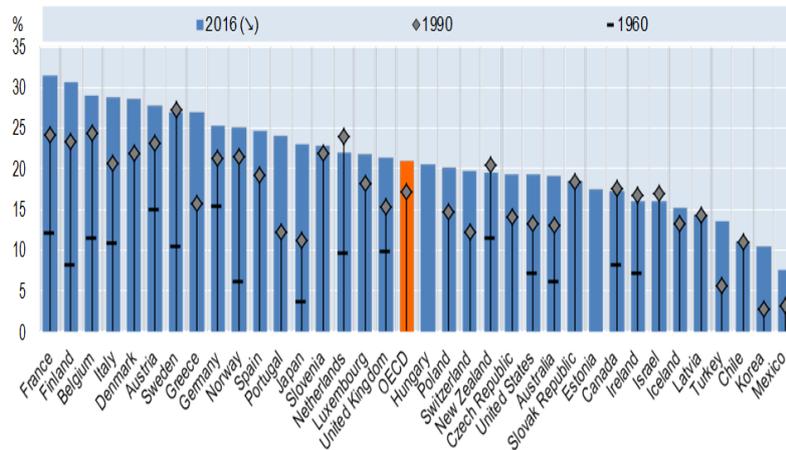
**Table 5. 2**  
Relative poverty rates, 2012-2016

|                       | poverty rates (%) |      |      |      |      |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                       | 2012              | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
| Total                 | 16.6              | 16.5 | 16.3 | 16.3 | 16.0 |
| Working ages (18-65)  | 11.4              | 11.8 | 11.3 | 11.4 | 10.7 |
| Pensioners (ages 66+) | 53.7              | 52.8 | 52.9 | 49.6 | 49.1 |

Source: Korean Statistical Information Service

Furthermore, as seen in table 5.2, up to the present time there has been no significant improvement in elderly poverty, and about 50 percent of the elderly are still in economic difficulty.

**Figure 5. 8**  
Public social spending as a percent of GDP, 1960, 1990 and 2016



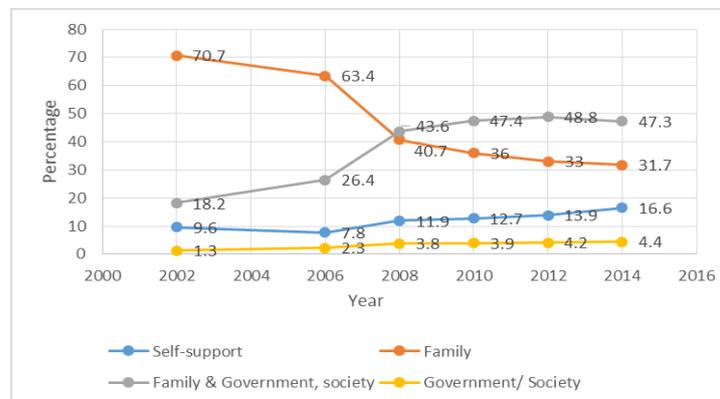
Note: Estimated for 2016, on the basis of national sources for non-European OECD countries, OECD (2016), *OECD Economic Outlook*, No. 99, as in June 2016 and EC DG ECFIN (2016), the European Union's *Annual Macro-economic Database (AMECO)* as in May 2016. For detail on the underlying methodology regarding estimates for recent years, see Adema, W., P. Fron and M. Ladaïque (2011), "Is the European welfare state really more expensive? Indicators on social spending, 1980-2012 and a manual to the *OECD Social Expenditure Database (SOCX)*", *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 124, [www.oecd.org/els/social/expenditure.htm](http://www.oecd.org/els/social/expenditure.htm). Instead of 2016, data for Mexico refer to 2012, 2013 for Japan, 2014 for Turkey and 2015 for Canada, Chile and New Zealand. Data for Chile, Israel and Slovak Republic refer to 1995, for Slovenia to 1996, and for Latvia to 1997 instead of 1990. Data for 1960 are only available for Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States.  
Source: OECD (2016), *OECD Social Expenditure Database*, [www.oecd.org/social/expenditure.htm](http://www.oecd.org/social/expenditure.htm).

Source: OECD (2016b:1)

Most importantly, the level of priority assigned to family responsibility for people's well-being is revealed by the intolerably low public spending

on family benefits compared to GDP. Public spending is the lowest among OECD countries at 0.8 percent. This is far below the OECD average of 2.23 percent. Less than 0.1 percent of GDP is in terms of cash benefit (OECD 2011a: 42). Actually, looking at figure 5.8, it is clear that public spending significantly increased between 1990 and 2016; nevertheless, as a percentage of GDP it remains far below the OECD average. Looking at the spending on family and old age, in 2014, 1.1 percent of GDP was spent on family while the OECD average was 2.2 percent and spending on old age was 2.7 percent while the OECD average was 8.7 percent (OECD 2016). Overall, the obligation is for family members to supporting family care, and public spending is still insufficient, so the Korean government is not taking up this responsibility.

**Table 5. 3**  
*Opinions on who should take care of aging parents*  
 (% , ages 15+, since 2012 ages 13+)



Source: Modified from Figure 2-3-7 in Joo et al. (2016: 154)

In this regard, the noteworthy problem here is that the low priority the state gives to family assistance no longer matches the attitudes of ordinary people. As discussed above, at a social cultural level, the Confucian social order lost its power as the rule for individuals. The weakening power of Confucianism is clearly shown in the high rate of elderly poverty and the low level of child poverty. In Confucian values, filial piety is one of the main values of children (Chang 1997: 23), whereby even when they could

not feed their children due to poverty they should serve their parents. However, the rate in the above figure shows a totally opposite feeling, one even more serious when compared with other countries. This needs, as well, to be taken together with the decreasing desire to marry (Joo et al. 2016: 142) and the ambiguous value placed on children (Kim 2015), because together these show that engagement with family responsibility of care has weakened. Indeed, as shown in table 5.3, the trend in care responsibility for aging parents reflects this shrinking engagement. In table 5.3, the main trends are the remarkable decrease in the agreement with family responsibility for the care of aging parents and the steadily increasing idea that care responsibility belongs jointly to the family, government, and society. Thus, overall, even though Korean people still accept some family responsibility for the care of aged parents, it is obvious that they are increasingly demanding to share this responsibility with the government and the whole Korean society.

This might be explained by the clash between developmentalism and Confucianism. That is, in everyday life people accept the change in family values from moral values to affection, yet in public social care the state focus is on growth-oriented developmentalism and keeping elderly care responsibility at the family level. At the same time, developmentalism caused the state to set up child care earlier than any elderly or the disabled care. This could well be, as Joo (2011) found in analysing the discrimination between the able-bodied and the disabled, a visible indication of the welfare “principle of balance by lifecycle”. Priority was awarded to child care over elderly care from a human resource perspective. This was the principle of welfare policy of a presidential candidate within the conservative party in 2012. Since this conservative party took back the political power from the liberal party in 2008, this candidate eventually became Korean president.

Child care policy goes back further. Since 1987, via the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, financial assistance has been available to companies that run childcare centres, yet company-run childcare centres still accommodated only 1 percent of all children in childcare centres between 2006 and 2009 (Kim 2011:134-138). In 1991, the Child Care Act facilitated the development of both public and private childcare centres, leading to a 15-fold increase in the number of childcare centres by 2007 (Peng 2009: 13). Childcare subsidies have significantly increased, expanding the coverage from poor children to all, and this necessarily mean recognition of the

state responsibility for child care (Kim 2011: 129). The child care budget jumped approximately seven times between 2002 and 2007 (Bang 2009, in Chin et al. 2012: 56). Furthermore, the number of private childcare centres has overwhelmed that of public child care, even though many parents would prefer public child care due to the higher quality, regardless of the different childcare fees (Peng 2009).

Undoubtedly, the increase in state responsibility for child care has reduced the childcare burden for Korean families. However, efforts to set up a universal public childcare system have failed, firstly due to market-friendly welfare policies in some government departments and secondly to the lack of long-term vision in setting welfare policies (Peng 2011). Seen in detail, firstly, market-oriented experts saw childcare reform as an opportunity to cultivate a new social service market and create private sector jobs (Peng 2011). Thus, although the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) was supportive of universal public child care, the Ministry of Planning and Budget (MPB) and the Ministry of Labour proposed subsidies and tax benefits programs to incentivize and stimulate market demand and increase market competition (Peng 2011). Secondly, in 1991 as the Child Care Act began and there was an urgent need for childcare teachers. In response, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) ran a special programme to generate teachers through short time training. Then in 1997, when a new public pre-school system for children aged three to five was proposed (Peng 2009), small-scale care service providers and childcare teachers who qualified through the special programme were strongly against the plan. For small-scale care service providers, the plan meant investing more to meet the new regulation for facilities, while teachers would lose jobs because the special programme did not fully qualify them as teachers. Under these complex conditions, universal public childcare provision was not settled, and resulted in only 5.4 % more public day care centres and 1 % more employer-supported child care centre, in the total childcare provision in 2009 (Kim 2011: 137).

In conclusion, Korean public care systems have had limited success in meeting care needs. Firstly, the initial setting up of care systems corresponded with an economic downturn, and a developmentalist ethic put priority on economic growth, and this has not substantially changed. Secondly, the Korean government still imposes primary care responsibility on the family. However, Korean families are not accepting this responsibility,

as their ideas about family and marriage now make this a matter of choice. Thirdly, the same developmentalism, termed productive welfare, discriminated between care for the able-bodied and disable-bodied in terms of productivity. This has meant less care provision for the elderly and the disabled than for children.

This chapter, with the lens of compressed modernity, summarised the discursive socio-historical context of Korea, showing the basic milieu that has generated the values and meanings of doing housework. It outlined how, due to the rapid change in all economic, political, social, and demographic aspects, two generations (industrialization and democratization) have been confronted with fairly different conditions. The industrial period saw a nominally modern political system and remarkable economic growth, still entwined with a strong Confucian social order. This economic growth was insufficient or insufficiently distributed and could not therefore bring general social prosperity and replace the Confucian hierarchical order with modern ideas of equality. In this vein, despite the import of the ideology of housewifization, the everyday practice of doing housework did not move from Confucian familism.

In contrast to the industrialization period, in the democratic period ideas did change, as economic growth and enhanced civil society provided sufficient social prosperity and created a bourgeoisie able to embrace new, modern, family ideas, including the sole male breadwinning family. However, compressed modernity has meant that the first modernity (including housewifization) overlapped with the second modernity (including dehousewifization). That is, immediately after the modern family system of the sole male breadwinning family was embraced, the post-modern family system was desired, with no interim period to ripen the former phase. This is revealed by three mismatched factors. Firstly, gender equality in the family has been completely settled in law. Secondly, gender equality in paid work is being slowed or reversed in the economic downturn. Thirdly, the Korean government still sees care as something that should be a family responsibility, except in cases where government provision directly results in economic productivity. This productive welfare is in line with neo-liberalism. As a result, inferior working conditions for women and primary care responsibilities remaining inside the family remain unaddressed, but this is inconsistent with dehousewifization, and damages the well-being of people. This shows that pressures arising from various

familisms (nominal Confucian familism, instrumental familism, affectionate familism and individual familism) co-exist in conflicting or compounding ways.

As an everyday life condition, the intertwining of extremely incompatible institutions and ideologies may provoke incompatible choices by actors. Korean women have reduced births and at the same time are not much inclined to join the workforce. People do not agree that they should marry or have babies, yet they agree that men should be breadwinners. In a not-so-good welfare system, people have little time for unpaid work. These incompatible practices in everyday life symbolize the problematic interactions among actors and chaotic institutions and ideologies. Above all, these incompatible conditions and choices have been causing the deterioration of inter-generational relationships, as well as those between genders, and even causing internal struggle in the self, thereby worsening the well-being of the whole Korean society. In this context, next two chapters, which scrutinize the contexts of actors' choices, offer the beginnings of ways to resolve the complicated care problems, by clarifying the interactions between actors and external conditions.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Briefly, the different focuses in the four familisms is as follows: women as daughters-in-law within Confucian familism, family as a resource for survival in instrumental familism, motherly love as the impetus of family care in affectionate familism, family for individual well-being in individualistic familism. In the Korean case, to excessively focus on children's educational success is representative of instrumental familism.

<sup>2</sup> The author had generated this theory by analysing different paths to reach gender division of labour with the cases of three countries: the Netherlands, Germany, and Finland. In the Dutch case, based on early economic affluence even before industrialization, gender roles (male breadwinner and female housewife) were common. In contrastively, in Finland roles transferred from an agricultural society to a welfare society, without a period in which a gendered labour division was dominant model. In Germany, the family model became dominant only around the 1960s, but Germany was a late industrializing country.

<sup>3</sup> To explain this clearly, the main role of men in Confucian *Chosun* society should be understood. This allows "the extensive integration of women into societal production in pre-modern societies" (Pfau-Effinger 2004: 378)". This makes visible

the varied contributions women's labour makes in society as determined by different socio-historical contexts, rather than considering it to be mere auxiliary income-generating activity. This will be discussed later.

<sup>4</sup> This democratization generation is also called as '386 generation' which means those who were born in 1960s and were university students in 1980s and were in their 30s in 1990s. They would have been the main actors in the June Struggle or the Great Workers' Struggle. Nowadays, this generation is called the '86 generation'.

<sup>5</sup> Here, I have the author used the term "1980s generation" in the English title, denoting the democratization generation of the 1980s in the Korean title. The Korean 1980s started with the May 18, 1980 Democratic Uprising that was suppressed by the second military coup, yet in 1987, people's power partially defeated the main power of the military coup.

<sup>6</sup> In this research, the authors identified three generations; (1) industrialization generation born by 1957, (2) democratization generation born between 1958 and 1971, and (3) the new generation born since 1972 (Lee and Kim, 2013: 445).

<sup>7</sup> In some of the interviewees in this generation, such as EC 3-H and SME 5, were determined to follow whatever the Korean government ordered, without protest, and proudly expressed this as evidence they were good people.

<sup>8</sup> At that time, most female workers in manufacturing were unmarried, with a conventional social perception that women should stop paid work when they married; which female labourers made written contracts for this. Since the 'Equal Employment Opportunity Act' in 1987, these written contracts have been illegal.

<sup>9</sup> He was a tailor in small factories in the 1960s (see note 11) and his sacrifice was, substantially, the origin of the Korean labour movement after Japan's colonial rule.

<sup>10</sup> In Korea, to date no water supply is privatized.

<sup>11</sup> In 1970, Chun Taeil, a tailor, sacrificed himself by setting himself on fire, saying "labourers are also human beings; we are not machines to work", to draw attention to labour issues. In 1980, the second military coup's cruel suppression of the Gwangju Uprising called attention to political oppression that had gone on since the first military coup in 1961. Both are rooted in realities that need to be overcome for Korean democratization.

<sup>12</sup> Gwangju is the city of the 5-18 Gwangju Uprising in 1980, by which the city became a symbol of Korean democracy movement.

<sup>13</sup> *Yonhapnews*, (15-07-1998) "Start in October, the Citizen's Alliance for the Abolition of the *Hoju* System" accessed in 07-05-2012.

<sup>14</sup> *Yonhapnews*, "number of male parental leave over 1,000; compared to last year a 74% per cent increase" 15-12-2011.

<sup>15</sup> In this research, the terms post-modern and post-industry are differentiated in a nuanced way. Post-modern focusses more on the cultural base, while post-industry focusses on the economic system.

<sup>16</sup> In 2002, 140,000 people received disability allowances, compared to a total of 1,294,254 disabled people; this was about 11 per cent of the total (Peng, 2009).

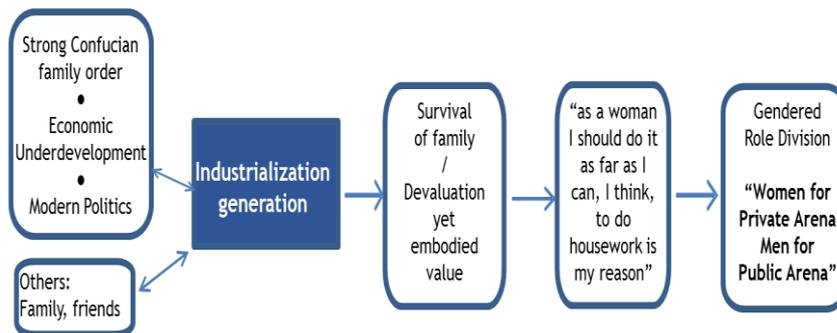
## 6

## Survival of Family: the Industrialization Generation

This research aims to understand the extent to which actors engaged in doing housework, in terms of the meanings, values, and customary norms for housework that they have generated in the context in which they live. These contexts were outlined in the previous chapter. In the early industrial period, where the industrialization generation supported their extended families, life was characterized by a compressed modernity (Chang 1999), the co-existence of three factors in collision: a pre-modern Confucian family order, insufficient economic development for a modern nuclear family lifestyle, and a modern political system. Under this co-existence, Korea was modern country, yet family life was strongly influenced by a Confucian order and by poverty. Thus, by interacting with mainly the Confucian family order but also with economic underdevelopment, the industrialization generation engendered specific meanings and values for doing housework, which then generated their everyday housework practices, as shown in figure 6.1.

Looking at this figure, and mainly interacting with the underdeveloped economics, housework was essentially the same as any other work women did. It had a significant meaning in life, namely ‘survival for the family.’ Yet, despite this significant meaning, the perceived value of housework was devalued by customary norms. That is, by interacting with the Confucian family order in the process of reproducing their practices, this generation had formed and consolidated customary norms (Heller 1984) of ‘women for the private area and men for the public area.’ Customary norms were anchored in the precedence of public over private, devaluing women’s contribution whether as housework or as paid work contributing to the family living. However, due to low economic development where occupations in public area is not enough to support family, interviewees felt huge embodied value of housework by which family life was also supported.

**Figure 6. 1**  
*Methodological points of industrialization generation under compressed modernity*



To fully comprehend these meanings, values, and customary norms requires special attention on two points. Firstly, given that most housework is done by women and housework has a strong gender distinction, the meanings presented in this chapter will be woven from the perspective of women. This, given that the meaning is at the social level, does not imply that men would have different meanings for doing housework. Secondly, the move of the realm of livelihood of family from private to public (Arendt [1958] 1998: 112) is key to contextualizing the customary norm of ‘women for the private area and men for the public area.’ In section 6.3, these customary norms are clarified by examining literature on the historical context. After this contextualization, the customary norms support the meaning of housework as for the ‘survival of the family.’ On the reasons for this is that the customary norms generated from the interviewees’ everyday practices were far from the practices in current Korean society; clarification by the historical context helps to understand their everyday practices.

In section 6.1, the meaning of doing housework will be explained, and section 6.2 will discuss the value of doing housework, followed by section 6.3, Confucian customary norm.

## 6.1 The Meaning of housework: Survival of family

This generation has generated a meaning of doing housework largely by somehow homogenous life condition from national poverty. Despite rapid economic development, the industrialization generation was accustomed to a belt-tightening life style. Even though modern Korean economic development had started in the 1960s (Heo 2012: 466-468), by the end of the 1970s the GDP per capita was still slightly less than 3,500 USD (World Bank Database). Thus, in this early industrial society, economic development was still insufficient to enjoy the fruits of growth. Furthermore, under the scanty welfare programs of the Korean government, people had to find alternative long-term ways to support themselves, so people tended to save if they could: the sharp increase of household saving went from -5.0 % in 1963 to more than 20 % in 1979 (Kim DoKyouon 2012:180). In this context, this generation has become people described like this: *“my father is such a person who has never spent money for himself; he even didn't eat out a bowl of Jjajangmyeon' for himself”* (FWC 5-H<sup>2</sup>).

In this belt-tightening life condition, no interviewees, except BokSun (who had an affluent family background), had ever felt released from doing labour for survival. This situation would probably fit to a rural area in industrial society, without considering that in industrial society the possibility to make most women full-time housewives is reliant on full employment<sup>3</sup>, and the gender division of labour as a typical lifestyle in industrial society would be no more than a top down ideology, too. Roughly speaking, in Korea, the only period in which the unemployment rate of Korean men was under 3% and fitted the condition for a gender division of labour was from 1990 to 1998<sup>4</sup>. Above all else, the root and the trunk of industrial society was manufacturing, but only in 1985 did the number of labourers in manufacturing exceed those in agriculture (Heo 2012: 470). Considering this, in the 1960s-1970s, when economic condition was insufficient for sole breadwinner families, most of my interviewees regardless of genders worked hard for a living. For this reason, most of my elderly interviewees said, *“this elderly stage is the happiest time in my whole life”*. Even single elderly people who lived on social security benefits said, *“at least nowadays there is no worry about food; how happy it is.”*

As seen in table 6.1, the interaction with severe poverty<sup>5</sup> and the Confucian family order, and concrete differentiations in respective life conditions, divided my female elderly interviewees in three basic types: co-

breadwinner, substantial breadwinner, and sole breadwinner. This never means men would be dependents, since there was no possibility of sole breadwinning families. However, it is fair to call industrialization women breadwinners, as this discloses the economic contribution they made. Their contribution was anchored in Confucian gender norms that assigned to them the primary responsibility for family under the hierarchy of public and private. Through gender norms, despite their position as breadwinners, these women were still considered inferior to men, something markedly different from the male as a breadwinner in the democratization generation.

**Table 6. 1**  
*Three types of female lives in the early industrialization generation*

|                 | Co-breadwinner   | Substantial breadwinner   | Sole breadwinner   |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| respondents     | Elderly couple 4, 6,7  | Elderly couple 1, 2, 3, 5,  | Single female elderly 1,2,3,5,6,7  |
| households      | Extended (6-9 person household)  | Couple and children (4-5 person households)   | Single parent (1-4 person households)  |
| particularity   | Lack of income from their husband for supporting the three generation family                             | Neglect of their husband for supporting family regardless of their job                | Living alone or with children through divorce or bereavement   |
| Causal dynamics | Interactions with Confucian gender norms as daughters in law doing a mass of housework and earning money | Interaction with Confucian gender norms of women for private area men for public area | Interaction with the low economic development; for a living doing informal work which blurs in terms of work concept |

Looking at the three types, the first is co-breadwinner. Among elderly couples, cases 4, 6, 7 lived together with three generations, the husbands cannot be a sole breadwinner even though the husbands have formal jobs as an employee in the railway, a teacher, and a business owner. This is firstly due to the large family size, yet more fundamentally it also due to Korea's low level of economic development, in which the salary of most jobs was too low to support a family. This will be detailed in the subsection of co-breadwinner. The second type of substantial breadwinner became so due to the neglect of the husbands, who failed to support the family despite of having a job (EC 1, 2, 3, 5). The third type consisted of

those running away from husbands due to alcoholism or violence (SFE 2, 3, 5, 6) or living with children after bereavement (SFE 1, 7). Of these, single female elderly 2 had left her daughter with her husband while the others lived with their children. Single female elderly 4 is BokSun, who is excluded in this categorization since she was literally a housewife.

### 6.1.1 Co-breadwinner

In this category, all female interviewees had to work to support their families as co-breadwinners as well as to do tons of housework for the extended family as the eldest daughter-in-law. This is basically due to the low economic development at that time, but also, more significantly, to their acceptance of their role in supporting the family; this is the main logic in their lives. This acceptance means they never think that to do housework is hard. Their attitude is fairly in line with the customary gender norms of Confucianism, in which this gender order is considered to be ‘natural’ law. While interviewees in all categories had to do housework, in this category the volume of housework was huge, mainly due to the large household size. Furthermore, before technological advances (piped water, washing machines, etc.) housework in this early industrial society was harsh physical labour.

*“Ah, long time ago when I lived in Segumjung, Pyeongchang-dong, on the bank of a laughing brook, I unstitched trousers and coat, socks, a vest, then a Gamasot (traditional iron pot) was full of them. I boiled all the things and washed them in the brook. At that time, the water of the brook was so clean, like the water of Gangwon-do. I stiffly starched all the things, pounded and sewed them through the whole night, and made them wear them, and after one week the clothes became dirty again so I did all the processes again” (EC 4-W).*

She is the wife of an eldest son, so at that time she had to do housework for nine family members, including her parents-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law. Plus, she would wake at 4 a.m. and walk to the South Gate market to fetch flowers for street selling. In these everyday labours, there is no need to distinguish between market work and housework. Merely, as a daughter-in-law, to do housework is definitely her duty and had to prepare all foods and clothes for nine family members. According to her, at that time, her husband earned one rice bag yet the family ate two rice bags per month. To earn the difference and to repay debts, her parents-in-law

farmed and she sold flowers. On his days off, her husband helped with farming and in her selling. In this regard, in her family nobody was sole breadwinner.

Through this endless labour, she now has poor health, and she mentioned several times that the inability to take care of herself after giving birth was the reason for her current health problems. Nevertheless, she perceived this as a common social feature. Thus, compared to the times when there was no way to be liberated from harsh labour, she saw her current life stage as the happiest time, despite her bad health.

*“if I start to work, I keep working without lunch, and gave birth, but I couldn’t take care after giving birth that’s why now I’m sick all around my body feeling pain with my heart and soul. I should have taken a care after giving birth, yet at that time people didn’t take care.... In old days I went through all sorts of hardships, these days, how good it is.”*

Furthermore, she accepted the gender norm as her duty, and even though she felt the harsh labouring as painful, there were no problems with family members. Just six months after getting married, her husband went into military service. Thus she had done all the work in her parents-in-laws’ house without her husband. But questioned about happy memories doing housework, she related an episode of that time, which is a never special event.

*“After washing clothes, when my first child was about to fall asleep, I was trimming the clothes up and singing songs, because my husband was in military service I was singing alone; it was a lot of fun. Thinking about my husband, singing alone, I was feeling good, looking at my child and trimming up clothes.”*

Another episode was that when she went to the South Gate market to fetch flowers at 4 a.m., she sometimes bought rice cakes and gave them to her mother-in-law. She felt good that her mother in law enjoyed the rice cakes. Depending on interpretations, these episodes would indeed be typical examples to show how hard the life was living as a daughter-in-law. However, to tell these story as good memories shows her absolute acceptance of her circumstances. Nevertheless, to understand these from her perspective is not easy. If we read the quotation below, she even seems to do meditation to control her negative feeling.

*“house chores, to do for my children and my parents-in-law, thus it’s good. No way to say it’s too hard, too hard. Everything is fun.”*

However, it is indeed her perception about housework. She did housework for her family thus there is no way for it to be hard, whatever the work was. The episode about rice cakes also shows her boundary of family, which included the parents-in-law. This is far different from the case of the democratization generation, which will be presented in the next chapter. Indeed, in this category, all female interviewees demonstrated similar attitudes and perspectives, and all did a lot of work for a living. They also all accepted it as the customary norm, and thus did not think about its difficulty. The wife in elderly couple 7 got her mother-in-law's help in doing regular housework, yet she also got up at 4 a.m. to prepare four lunch boxes<sup>8</sup> for two sons and breakfast for the family, then went to work. She did laundry at weekends.

*“as the eldest daughter-in-law I thought I should do all things, taking this for granted. Because I'm the eldest daughter-in-law, I always do, I had done kimchi-making for the winter, for preparing a sacrificial table, there is no need to make a big table, so from several days before I would prepare; it is not too hard.”*

*“I thought that this is my work, so I didn't know it's hard. For my sons, lovely my sons, and my family, I've done what I surely do, so it is never hard. Just aside from the lack of time always, what, complaining, ah, it's too hard, I've lived without those thoughts.”*

She was a teacher, as was her husband. She as well as her husband said that at that time the salary of teacher was very small, thus with only her husband's salary they could not live, so she had to work. And then, as shown in her story that she clearly accepted doing housework as the customary norm. Then, by everyday practices relying on this acceptance, she produced the same norm of doing housework. Finally, she had no problem with it, but she also said happiest time is nowadays, being released from all kinds of work. Nowadays, this couple lives in elderly group housing, and they have done volunteer work since their retirement.

In the case of elderly couple 6, while the couple worked together and commuted daily to run own business, the wife, as the eldest daughter-in-law, was also in charge of doing housework for seven family members including her mother-in-law, who do not help with housework. Again, she also never saw housework as hard, even though physically it was very demanding and included things like fetching water far from her house. Actually, her husband mentioned that to fetch water must be very hard for his wife, who is not strong like a man. This work of fetching water would

be also fairly normal, given a water supply ratio of around 30-40 percent in 1960s-1970s as seen in figure 5.2.

In all of these cases, the couple had a good relationship and the husbands recognized how hard the life of their wives were. This recognition was not only for doing a lot of housework as the eldest daughter-in-law, but also for work in the market. They obviously recognized that without their wives' work in market as well as housework, the family economy could not be assured. Even though this recognition is not comparable with valuing housework as cost, it is compatible with the sense of its significance to their bodies, thereby putting meaningfulness of doing housework in family life. Based on this recognition, they have tried to share housework in current elderly stage.

To understand how someone perceives very harsh physical work as not that harsh or not at all harsh, the acceptance of customary norms must be a basic factor. This acceptance was not a particular event a long time ago, after which they produce their practices. Instead, it was in the middle of their everyday practice, whereby they also produced customary norms (Heller 1984). In this process, the customary norms are internalized and entwined with their identity. In this mechanism to boost the meaningfulness of doing housework, the self as the eldest daughter-in-law was positively enhanced by doing well. The self is one of main categories to boost meaningful work (Rosso et al. 2010). This may be relied on even in the situation of no alternatives. That is, even though they are mothers, wives, and workers, if they give up their view of the self as a daughter-in-law the other selves would be also in danger. This is also in line with Confucian family identity, where becoming a daughter-in-law was the main identity for women (Kim 2010) fulfilling filial norms for parents-in-law (Kim 1999a). In this sense, to fully accept their roles and norms, thereby getting identity is not negative or positive, indeed it was just the way of life they has walked by.

Here the focus is reasons to consider women interviewees in this category co-breadwinners, which is not only due to their joining in market work. As shown, all female interviewees in this category did market work, but they were also the sole or the main person in charge of housework. Crucially, the meaning of being "in charge" of housework means performing most of the work: preparing and serving food every day, keeping clothes clean and mended for the family, whatever other work is done and

whatever the family income is. Also, the housework done by female interviewees is totally different from that in current Korean society. In current Korean society, doing housework would be more as consumption rather than doing harsh physical labour: buying the washing machine, then consuming soap and electricity.<sup>9</sup> This is not the case in my interviewees' housework, since they had to fetch the water, hand wash the clothes, and even sewed the disassembled clothes again after drying. In this sense, the housework at that time would be closer to production than consumption, as becomes clear in the following two categories. To take notice of this different aspects of housework is necessary in order to clarify the contribution of women at that time in family life.

### 6.1.2 Substantial Breadwinner

Compared to the other categories, female interviewees in this category have been the main breadwinners for their families. This feature was revealed by the comparison between the lives of a husband who was currently considered to be the provider yet was not, and a wife who had substantially supported family by own labour. In male interviewees' cases in this category, first, despite having formal jobs, one had not spent income preferentially for the family (EC 1-H, 2-H), rather giving priority to keep own prestige or face-saving. One was a street vendor with his wife, but did not offer his income for family use (EC 5-H), the third, focusing on his musical activity, did not give priority to family support (EC 3-H). As a result, in contrast to female interviewees who acted as both mothers and breadwinners, by this neglect of family matters, these male interviewees lost the affection of their children as well as good relationships with them: *"I don't have affection with my children, so they call to my wife but not to me"* (EC 2-H).

To start with, see two quotations which revealed the awareness about the role of men.

*"when I was young I thought I should more focus on things outside of family such as friends, co-workers, or the work in my job. Otherwise I cannot have my seat in the society... at that time I thought there should be my position only in the case of doing like that. If not, others would think that this person was only concerned about family even though he's a teacher. In particular, if I went home there were many who thought like that, only caring about home."* (EC 2-H)

*“when I stayed in the rural area, after work there were many opportunities to get along with friends. My wife may feel too burdensome to it. I had lived like to feel that would be too reckless. Before, the work for families of the same clan, that is also a sort of housework. Even though the property of our clan is not mine, because my elder brother passed away, I have the responsibility to manage the property, which is not simple.” (EC 1-H)*

These quotations clearly revealed the perception that to care about family was incompatible with male norms in which the man should be in charge in the public arena, namely outside of family (Park 2002, Park 2008b). If they cared for family, there would not be a position in the wider society, thus they cared about their relationships outside the family or managed for families of the same clan. This is would be the legacy of pre-modern society, where men should not be concerned with matters of family and women should do this (Cho 1986, Cho 2001). Nevertheless, exactly in line with the theory of everyday life (Heller 1984), this customary norm has been reproduced by the practices of the industrialization generation. This perception and gender hierarchy seem to be two sides of the same coin. Men are higher than women, thus men should do great work in the public arena while women support the family. That is, the hierarchy between public and private has naturally intermingled with the hierarchy of gender roles. Actually, unlike his perception, the area of a clan which the husband of elderly couple 1 mentioned had been the representative public area as the unit of performing Confucian rituals (Park 2008b: 210) as well as for men’s role in governing the family (Ham 2013, Park 2002).

The noteworthy point here is that by making this distinction, the men have space to be released from the breadwinner’s role, leaving women as the substantial breadwinners. This is fairly different from the idea of gender division of labour. Nevertheless, the reality shown in this category is that thanks to the room for releasing from family duty, a husband can have a freedom to pursue his dream for music, or to dominate the extended family as the head of family without duty for the family, as well as to receive status in his clan and society. Their practices to neglect family are largely in line with Confucian customary male norms, so again reproducing the customary norms. The customary norms this generation reproduced somehow differ from the contemporary concept of gender division of labour, which will be elaborated in section 6.3.

In the case of elderly couple 5, until seven months before my interview, the couple had worked as street vendors for their whole married life,

sometimes together and sometimes separately, yet the husband had not contributed to the family economy. Rather, when he was out of money, he asked the wife for money. If the money was not given, he used violence against her and against household goods. Thus, she had always kept aside some amount of money even when in debt, as well as partly supporting her family-in-law as the eldest daughter-in-law.

*“I don’t want my children to go around outside, so I prepare lots of rice and many side dishes, and I bought books and toys, even second-hand, which children like, so my children can come home with friends and play there eating the meal.... I have been prostrated several times with high blood pressure, but I cannot fall down. Without me, who will take care of my children? so I arise clenching my teeth and prepare lunch boxes, and after sending children to school I go to a pharmacy by myself, ... the doctor there was surprised: how you can come alone in this serious condition.”* (EC 5-W)

This quotation shows differences with her husband’s awareness about caring for children. Her husband said, *“at that time we could not afford to pay for cautious attention to look after children.”* In fact, because they were both street vendors, they had to bring the children to the street before the children went to school, and the husband stated that he did almost half of the taking care of the children. However, the two quite different reports show what the wife did for children while the husband’s did not. More fundamentally, considering his later relationship with his children, his statement does not look valid.

*“mom, even though you don’t know any letters, you are greater than me, but what about father? What has he done? My daughter said.”* (EC 5-W)

Nowadays, the son has a good job, and then whenever he goes on a business trip he always brings gifts back for his mother, but never for his father. These would be the micro-moment experiences to share the emotional value of gratitude and love. Actually, due to the father’s violence, the son once asked his mother to move to another house without informing the father. Several years ago, the wife bought a good house where her adult son finally has own room. Yet, the husband even does not know about its price; *“I don’t know, but maybe it is quite expensive, and because of that the government does not give any subsidy to me”* (EC 5-H). This quotation adequately proved that the husband had not been a breadwinner of his family regardless of his position of the head of family by family law.

Without her efforts, it is clear that the family could not have survived. Further, after going through tremendous hardships in managing her serious health problems alone as well as her commitment for family, the wife has finally received recognition from her children and even from the troublesome husband. This recognition has given her an increase of self-esteem as the person who has followed the right life path as a mother and a wife. The rightness is owing to her acceptance of customary norms and reproducing the norms by her endless everyday practice, sacrificing herself for the whole period of the marriage. This is supported by her good relationship with her children, including their voiced expression and the changed attitude of her husband. That is, the micro-moment experiences of enjoying emotional values converged attaining its moral value. Nevertheless, her severe past life left a scar, and she has inner struggles between timid revenge and forgiveness; *“I hate him, but how can I, so nowadays, so as to remove the sense of hatred, (I told to my husband) I love you, and looking the ceiling, father, shouldn’t I hate him? Please make me forgive him” (EC 5-W)*. The scar would be a spot to question the customary norms, which are seriously unequal. The question would be not uttered by her, yet maybe by her children, by the next generation.

According to Honneth (1996), actors get self-respect, self-confidence, or self-esteem from recognition from others, and use this as the basis to form the identity. That is, individuals can be themselves only in their interactions with others. In particular, in this early industrial society where there was not much option for women to see the self outside the family, to achieve this recognition from children and husbands would be a vital and connected to getting moral value of doing housework. For women, this is almost the only way to be a member in a community, having social status by Confucian order. In Confucian order, without being a member in a clan community there is no individual identity (Kwon 2013: 205-209). Then, as seen in the sub-section on substantial breadwinners, while men get their status to join in the clan family as their norms in public, women get this status by completing their role of supporting the family. The wife of elderly couple 3, Hyunja, also shows clear self-confidence on her accomplishment of the full responsibility to run family and raise children:

*“I’m the one to save money raising children, to send them to university, to marry off them, so I’ve done everything if there are family events that need big money. Last autumn, my husband bought grain with about 300,000 won (300 USD) solely by himself, for the first time in my entire life.” (Hyunja)*

Like the co-breadwinners, women in this substantial breadwinner type did all kinds of work in supporting the family, whether the work was formal, informal, or housework. Thus, the meaning of housework is again survival of family. These women's contributions as substantial breadwinners supporting family cannot be revealed by the lens of 'gender division of labour', which assumed men were the breadwinners. In this type, the neglect of their husbands of the need to support the family made the women's burden for family all the more critical. Hence, this type would maximally reveal the Confucian customary norms that women have the primary responsibility for family while men have the public arena, as is compatible with clan families. This interpretation is supported by the everyday practices of women of this type, who supported their families and later received recognition from children and finally even their husbands after completing their roles. The recognition would be also the evidence that they were reproducing the customary norms by their everyday practices.

### 6.1.3 Sole Breadwinner

Basically, focusing on taking the primary responsibility for children as well as oneself, interviewees in this category are sole breadwinners. The point to be made regarding this type is that when it comes to the pairing of productive work and housework (reproductive work), the work interviewees had done for a living was not matched to the modern concept of work. This discrepancy would be the locus to hypothetically reveal the use value of housework as the same as the informal work the interviewees did. That it, unlike modern work, which produced surplus value while participating in the labour market (Marx 2001) as well as the basis of social identity (Ardichvili and Kuchinke 2009: 158-160), the major function of work including housework in this early industrial society was survival. This function of work for survival relies strongly on the low economic development in the very early stage of industrialization, where the proportion of formal market work was not enough to support the whole population. In this vein, to be dependents of certain categories of people would be implausible.

To start with, the life story of YeongJa would show the indivisibility of work and women throughout a woman's whole life. In 1942, YeongJa was born as the first daughter of the family. In Korea, there was an old saying that *'when the first child is a daughter, that is a great help around the household.'* This

old saying is indeed compatible with the Confucian customary norms for women who have the primary responsibility for supporting family with physical labour to produce use value (Cho 2001, Kim and Lee 2007). In line with this old saying, her whole life has been offered to support her parents and her daughter, by own labour. Her life story started with a mixture of her working experiences in care work, housework, paid work, and child labour from the age of 5 years.

*“My story is too intricate to tell. At about 5 years old, I took care of my younger siblings; when I was 7 years old I cooked rice looking after younger siblings; 8 years old cooked rice gathering firewood, from the middle of 8 years old I started to work with adults because to earn money to eat, and since autumn of age 8 I wove hemp fabrics by hand; at the age of 9 I had woven a fabric for payment and with the money I had fed my family. From my childhood. That’s why, from the childhood, I’d fallen many time by dizziness.” (YeongJa)*

As shown, before she was 10 years old, she became one of providers starting from care work, successively extending to housework, unpaid work at home, and paid work. Unfortunately, this kind of story is not unique for women who experienced the colonial period and the Korean War. At that time, her parents had surely worked to support family. However, as seen her story: *“as my father is a Sunbi<sup>10</sup> (scholar) he is not good at labouring, so when we go to work in the rice field, my mother or I go ahead, but my father never goes ahead,”* at the time of absolute poverty her father did not show a strong sense of responsibility to support the family. Surely, that time was no longer feudal. Nevertheless, this shows the deep embeddedness of the legacy of feudal life in the everyday life of ordinary people. These embedded norms are in line with the attitude of the man in the *Yangban* class that *“despite being starving they do not labour in person crossing their arms (Kim and Lee 2007: 3).”* Indeed, this point is similar to the space that husbands in the category *“substantial breadwinner”* felt, which released them from the primary responsibility for a living.

After marriage, due to the violence of her husband she ran away with her daughter. For one year she left her daughter with her parents to earn money. With the money, she rent a room to live with her daughter. *“I rented a room but there was nothing... I got a blanket, two spoons, two bowls, and a pot from acquaintances, so I cooked rice. But to save money, I just bought a little rice and cooked only for my daughter.”* As shown in this quotation, her life condition was extremely bad, partially because of her husband, who tried to find her and assaulted her violently and repeatedly. Thus, she had to move over

and over, and could not settle down in a place after her divorce. The first time she ran away, she had not dared even to think about divorce, but because she was experiencing recurrent severe violence from her husband, she did initiate the divorce. No doubt, for her, with no schooling, to proceed in this process was very difficult, and it had taken several years. She did not know why the process had taken so long, but certainly the delay in the process would have been due to the societal patriarchal environment. At that time, when women divorced, women were not normally awarded custody of their children.

*“after divorce, I worked as a Sikmo (live-in domestic worker), or Pachulbu (live-out domestic worker). At that time, I didn’t know how to get a job in a restaurant, just worked as Pachulbu for a living. Then I thought, if I work as a Pachulbu I would not be able to afford to send my daughter to school, so I have to work in a restaurant, and then I worked in a restaurant for 12 years.”* (YeongJa)

Since her daughter’s marriage, she has lived alone, with about 230 USD from the government. From that money, she has to pay a rent of about 150 USD. To supplement her income, she collects paper on the street and sells it, for which she earns 2 or 3 USD a day. For her, doing this work is not only about earning money but also about releasing herself from lamentable memories about her life. She has never told this life story to others, just when she collects paper, sometime expresses her anger to the paper, throwing out the paper and collecting it again.

In her story, she has mostly not been a dependent. Rather, she has been a provider for her own parent and daughter. In fact, an old saying in Korea that *‘everybody is born with the food for the own survival’*<sup>11</sup> may express her situation. That is, at that time of low productivity, there was no distinctive duty of a provider and a dependent. Just as in her life, everybody had to make their entire endeavour about survival, not only for oneself but also for the extended family, regardless of their age. In this sense, to distinguish housework from productive work would be irrelevant to understanding the housework function in that society. Further, unlike some studies (Bae 2008, Kim HyeKyung 2007) which revealed women’s harsh working conditions as they supported the family and yet did not call them breadwinners, relying on the ideology of women as housewives, recognizing them as breadwinners must be accurate, to make apparent their contributions to the material life of the family.

Like Yeongja’s working experience, most interviewees in this category have worked in the informal arena, doing things which are similar to

housework such as cleaning, or cooking. In this context, they have revealed the complex perception concerning the kind of work they do. This is not due to ignorance of the different characteristics between different types of work, yet this is indeed working conditions analogous to informal work. As two quotations below show, this interviewee did not have concepts that could distinguish work in other's house from work in restaurants.

*"I worked as a Sikmo (domestic worker) living and eating there but they did not give me much money .... the house was not a usual family house, it was a small snack bar in front of Hanyang university." (SFE 2)*

*"for example, in a small dining room, I have to cut green onion, peel garlic, if the food is Bibimbap, I have to prepare all sorts of vegetables, then those who come from home they come on time, but I have lived there so I have a lot of work." (SFE 2)*

In the first quotation, she did not distinguish the work done as a domestic worker and as an employee in a snack bar. According to current concepts in Korea, domestic workers are not still considered to be labourers with rights enshrined in the Labour Standard Act. Employees in a restaurant, however, are labourers in a service industry. Thus, there is currently a struggle to gain the right for domestic workers to be considered labourers. However, at that time the labour law was not a practical institution to improve labour conditions. For example, in 1998, employment insurance had spread to cover all place of business with at least one employee and in 2000 so did the Occupational Safety and Health Program (Yang 2008: 341). In this regard, under the context of no institutionalized differentiation between work as a *Sikmo* or as an employee in a small snack bar, the interviewee's inability to distinguish the two forms of work seems very natural. Surely, she did not have any contract to work there.

In the second quotation, the blurred conditions between work at home and work in a business place is far from modern working conditions. The separation between home and workplace is one of representative distinctions between feudal work and modern work, with the household limited to consumption or reproduction. Then given that where she lived is not her home, this blurred environment had impaired her understanding of her working conditions. Because she stayed in the restaurant she did more work without extra payment. This is not exchange, not performing extra work in order to stay there. To be sure, there was also no negotiation how to exchange these between her and her employer. In this sense, the work

is not distinguished from housework at home, formal work in a restaurant, and informal work as paid domestic labour. Rather, she had just worked for a living, entwining all three.

The nature of this is quite similar to housework, in that there is work to do for survival, and as women, they did it. There was work to do to continue the restaurant, and she was there so she did it. No matter how this is conceptualized, this would rely on their physical knowledge that without labour there was no way to survive. That is, all kinds of work are for survival whether in a restaurant, in other's house or at home; thus there is no point to distinguishing which one is housework and which one is market work. To take a male example:

*"ah, by mutual acquaintance, to work as an assistant to a truck driver, leaving Seoul to Sokcho, Gangneung, It takes two or three days to help him, receiving meals and bed, without money, washing his socks and panties, because I have to live, eat meals." (EC 5-H)*

This quotation clearly shows the hazy characteristic of informal work as to whether it is market work, or not. In his case, he called himself assistant of a truck driver, yet his work was not regulated to dealing with luggage. He had to do everything, even for everyday private needs of the driver. More fundamentally, there was no wage and only meals and a bed, so the work cannot belong to market work and is more like housework. In this regard, the work he did cannot in fact be called work in the modern sense. Nevertheless, he could survive thanks to that work.

The work experience of interviewees in this category revealed the discrepancy between the current work concept, which focuses on producing surplus value and work experiences in informal settings for use value. And then, no matter what kinds of work they did, this category apparently shows that the main function of all kinds of work in this period is for survival. In this sense, the fact that the formal female labour force participation was less than 44 percent until in the middle of the 1980s (figure 5.4) cannot denote a status of female dependence. Indeed, as shown in this type of life, women worked outside of the statistics of labour force participation, and would be engaged in all kinds of informal work and housework to help the family survive. Then the significance of housework in interviewees' everyday lives in this category cannot differ from that of co-breadwinner's case, which has shown the impact of housework in family life. Also, at least in that they brought up children by their labour, to call them as sole breadwinner must be accurate.

In this section, in interaction mainly with national poverty being supported by the customary norm of ‘women for private and men for public,’ the meaning of doing housework as survival of the family in the early industrial period has been depicted. By the fundamentality of the meaning, the everyday practice in doing housework is to put all endeavour towards supporting family, without freeing from breadwinning role. This proved the inconsistency of the conventional reasoning to see care deficit from the increase of women participation in work force. No matter it is hold in labour force statistics or not, women did already bulky work in formal/informal setting with taking care work. Furthermore in this context, the conventional concept of gender division of labour does not help in comprehending women’s contribution in family subsistence in this early industrial period. For example, relied on the concept of gender division of labour, a study defined the Korean family before 1960s as a traditional nuclear family consisting of a breadwinner husband and care giver wife (Baek and Kim 2000: 12-13). Then this section shows that the definition is simply incompatible with the everyday practice of my female interviewees, who cannot have been dependents in this generation. In particular, considering that the still low economic development meant the country lacked the social prosperity to make certain family member dependents (Pfau-Effinger 2004), to clarify these conventional concepts would illuminate the different historical features that devalued housework. In this regard, the customary norms to differentiate a gender division of labour from gendered role division will be examined in section 6.3.

## 6.2 The Value of Housework: Devaluation vs. Embodied Value

Given that the value of housework is one of the main factors for engendering the meaning of work (Rosso et al. 2010) and issues in housework studies, to look at the value of housework separately would help to elaborate housework practices empirically. However, in this generation, responding to the question about the value of housework, most interviewees mumbled; *“value, what value, I don’t know, I never think about it.”* Nevertheless, without obviously recognizing the value, they do housework as presented in the previous section, accepting the customary norms; *“it was the time to*

*live like that.*” In fact, the meaning of housework as survival of family and their everyday practice of housework presented in the previous section obviously elucidate the significant material value and moral value of housework by following customary norms.

Aside from that, in this section, drawing attention to the incongruity between body knowledge and customary knowledge about the value of housework, three cases will be presented that depict the empirical value of housework. First, compared to other women, BokSun, who had had affluent family background, has clearly devalued housework, but still accepts it as her primary responsibility due to her gender. Second, HyunJa, who was born in 1950s, mentioned the value of love for family members as an invaluable thing in connection with the modern concept of gender division of labour. Third, a male interviewee, CheolSu vocalized the intentional devaluation, denying the value he felt.

*Devaluing housework by one who do not it*

Boksun, in contrast to ordinary women at that time (1930), was born into a very affluent family and as a result has never had severe work experiences. Her grandfather, who supported her family, even had special land for rice to brew alcohol for his consumption. After marriage, her husband had run his own business in the steel industry, which was very successful. She said, “*we just put money close to the pillow and spent it for whatever we needed. I have been well off for all my life. I’ve never experienced hardships.*” Half of her life story is about doing volunteer work, such as leading associations as a president, cooking for soldiers, and visiting another country, in which doing volunteer work was not only enjoyable and meaningful but also a very privileged experience. She said, “*If there is lack of money my husband donated money; those who are poor cannot do (volunteer work).*” This quotation shows that her volunteer work was possible because she was relying on her husband’s stable economic support for the work as well as a living. In this respect, her marriage life looks like the stereotypical housewife, free from subsistent labour, in the ideology of modern marriage based on the gender division of labour (Kim 1999a, Kim HyunJu 2007, Kim Keongil 2012).

In contrast to her vivid statement about volunteer work, she put little value in doing housework saying, “*house chores, we have a small family and not many household goods, so it’s simple. There is nothing to do, not much.*” In that she has only son and her husband, who is from North Korea, has no relatives

in South Korea, her family size must indeed be small, and family housework might not be a big deal for her. Nevertheless, as compared to others in the single female elderly category who lived alone (SFE 2) or with children (SFE 1, 6, 7), her perception of housework seems to have a basis other than the small family size or simple life conditions. Furthermore, she once had three adopted children.

Indeed, her devaluation of housework derived from her position that she was not the person who should do housework. Even though she is the only (full-time) housewife in this generation, the gender division of labour in this couple is somewhat different from the modern idea. In the modern idea of gender division of labour, apart from earning money which husbands should do, housewives should be the person who has all responsibility as the master of family (Kim 1999a, Kim HyunJu 2007). In this idea, doing housework has a positive reputation as part of a scientific, modern and westernized life style (Kim 1999a, Kim HyunJu 2007), so it should be highly valued. However, she did not put high value in it. Actually, in her case, her housework was mostly managerial. She said, *"If foods, I should know how to cook it, then I can order someone to make it. Don't let one do something that I don't know how to do. Treat them benevolently, yet I should know. That is something wrong if I order someone to do what I don't know how to do."* Her physical housework seems to be a showcase for managing *Sikmo*.

In this sense, her main work was voluntary work in non-profit organizations like the Red Cross or *Saemaul Undong Association*. *"If I stay at home I feel sick, so my husband recommended that I go out to do volunteer work."* And then, this was likely to be ensured mainly owing to her two quasi-employees, one for doing housework and another for taking care of her child.<sup>12</sup> Considering these factors, the basis of her perception about housework should be her affluent family background in which she was not the main labourer for doing housework. That is, she relied on her upper class background to look down housework, in line with the feudal life mode of looking down on physical labour.

In *Chosun* society, the hierarchy between physical labour and spiritual labour was one of the main factors to keep feudal society in relation to feudal social status, in which *Nobi* (servant) for physical labour and *Yangban* for spiritual labour. In this hierarchy, the father of *YoungJa* had not gone ahead to the rice fields by his embodied habitus as a *Yangban*. In relation to gender, the hierarchy has been adapted: women for physical labour and men for spiritual labour (Cho 2001: 188-189, Kim 1999c:151).

Under this hierarchy in *Chosun* dynasty, men managed household as the head of family and women did survival labour.

Within this intersecting context between social status and gender, Bok-Sun, who had high economic status, was released from the female norm of doing physical housework. This is in line with the idea that privileged white women in western society, whether by class or racial hierarchy or a combination of these, should do highly valued spiritual housework (such as educating children and managing home economy) while low-valued menial housework is done by minority, immigrant, and working class women (Roberts 1997). BokSun's perception of housewife as manager, means that even though she felt housework was her duty, she saw her role as comparable to men's role: managing the family. Then this exemption from doing housework in person caused her to lose the chance to feel embodied value, and this was the basis of her devaluation. Without question, this would be strengthened by Confucian ideology, particularly in looking down on physical labour as the work of those of low social status or women.

Furthermore, the housework she did not do was done by someone she hired. In this sense, the housework value to the body would be different in her case from than that of men in the low economic class who had no alternative ways do arrange housework. For men in a low economic class, without a wife or mother who will do housework, they have to do it themselves (to whatever extent it gets done). Because the interviewees in this generation are old, they have already experienced some period without a woman to do housework for them, either through divorce, health problems of the wife, living alone at a young age or in the present. Above all, relied with little ability to avoid housework as a fundamental life condition, most interviewees in this generation generally felt the value of housework. In this context, only Boksun clearly devalued housework, while others ambiguously mumbled.

#### *Desire for housewifery*

Secondly, as mentioned in chapter 4, HyunJa was the only person in this generation who expressed the dream of a gender division of labour. This could be due to her relatively young age (she was born in the 1950s). Also, compared to many female interviewees who were born in a rural village and received no schooling, she was born in Seoul and had a middle school

education, by which she was able to access women's magazines and movies. As mentioned in chapter 4, her imaginings of what a housewife should be were learned from movies. At that time, the discourse of the new women or professional housewife was spreading to ordinary people via the media and public education (Kim HyunJu 2007). To understand her perception of the value of housework, here are two telling excerpts from her story

*"If I do only housework I would check everything that my family eats, the nutrition in it, and I would study it. I would definitely concentrate on the life of my family. Yet that is not how I've lived, I've lived in all nonsense."* (HyunJa)

*"How dare we measure in monetary value what we do for our family for our precious people? There is my love. I think so. People say that the value of housework may be a sum of money, but we are creatures of the Creator. If we do not get married, then it's ok, but if we live together with children in a family, then do not measure it with money."* (HyunJa)

The first quotation reveals the concept of becoming a professional housewife by doing housework in a scientific way. This is exactly in line with the domestic labour discourse which focused on efficiency, hygiene, and professional housewifery in 1920s (Kim 1999a). By checking the nutrition in foods her household ate, she would have created perfect conditions for a decent and flourishing life. As briefly shown in previous section, she feels proud of herself as a wife who has been able to raise her two sons with university education, and to marry them without her husband's economic help. Nevertheless, as her expression, *"I've lived in all nonsense,"* she also feels regretful for her life, mainly because of the condition that she cannot do housework perfectly due to the need to earn money.

In second quotation, she pointed out the value of love as the main underlying value of housework, by which doing housework becomes invaluable. This is connected to the fundamental concept of modern marriage, which should be based on romantic love (Kim Keongil 2012). That is, romantic love should be the main thing to bind husband and wife as a family, and then to do housework or to support family can be based on this love as a sacrifice with pleasure for partner as well as for children. Since this love is the invaluable, so is doing housework that enables it. However, her sense of emotional value of love is not the same as the mentioned positive emotional value of love which comes out in the context of sharing positive emotions in micro-moment experience. Rather, her sense of emotional value of love is similar to moral value that as a woman she

should give love via doing housework. Thus, even though her high valuation on housework is reversed to the devaluation of housework by Confucian ideology, in reference to its feature as external norms, both, Confucian ideology and the modern ideology of gender division of labour are the same.

In sum, the case of HyunJa shows the emergence of a modern ideology of gender norms in ordinary people and at the same time the restricted conditions available to realize those new gender norms in this generation. In addition, it raises another point related to the high value placed on housework. That is, unlike studies in the domestic labour debate that found housework was devalued because it was unpaid (Molyneux 1979), HyunJa, like other studies (Kim 1999a, Kim HyunJu 2007) reveals a positive perception of housework by professional housewives, despite its unpaid character. In this sense, the desire for a gender division of labour by ordinary women (Kim Keongil 2012, Kim 2012, Kim and Lee 2013) may be due to this high valuation as well as being released from the heavy burden for family imposed by Confucianism. However, in addition to insufficient economic condition for the division, the high valuation is just idealistic as moral value rather than taking enjoyment in the value in everyday life for both, doer and receiver of housework.

#### *Devaluing housework anchoring at Confucian order*

Thirdly, CheolSu as a male interviewee revealed fairly clear intentional devaluation of housework, saying it should be done by women. He was born in 1941 in an affluent family, had a university education and worked as a high position civil servant. In 2000, he was divorced after having an adulterous relationship with his wife's friend. In his whole married life, he had many times conjugal infidelities, yet he thinks that was not a big problem, because he is a man. According to him, at that time as a man while in the public arena there had been many chances to stray -- a kind of semi-formal program of sexual favours existed. His wife had worked as a civil servant until retirement, yet he did not think that the situation would have been the same for his wife. Nowadays he is living alone, and his son and daughter sometimes visit him. He said he likes his grandchildren from his son more than those from his daughter because they are the heredity of the son. He exhibits a strongly patriarchal attitude, which is the point to emphasize in comprehending his perception of the value of housework. He

intentionally looks down housework, despite his clear awareness of its value.

*“what is housework, is it important? Honestly, it is impossible to measure it with money, if it is then it would be huge, but no touch, ignore it, and it is right to ignore it. It’s because in our society nowadays something is wrong, women have become too wild, there is a change in the census registration law, they run roughshod over everything, that is the behaviour to root out Korea.”* (CheolSu)

He is clearly aware that the value of housework must be enormous, yet he insists he will ignore it. This paradoxical self-incompatibility has uncovered the disparity between sensing the value of housework by his life experiences (in the body) and recognizing its value via Confucianism knowledge. That is, by reflecting on his mother’s endeavours to raise him and feeling thankfulness for his wife who brought up his children well despite having an occupation for her entire working life, he understands, bodily, the value of housework. However, his sense of thankfulness for his wife has rarely shared with his wife: roughly speaking, he realized it after divorce. In his case, he had a good job and he gave the money he earned to his wife as a breadwinner, yet his wife had a similar job and spent her income for family subsistence, too. Then, while his wife did everything related to raising their two children, he enjoyed a different life. In this vein, he realized the value of housework via his children, who could not be the people they now are without his wife. As such, he had enjoyed the benefit of housework as he had become a grown up and has children who are support him now.

However, he also has a feeling that to recognize the value of housework would empower women, which would result in threatening the tradition and social order of Korea. For him, the end of the *boju* system, which was the symbol of Confucian family order, exemplified destroying Korean tradition. By anchoring his thought within the Confucian social order, he insists on ignoring the value of housework and feels justified in this, reasoning that this keeps tradition at the root of Korea.

The disparity between his bodily understanding and Confucian ideology is in fact the locus to prove how the mechanism of devaluing housework has operated. In comparison to BokSun, who has devalued housework in an individual experience setting, his awareness had directly revealed his wish to ignore personal knowledge in favour of a wider social setting, reasoning that in the social setting, maintaining a patriarchal social order is patriotic, and can be only supported by the oppression of women,

so the value of housework should be devalued. Other interviewees did not so clearly vocalize this social mechanism of devaluation of housework. Nevertheless, the disparity between what they say “*value, what value, I don’t know, I never think about it*” and their practice of doing housework, relying on the meaning as the survival of the family implies the same contradiction. And then, thanks to this vocalized societal mechanism of devaluation, the reasoning has rather exposed the embodied value of housework which may be largely from its material value. Furthermore, this clearly revealed the difference between the devaluing mechanism in Confucian knowledge and devaluation based on its character as unpaid work.

Compared to this first self-incompatibility, the second self-incompatibility is less obvious. As an elderly male living alone, for him to do laundry is troublesome. Sometimes, his girlfriend comes to his house and to do laundry for him. In telling these stories, he has revealed an obviously different assessment of the same work; “*though to do it with a washing machine, to hang the wet clothes is a bothersome task, (although you) may say what is hard to do it, but the piece of work is not just anything,*” contrasts with “*Sometimes she comes, cooks for me and does laundry. Does she wash laundry by hand? Just hanging and folding the laundry*”. The same task of doing laundry when it is his task is assessed as a troublesome chore, whereas when his girlfriend does it, it becomes trivial. This different assessment is in a sense similar to BokSun’s devaluation of housework, as someone who did not do housework in person. This can be extended to devaluation by Confucian gender norms, in which men who do not do housework have the power to decide what has important value what does not. Thus, when they do something in the public arena, they place significant value on it, but when women and *Nobi* do physical labour, men (in *Yangban*) do not assign it much value.

In this vein, it seems correct to presume that most women have little interest keeping a patriarchal social order or cultural tradition with Confucian gender norms. That is, even though most female interviewees have insidiously accepted the devaluation of housework via socially justified norms and roles, most would feel the value of housework if they actually did it. When it comes to causing change in attitudes toward valuing housework, this embodiment would cause little feeling of rejection. Indeed, most female interviewees have preferred the current shift in Korean society towards more sharing of housework between genders. This shift has not been significant in their generation, but in their children’s families the wife and husband share housework. Thus while men revealed negative

feeling about the change similar to CheolSu, women gave a positive assessment.

About the question of what she thinks about her married son's sharing the housework, one woman (SFE 1) strongly expressed her approval; *"it's really good to see, good to see him live happily like that, really lovely."* In confronting of the societal change, she had regretted not having educated her son on how to do housework. She thought that due to this gap in his education, at the early stage of married life her daughter-in-law may have had a hard time. She went further to criticize the Korean traditional life mode, contrasting with the views of CheolSu; *"there are no men and women (to be distinguished), yet we are raised to think like that, we are educated like that; that is wrong to think like that. In the old days our elders were always concerned over Yangban and Nobi, our way of life in old days was wrong."* The now useless demarcation between *Yangban* and *Nobi* is naturally associated with the irrational hierarchy between genders, showing her strong rejection of unequal way of life. In modern day Korea, the classes *Yangban* and *Nobi* no longer exist, despite having once been regarded as natural law. Experiencing this change opened her mind toward her children's life mode of gender equality.

Despite her willing acceptance of her son's sharing of housework she had also firmly thought of housework as women's reason for being as well as duty; *"the thing is I should do it, I've been doing it; as a woman I should do it as much as I can, I think, to do housework is my reason."* To be sure, how far her son shared housework would be fairly biased by her experiences as a woman who had never experienced housework done by her husband. Apart from this, the key point here is her inconsistency. As a woman, she strongly believes and is committed to women's duty and reason, yet as a woman she also realized the unreasonableness of the old days' differentiation of women's duty and men's right. This co-existence of two contrary perceptions would be the means of keeping self-esteem as one who completed her duty taking its moral value and of emancipating her embodied knowledge from customary knowledge. Also, this co-existence derives from interacting with different "epistemic group agents" (Fuller 2012, Palermos and Pritchard 2013): one is this industrialization generation and the other is their children's generation. By doing so, she can keep step with the changing society while keeping her esteem.

As seen hitherto, in this industrialization, two values are significant: material value for family life and moral value for women who completed social norms in charging of doing housework. However, this enjoyment

of value is under devaluation by Confucian ideas, thus never explicitly revealed. There are three remarkable features in the way they value housework. First, there is the contradiction between the devaluation of women's chores in Confucianism and their recognition of its significant material value in family survival: interviewees' bodily perceptions from taking enjoyment in the benefit of housework and their knowledge of custom to look down on it. Second, the devaluation was stronger among those who were free from doing housework in person, owing to their class or gender. Third, the affectionate familism based on the modern ideology of romantic love, marriage and motherly love had burgeoned yet it was not yet prevalent. Furthermore, in that to give love has settled as women's duty by society, the value of love in this modern ideology of motherly love, is indeed moral value, rather than positive emotional value of love which comes out in sharing the value in interpersonal relation.

In relation to the issue of care deficit, the high embodied value of housework of this early industrialization generation should be taken special attention. From the perspective of current society, the quality of care at that time would be problematic. For example, at that time leaving children at home without adult surveillance (stated in SFE 6, YeongJa, and EC 1 and 5) was usual, which will be diagnosed as care deficit from the contemporary point of view. The main reason of this is due to national poverty in which to get material support is fundamental and urgent, whereby no room for considering caring in contemporary ways. Nevertheless, the fact that people enjoyed the benefit of housework, thereby embodied the value should be not neglected, because this can be the reason of rare perceived care deficit in everyday life. This will be clear when it comes to compare with the democratization generation.

In order to comprehend the mechanism of devaluation of housework, the noteworthy point to consider here is the different ways housework was devalued both in this early industrial society and in current Korean society. To fully understand the different mechanisms of devaluing housework in customary norms, to scrutinize the historical pieces of the Confucian norms will be in the next section.

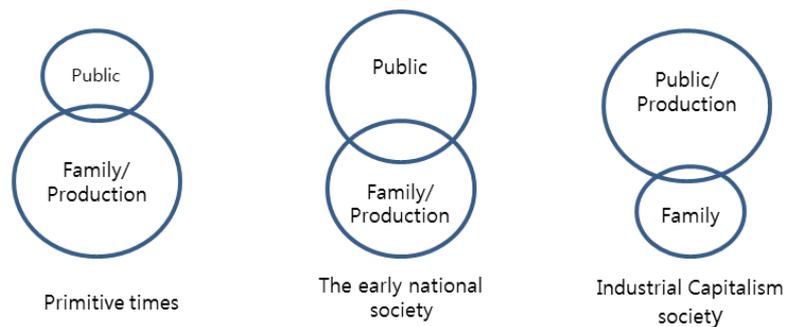
### 6.3 Confucian customary norm: Gender inequality relying on the hierarchy between public and private

In order to understand the customary norms of this industrialization generation, one should start by understanding pre-modern society, particularly, the move of the realm of family subsistence from private to public (Arendt [1958] 1998: 112) which related to the boundaries of gender roles. In late pre-modern society, the area of production transitioned from family to public (see figure 6.2). In this transition, the feature of gender roles and inequality is remarkably different from that under the gender division of labour (women for housework men for market work). This section presents the different features of gender inequality under Confucianism, anchoring them at the hierarchical demarcation between public and private. This makes it possible to show how the logic of gender inequality by socio-political superiority of men differs from the logic of gender division of labour by economic superiority of men.

#### *Production from family to public area*

To think about the transition of production area, a diagram by Cho (1986: 139) usefully shows the relation between public and family. The diagram shows the transition of production area and its proportion in each area under different eras. In primitive times, production mainly belonged to the family, while in early national society, production still chiefly belonged to family but the public proportion of production had grown. In current industrial capitalism society, production is mainly in public. Despite this, the public/domestic dichotomy is generally accepted in connection with the concept of gender division of labour, employing private, reproduction, domestic, and family as roughly compatible or equivalent terms (Beneria 1979, Cho 2001, Edholm et al. 1978, Elshtain 1981, Kroska 2004). Within this way of thinking, public and productive activity is for men and private and reproductive activity is for women. These pairings – men/women, public/private, production/reproduction – match production with men, who have always had a position in the public arena. This conventional knowledge would prohibit paying attention to both how production had moved from private to public and to women's role in production. However, to uncover women's contribution in production would be impossible without drawing attention to this transition.

**Figure 6. 2**  
Transition of production area from family to public



Source: modified from Diagram 1 in Cho (1986)

In industrial capitalism, where production belongs to public arena, women's contribution to the material life of the family is seen as less than that of men due to a gendered division of labour.<sup>13</sup> However, this would not have been the case in earlier society, when production belonged within the private arena. That is, in earlier society, given that women were in charge of the private arena, women would have been in charge of production. Given this, the disconnection between production and public should be carefully elaborated. Then the exact role of women in family material life, both in the context of the gender division of labour and in this previous society where women were in charge of production, can be clarified.

*Confucian patriarchy: The hierarchy between private area for women and public area for men*

Looking at women's role in production in Korea, the time of *Chosun*, the Confucian family order had a place in the transition period, ranging from the later part of the second period to the very early part of the third period in figure 6.2. In this time, the primary locus for production was the family/domestic/private area. Looking at this in detail, the patriarchal order and rules had strengthened and expanded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, establishing a rigid *hoju* system. In this, only a man can be head of household and only a man could be registered as a property owner,

and inheritance rules were thoroughly settled (Jung 2002).<sup>14</sup> This patriarchal transformation has been supported by technical improvement in rice farming, which had increased productivity (Moon 1992). According to Moon (1992), in terms of monetary exchange, the total quantity earned through women's labour was less than that from men's labour farming rice. However, she also pointed out that one of reasons for women's low production in weaving was the lack of time for it due to their work in dry fields and reproduction (Moon 1992: 106-112). This background of Korean patriarchy is considered by some to show the economic superiority of men under "the allocation of women as agents of production which is conditioned by their role in reproduction" (Beneria 1979: 207).

Nevertheless, to assume that high contribution of male labour in family material life was the cause of Confucian patriarchy should be examined more closely. According to Confucianism, which was the main ideology backing up *Chosun* patriarchy society, there were two main hierarchies for keeping social order: a feudal social status system, and the relation between public arena and the private arena. In the first, apart from the royal class, the *Yangban* (aristocratic) class had priority over every other social class while in the second, the public arena has a nominal priority over the private area (Cho 1986: 147). This social order is intertwined with the hierarchy of physical labour and spiritual labour. In this vein, between *Yangban* and *Nobi* (servant), *Yangban* was for spiritual labour and *Nobi* for physical labour. Similarly, between genders, men were for spiritual labour and women for physical labour. In this sense, men in *Yangban* class did work for the family such as managing the home economy rather than farming in person. Secondly, as for the hierarchy between public and private, despite the nominal priority in terms of influencing the whole society, in gender the priority had been practical power and absolute rules as 'natural' laws to support the patriarchy (Cho 2001). That is, the gender division divided physical space: public, namely outside the family for men while inside the family for women. In this division, women's role is to maintain the family through subservience and sacrifice as subordinated beings (Lee 1995) while men should focus on public matters rather than their household (Cho 2001: 184-186).

Within this hierarchical gender order, women should do labour to support the family, given that they have the primary responsibility for the family. Under this primary responsibility for the family, women had always

severely laboured. The daily housework for women in the late *Chosun* dynasty had consisted of cooking to feed the cows from 4 a.m., fetching water, threshing barley, preparing meals, working in the fields, working at a loom, doing laundry and sewing clothes to midnight (Paik 2010: 80). According to Kim Eonsoon (2010), the absence of women's education in the *Chosun* Dynasty is due to their lack of time, since they did the bulk of daily labour to support the family. Further, women's labour was not limited to household labour but stretched into the commercial economy, not only by women in the common class or maidservants but by women in every class (Kim KyungMi 2012).

In this period, savings may have been from the output of men's labour due to their control of the cash crop, rice, but a large proportion of subsistence must have been from women's labour. Overall, while women had immensely laboured for 'use value', men had partly laboured for use or 'exchange value', and partly for religious rituals or politics in public area. Then, the production area for 'exchange value' would have been in the overlapped zone in figure 6.2, i.e. both public and family, in early national society. Furthermore, owing to the tangibility and durability of money which is more from men's labour, male productivity may saliently stand out. Nevertheless, in this low production society, there seems no doubt that, in any classes, a provider and dependence relationship between genders would be unlikely. With low production, only a few men in *Yangban* class could do religious rituals or participate in politics in the public arena: those in "the leisure class" (Veblen 2005), while most people had to labour for a living.

In this sense, the momentum to provoke gender inequality would not be economic superiority relying on men's large contribution in producing exchange value. Indeed, the momentum is the hierarchy between genders which had been imposed in the name of natural law from Confucianism. Supporting or being supported by the gender hierarchy, a hierarchy developed between spiritual labour, which was considered to be men's, and physical labour, which was considered to be women's (Cho 2001: 188-189, Kim 1999c:151). As such, the mode of life was based on Confucian principles, the basic ideology and mores for politics and society of *Chosun* (Cho 2001, Lee 1995) and this must be deeply rooted in the background of gender inequality. That is, without men's monopolized power in the public arena, it would be impossible to settle a patriarchal social order as regis-

tered rules. Since the establishment of *Chosun* around the fourteenth century, generally only men were provided formal education as well, preparing them for control over any savings. In this regard, an increase in productivity in rice farming would ignite the firmly actualization of a registered patriarchal social order, supported by the economic system. However, this does not mean the high contribution of men's labour to material life.

*Gender division of labour: two underlying principles and the twisted contexts*

In short, gender inequality in pre-modern society stemmed from a gender role hierarchy that awarded priority to the public over the private. Thus, men's role in public was also prioritized over women's role in private. This meant that no matter how big women's contribution to material life by their labour actually might be, the labour involved was inherently inferior. This markedly different feature of gender inequality in pre-industrial society is not captured by the concepts in figure 1.5, a conceptual constellation around housework. Instead, it is hidden by the conventional concept of gender division of labour. This would mean it cannot make sense of how the industrialization generation in this research actually lived. Thus, for this research, it is necessary to clarify the boundary of the concept of gender division of labour.

Thinking this through step by step, without or suppressing doubt, it seems clear that pre-industrial society accepted gender inequality as the natural order in life, whereby women were regarded as inferior to men. Based on this, there was no need to consider the value of housework, because regardless of the economic value women produced, it would be considered inferior, in line with women's status. And then, housework should be done by women, and women should see this as their duty. This is fairly in line with the feminist perspective on the devaluation of women's work stemming from socially allocated gender division of labour (Avdela 1999, Beneria 1979, Cook 1987, Laslett and Brenner 1989, Wharton 2000). Specifically, since "housework was unpaid, it had no value, and its public equivalent could not be valued comparably to «real work» and so was set at a «woman's wage»" (Cook 1987: 522).

This feminist diagnosis was based on a challenge to modernization theories that accepted the gender division of labour as naturally resulting from biological differences in genders (Laslett and Brenner 1989: 384). Similar to accepting feudal status system, to accept this as a natural consequence

of biological differences implies agreeing to accept anything that logically follows from its. This has been argued against by clarifying its similarity to arguments based around class (Beneria 1979). In this regard, the feminist diagnosis is very appropriate at the beginnings of modern society. Rather than stemming from biological difference or natural law, gender inequality stems from the social allocation of work.

Despite the significant ability of the concept 'gender division of labour' to elucidate the socially originating characteristic of gender inequality, keen attention needs to be given to the idea that 'gender division of labour' equals 'gender inequality'. Without doubt, in almost every society in the world, there has been gender inequality (Beneria 1979: 205-209). There is no doubt that, because we are social beings, a division of labour inevitably arises from collective life. However, the reason doing different work generates inequality is actually not very obvious. If the life mode is that I do cooking and you do farming and we share our output, there is no necessary inequality. Hence, we need to clarify the momentums that provoke inequality, rather than considering inequality to be a natural consequence of the division of labour.

First, the social allocation of different work by gender and the limited or missing substitutability for both women and men in these roles provokes the possibility of inequality. Second, more obviously, the different monetary reward produces inequality: women do housework without payment while men do market work with payment. This is generally regarded as key to the gender division of labour. The economic priority of market work related to the income plus any attached work-related benefits has been seen as a fundamental source of gender inequality. To overcome this, many studies have tried to reveal the monetary/economic value of housework, implicitly persuading women to have paid work. This rationale is fairly reasonable in the current wage-based society (Gorz 1999).

This interpretation of the gender division of labour contains two underlying principles that justify gender inequality: firstly by monetary measures, women's contribution to material life is inferior, and secondly, it determines gender order by nominal earnings rather than by social political contexts. Particularly for the first, no matter its actualization, men have been considered the primary providers and women as their dependents. Consequently, gender inequality under a gender division of labour has relied on the economic superiority of men in terms of their paid jobs.

However, in pre-industrial Korean society, as discussed above, gender inequality stemmed from a gender role hierarchy anchoring at the hierarchy of public and private. Thus, even though both societies have gender inequality, the main logic for it differs: the equation of women as dependents and men as providers is roughly valid in one, but not in the other.

Despite this limitation of the concept of gender division of labour in its application, many studies employ the concept as a parameter for revealing gender inequality. The accumulating studies that have revealed its effects on gender equality (De Casanova 2013, Greenstein 2000, Jefferson 2009, Mullan 2010, Roberts 1997, Smith 2007), and its nature being entwined with gender ideology (Kroska 2004), have led to the gender division of labour being accepted as a fundamental cause for gender inequality (Kim 1994a, Cho 2001). If this is accepted, then, after women increase their participation in work force, sharing housework between partners is considered to be a driving parameter to check gender equality between partners. In current post-industrial society, where women's participation in paid work is relatively high, they remain in charge of work at home, so this discussion is surely proper. However, it totally depends on the context.

For example, focusing on the spatial segregation by sex (men outside the household women within) in Confucian culture (Cho 2001), the work within household could be treated as an equivalent of reproduction. Yet in Confucian *Chosun*, the work within family included both production and reproduction. Turning to another example, in Korea, by showing that men in *Chosun* society had done a part of housework such as managing household economy, educating sons, or making tools for farming, authors have become convinced that the gender equality at that time would have been no worse than in contemporary Korean society (Kim 2000, Kim and Lee 2007, Park 2002). And then, this possibility must be squared with the fact that colonial education could be the cause of decreasing housework sharing by Korean men (Hong 2005).

There is no doubt that men's sharing of housework decreased and that colonial education aimed to persuade men to focus on the labour market. However, to interpret these facts as evidence of relative equality in genders before would be a one-sided way of looking at gender equality. That is, by using sharing housework as the main parameter to define gender equality, these studies are likely to hide gender inequality in its other manifestations. This results from the lack of insight on the different aspects of housework in *Chosun*, where the hierarchy of physical versus spiritual labour (home

management) is much more relevant than that of housework and paid work. Above all, it also assumes a male provider, making the work females did was supplementary. However, as hitherto discussed, women in *Chosun* were not dependent, and men in *Chosun* were not the primary providers.

In the same vein, seeing men as the primary providers risks overlooking the economic contribution of women. Since it is impossible to clearly measure economic contribution between genders, much literature, despite revealing women's profound economic contribution in the early industrial period, still considers women as auxiliary providers (Bae 2008, Kim HyeKyung 2007, Laslett and Brenner 1989: 389-391). However, as seen in this chapter, in the specific Korean situation of severe national poverty during colonial times and the Korean War, and in the delayed transition to an authentic industrial society, female interviewees were never free from a breadwinning role. All of the unintentional devaluation of women's contribution in family material life is due to assuming that the "conventional" viewpoint of the sole male breadwinning family was a prevalent life mode. The life mode of the sole male breadwinning family was possible after economic development, but before that time, as pointed out by Jaquette (1982: 280), "contrary to the image of women as economic parasites or a leisure caste – women consistently work harder and longer than men."

#### *The context of early industrial society*

All of this misinterpretation of the relation between sharing housework and gender equality or women's economic contribution is strongly anchored in conventional sociological thinking on the male breadwinning marriage as the dominant family model in the industrial society (Pfau-Effinger 2004). To be sure, the other side of this conventional thinking coin is the idea of the modern gender division of labour. Hence, the idea of gender division of labour should be employed in strictly contextualized circumstances. This is mainly due to the fact that it implies women's contributions to material life are inferior, and that gender hierarchy originated through monetary considerations. The idea that women were dependencies is not matched in *Chosun* time but also not accurate for early industrial Korea, where the industrialization generation generated their meanings and values for doing housework.

For the industrial period, as mentioned in chapter 5, since the first stage of modern Korea, compressed modernity (Chang 2010) has settled. The

modern Korean government was established at the end of World War II, when the country ceased to be a Japanese colony. This modern political system arrived very suddenly. However, with the low level of economic development during the colonial period and the Korean War, the modern system could not boost the urban bourgeoisie enough, i.e. could not sufficiently increase general societal gain or its distribution. Thus, there was the lack of basic conditions for the male breadwinner family (Pfau-Effinger 2004). From colonial times, a small number of elites did spread the ideas of Westernization or modernization, including the 'new woman' and the professional housewife ideology (Hong 2005, Kim 1999a, Kim Keongil 2012). However, despite Korea's rapid economic development, the conditions for the sole male breadwinner family would have existed only since 1990 (refer note 4). Further, the patriarchal family order of the *boju* system, which had held sway since the middle of *Chosun* dynasty, was been demolished only in 2005.

In this environment of compressed modernity, given a lack of resources to govern Korea, the authoritarian Korean government strategically adhered to Confucian ideology, emphasizing filial duty and family responsibility (Chang 1997, Śleziak 2013). Ordinary Koreans as well had long employed the Confucian ideology, by practicing the mores of *Yangban* (Chung 2014). Chung's study shows the increasing number of newly established ancestral shrines in the twentieth century in a certain village. According to Chung, the clan studied had its own ancestral shrine, dating back to around the 14th century with the establishment of *Chosun* dynasty; a certain number of households could be recognized as *Yangban* in a village. To fill this qualification, there had been a steady increase in the number of ancestral shrines since the 14 century. This number rather dramatically increased in twentieth century: 4.5 times more than in previous periods. In fact, the early twentieth century marked the end of the *Chosun* dynasty and the start of the Japanese colony (1910-1945), so the feudal social status system (*Yangban* and *Nobi*) had shrunk and was demolished. Nevertheless, the endeavour to be recognized as members of the *Yangban* clan had persisted at least to the end of the 1990s. No matter what the reasoning was behind this wish to be recognized as *Yangban*, this shows that the Confucian life mode was deeply ingrained in Korea's early industrial society.

In this context, the belief that women were inferior to men according to the Confucian order, would be pervasive. Yet, with the primary responsibility for family imposed on women, my female interviewees had done

all kinds of work, including housework. The customary gender norms in this early industrial society cannot be clarified by the conventional logic of gender division of labour, nor was the gender division of labour the origin of gender inequality (Kim 1994a, Cho 2001) in this period.

#### 6.4 Discussion

In line with symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969, Mead and Morris [1934] 1967), in the mixture of economic underdevelopment and strong Confucianism under compressed modernity, the early industrialization generation had the meaning of doing housework, 'survival of family'. This meaning has not continued to their current stage of being elderly but was valid at the time they managed their families and raised their own children. Anchoring at the significance of this meaning, women put all their efforts in doing housework: *"as a woman I should do it as far as I can"* This collective practice of putting all efforts in doing housework is the source of their embodied value, largely material value for family life in under developed economic condition. In addition, by these efforts, women can take enjoyment in moral value (which included emotional values) of doing housework after completing the social norms. In this context, this early industrialization generation had enjoyed the benefit of housework in everyday life, by which little care deficit may engender. However, by customary norms which anchor women's status to the inferiority of private area than public area, the discrepancy between their embodied knowledge that acknowledged the value of housework and its devaluation by Confucian knowledge has provoked.

As for class, despite a variety of respective life conditions, apart from BokSun (who had an affluent family background), all other interviewees, largely due to national poverty, met similar life conditions for generating the housework meaning. Surrounding housework, socioeconomic circumstances determined the existence or lack of substitutes, e.g. the absence of day-care centres, the underdeveloped food service industry, the lack of household goods, as well as the lack of infrastructure (Kim 1999c: 8). Lacking these goods and services, without housework most people cannot survive; this was the social reality. Furthermore, unlike an imaginary industrial society where women did housework men did paid work, most women could not be released from survival labour. Under the vague male

breadwinning system, women were always keen to maintain family subsistence with all kinds of work (whether formal and informal) including housework.

That is, this chapter argues, by inductive reasoning amid a focus on women's everyday practices supporting the family, women were breadwinners. Unlike this argument, in existing literatures there is no concept that exactly describes women's economic contribution in this period, and the literature commonly treats women as auxiliary providers using the concept of gender division of labour (Ahn 2011, Bae 2008, Baek and Kim 2000). Thus, to elucidate women's lives as breadwinners female interviewees had done in this period, I discussed the customary norms of Confucian patriarchy, examining its socio-historical features to shed light on the gendered role division (women for the private arena which included both production and reproduction, and men for the public arena). Then, the core logic of two concepts (gender division of labour and gendered role division) are distinguished in terms of their relationship to gender inequality. That is, the inequality found in the gender division of labour is provoked by the women's low moneyed contribution to material life. By contrast, in gendered role division the inequality is caused by the priority given to the public arena, which undervalues contributions by women regardless of the level of economic contribution. In this context, in this early industrialization generation, although women provided the bulk of labour that supported families, they accepted inferior status, pulled between their embodied knowledge and customary knowledge.

I believed that the process of clarifying customary norms is exactly in line with the epistemological stance of co-producing knowledge between a researcher and the participants, shown in the chapter 3. That is, rather than employing an analytical framework in advance, this work has relied on the findings to explore ways to contextualize them into a socio-historical context. Importantly, the bulky literature review in chapter 2 and the conceptual constellation in chapter 1, which have pictured the matter of gender inequality in housework, do not correspond to this case: the early industrialization generation in Korea. Then this inductive reasoning in line with the epistemological stance illuminates a viewpoint that is fairly different from the current, conventional viewpoint. Further, the clarifications made in this chapter show the different aspects of housework and different actors' practices in their specific socio-historical context, in readiness for comparison with the democratization generation

The significant embodied value of housework this generation presented should be taken keen attention. As we know in previous research, to reveal the value of housework is not only one of key issues in housework studies, but surely getting expressive progress to publicly recognize or make knowledge about its value. Nevertheless, to what extent people enjoy the value in everyday life is never questioned. In fact, if people enjoyed housework value it would imply the little care deficit, at least in people's perception. This does not mean that the quality of care is better than that of current society where care deficit become serious problem. As seen in this chapter, the care at that time is hard to go beyond feeding, namely supporting material life. However, in interacting with external conditions, people understand the boundary of care they can get or have a desire which can be. Then if the desire for care is fulfilled people may feel little deficit for it, which may support emotional satisfaction. This insight would offer a pathway to thoughtfully comprehend care needs of people.

As shown in this chapter, this generation were largely accepting of unequal gender norms. This could be partly because of the insidiousness of customary norms, but would be also due to a lack of room in which to manifest actors' particularity, whether this was due to the underdeveloped economic conditions or the undifferentiated self. In particular, in the Confucian culture, where there is no female identity without family, customary norms would be strongly connected to social identity by taking moral value. This would be the core dynamic of their acceptance of the norms. This will be interpreted in chapter 8 by applying the theory of recognition by Honneth (Fraser and Honneth 2003).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Jjajangmyoen* was a typical and popular menu for eating out at that time, when eating out was not a widespread phenomenon. Currently, this remains one of the cheapest foods.

<sup>2</sup> When showing life stories, pseudonyms are used. For all others I used this system: capital letters (FWC) to denote the category in the appendix, the number (5) is the order of interviewees in this category, and H means husband.

<sup>3</sup> Generally speaking, when the unemployment rate is less than 3%, it is considered full employment.

<sup>4</sup> In 1990, the unemployment rate of Korean men was 2.9% and this increased to 7.8% in 1998 when the Asian economic crisis occurred.

<sup>5</sup> As seen the quotation; “*at least nowadays there is no worry about food; how happy it is*” severe poverty means the threat against life due to poverty. At that time, there was a term “*boritgogae*,” the barley hump, implying to suffer due to lack of food for the period of before spring crops harvest after long winter. This generation has the memory of this period in common.

<sup>6</sup> This is the sound of flowing water in the brook, and the interviewee made the sound in telling her story, which implies her positive associations with the memories.

<sup>7</sup> This is the traditional way of washing Korean clothes. Before washing, the clothes should be unstitched, then washed, ironed, and re-stitched.

<sup>8</sup> In Korea, most high school students studied in school until evening; they carried both lunch and dinner. Thus, she prepared four meals for two sons.

<sup>9</sup> About this perception, there would also be argument, such as without doing in person the machine does not function including the time for arranging laundry. Nevertheless, in terms of consumption, housework in current post-industrial Korea cannot be compared to housework in early industrial Korea.

<sup>10</sup> This is the term to call a man in the *Yangban* (aristocratic) class.

<sup>11</sup> This means that there is no worry about supporting a baby because when a baby is born, there is always a way to feed it.

<sup>12</sup> I called them quasi-employees due to vague employment relationships. One person in charge of housework may have a wage, while another person in charge of taking care of the son may not because she was also a child. Above all, between them and the interviewee, there was no understanding and practice of employment relations, even by law at that time.

<sup>13</sup> In fact, this remains unclear. It would depend on the boundary of the economy whether social economy/informal economy is included or not.

<sup>14</sup> As mentioned in chapter 5, the *hoju* system finally ended in 2005, as unequal heredity finally changed through the family law reform in 1990.

# 7

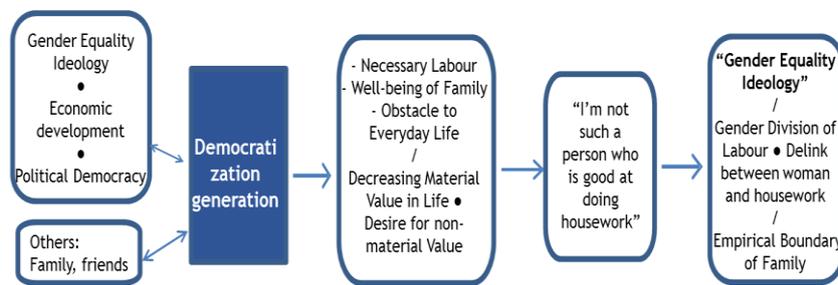
## Democratization Generation: Varied Meanings and the Desire for non-Material Values

For the democratization generation, the aim of this chapter is to elucidate meanings, values, and customary norms of doing housework, focusing on everyday practice. As shown in chapter 5, this generation interacts with three important external conditions: firstly, gender equality ideology as embedded within the democratic transition of Korean society, secondly, economic development and its relation to the gender division of labour, and thirdly, delay in social policy supporting a work-life balance. These external conditions were intermingled in everyday life under compressed modernity, with co-existing pre-modern, modern and post-modern life modes (Chang 1999) existing in a first modernity and a second modernity (Ochiai 2014). Further, although the Confucian customary norms are no longer accepted as natural norms, interaction with the Confucian family order partially continues in certain contexts, via interaction with the parents' generation.

Compared to the early industrialization generation, the remarkable feature of this generation is the variation in individual particularities (Heller 1984). Through this diversity, interviewees have generated various meanings and customary norms. Nevertheless, for the everyday practices of doing housework, this generation has also shown common practices, for instance in vocalizing *"I'm not the person who is good at doing housework."*<sup>1</sup> The common practices can be used to see what is true in general about housework in this generation. This noticeably different practice is in fact the reason this research was able to distinguish generation as its main methodological axis. As seen in figure 7.1, this generation created three different meanings of doing housework (section 7.1). The shrinking of material value and desire for non-material value will be explained in section 7.2. In section 7.3, specialized gender equality norms are used to understand the

mentioned mismatch between increasing gender equality ideology and continuing gendered practices of housework.

**Figure 7. 1**  
*Methodological points of democratization generation under compressed modernity*



## 7.1 Three meanings of doing housework

As explained in the methodological rationale for symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969, Mead and Morris [1934] 1967), individuals interact with external conditions and others to generate the meanings that determine their housework practices. In the democratization generation, in relation to doing housework, three external conditions can be seen grouped around gender equality ideology and the male breadwinning family system. Different life modes are also affected by compressed modernity (Chang 1999), which determines the room for particularities of individuals in the practices of doing housework to develop. Owing to this room, in their interactions, respective interviewees revealed own level of gender equality or of having choice; this depended on their life experiences and thereby generated their respective meanings for housework.

Table 7.1 summarises three meanings this democratization generation created, and lists the examples that will be elaborated in this section. Conjugating different particularities such as political identity, gender equality, self-improvement, personal choice, and role engagement (e.g. as a mother or a worker), members of this generation created three basic meanings for

housework: ‘necessary labour’, ‘well-being of family’, and ‘obstacle in everyday life’. For individuals, their particularities were the key factors in generating specific meanings in the whole life path. In this section, the dynamics of generating these three meanings will be portrayed, paying attention to the influence of particularities on meaning making throughout an individual’s life path.

**Table 7. 1**  
*Meanings of doing housework in the democratization generation*

| Meanings           | Necessary labour                         | Well-being of family                          | Obstacle for everyday life              |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| Attitudes          | No significant meaning in housework      | Possibility for improving the life quality    | Negative mind-set/<br>Lack of time      |
| Examples           | EunJu (SM 2),<br>MinSu (CH 2-H)          | MinHo (househusband)<br>JaeEun (FWC 7-W)      | HyunSuk (DEC 1-W)<br>YoungHee (CH 4-W)  |
| Particularities    | Self-improvement<br>Having own lifestyle | Political ideology<br>Identity as mother      | Identity as a worker<br>Gender equality |
| Housework practice | Putting less energy into doing housework | Doing one’s best or focusing on child raising | Extremely minimizing housework at home  |

Before depicting these meanings, however, I need to clarify two points regarding particularities and meaning. First, I analysed the meanings relying on their particularities at that time of my interview, but depending on whether (and how) the life path will confront new significant others or experiences, the specific particularity can change, thereby changing the meaning. For example, a wife in co-housing 3 generated the meaning of “obstacle for everyday life” from her strong gender equality ideology from the young age. However, in interacting with her husband, who also has gender equality ideology and does gender equal sharing of housework, she has newly acknowledged the meaning of doing housework as well-being of the family. In this case, even though the particularity of gender equality is the same, partners can generate different meanings depending on their

concrete life experiences. In this sense, the particularities are not the cause of the meaning, and can be only manifested in concrete life contexts. In this sense, to choose example cases is to depict the concrete life context in flow, relying on the epistemological stance of integrating objectivity into subjectivity. By the epistemological stance, a story is not isolated as an individual story, rather a story involves cultural historical contexts.

Secondly, 44 interviewees in this generation belonged to one of these categories in terms of meanings of doing housework, yet within the same category, respective interviewee have different particularities. Class and gender, for example, can be particularities, yet mostly act in indirect ways, and no distinct categories is distinguished by class or gender. For example, in the category “necessary labour”, the two exemplary cases have different class and gender backgrounds: EunJu as single mother with a high school education earning the minimum wage and MinSu as a male lawyer with a tertiary education in the upper class,<sup>2</sup> yet they generated the same meaning of doing housework. Also, a working class single mother (5) with high school education generated the meaning “well-being of family”, interacting with her memory about a birthday meal her mother served despite a very poor life condition.<sup>3</sup> In her memory, the birthday meal equated to giving respect to even a small child as a human being. In her case, with the experience of having dignity by her mother’s housework, she saw the “private-familial sphere as having its own dignity and purpose” (Elshtain 1981: 334) in being human, and tries to offer that to her children. Nevertheless, as a working class single mother, her life is very tough, and thus sometimes she drinks *Soju* (Korean strong alcohol) alone in a park before going home after work.

Strictly speaking, in this democratization generation, even among the working class, the meaning of doing housework cannot be the survival of family. If under severe economic difficulty, they have to have a job, and housework can be minimal, substituted with cheap market products and government support. This is due to Korean economic development. Even those who have a strong gender identity as women hardly generate the meaning of housework as part of women’s role or in line with norms for women. While at an early stage of marriage life a woman may do housework as her duty, she will, interacting with others, with media and so forth, change her thinking, as a result of interacting with the increasingly present

gender equality ideology. These external conditions offer specific boundaries to actors' particularities, thereby restricting actors' particularities to certain temporal-spatial contexts.

### 7.1.1 Necessary labour

The meaning "necessary labour" was generated by those who do not wish to attach significant meaning to doing housework. This necessary labour does not point toward doing housework for the survival of physical life, like men as *animal laborans* in Arendt's work, or putting in 'socially necessary labour time' which is the term for market exchange in the labour theory of value.<sup>4</sup> This is, as lay language, more about individual choice of arranging their everyday life, implying their desire to minimize housework. The less they put energy into doing housework, the more they have for their everyday life. Instead of putting energy into housework, they have chosen to put their energy into doing community activity or into self-improvement. In other words, the work content of housework, such as cleaning, cooking, and taking care of children, does not address self-improvement or the meaningful life they wish to achieve. Nevertheless, there are something at home which should be done for keeping everyday life. In this sense, "necessary labour" does not demand quality housework.

The case of EunJu reveals the particularity of self-improvement in generating the meaning of doing housework. The unfulfilled desire to improve herself, which may be enhanced by her inability to go to university due to her poor family background, has awakened in her through her work in a trade union after her divorce. She calls her life after divorce her heyday, a time for putting her energy into acquiring new knowledge and skills, and housework correspondingly diminished in importance, becoming necessary labour. The particularity of MinSu and his wife is to choose their own lifestyle. Through their experience of joining social activities starting in their university period, they found community activities much more meaningful than housework. They have reduced housework as far as they can and still maintain daily life, so again, its meaning is necessary labour. As a lawyer, MinSu earns enough to hire someone, yet hiring someone for their housework is not compatible with their equality ideology, and would be a dilemma from a moral perspective regarding the marketization of domestic work (Tronto 2002).

*For self-improvement- EunJu*

Looking in detail at the case of single mother 2, EunJu<sup>5</sup>, who born in 1969: she started her life story from her divorce, defining the time since divorce as her heyday. In the process of divorce, because she did not have any money to rent a room, she moved into her mother's house with her two children. Taking care of her two children, despite her hard work at 3-4 kinds of work per day, she still was unable to save enough money to rent a room. To have a regular full time job, she then started working as a room maid in a big hotel. However, at first, she did not realise that she was not directly employed by the big hotel but by a small subcontract company. In the working conditions from the subcontract company, her wage was just about at the level of the minimum wage. Moreover, the company sometimes did not pay its employees their full wage. To solve this problem, the workers established a trade union, and during a struggle for the union she was fired. Since then, she has worked for the Korean Women's Trade Union (for 8 years). This is the summary of her story in responding to open question.

In spite of remembering her life after divorce as her golden time, this story does not show brightness or hopefulness. No matter how seriously she needs money, for her there seems no way to earn far over the minimum wage. Her salary at the KWTU is also slightly over the minimum wage. Mainly due to this economic scarcity, for 5 years she lived with her mother, but between her mother and her first daughter there have always been big troubles. Thus, the mother sent her first to her father, but her daughter had not fared well there, and was even unable to go to high school. EunJu then moved out of her mother's house, paying 300 USD for rent from a total monthly income of about 1,000 USD. At that time of interview, thanks to living in social housing for single mothers and earnings by her first child, the economic condition has become a bit better.

Her life story is about her turning point in life. For her, the focus of her heyday is self-improvement. From childhood, she never had a chance to dream. In her memory, her mother was always out earning money and her father very seldom came home. Because nobody gave daily caring for her and her siblings, skipping meals was very normal. Even though she was accepted to enter university, she told her mother that she had failed, because she knew her mother was unable to afford it. While working several years in a factory, she got pregnant thus got married. After marriage,

her husband became violent and alcoholic. Her first also had micturition disorder at 12 years old. She felt the most uncontrollable situations had changed thanks to her divorce and to working in the KWRU.

*“I always feel thankfulness to this union. This union gives me a lot, gives me chances to know and to experience the world. When I started to work here, at a project, there was a new program to learn how to do visual editing, so then I was for the first time accessing a camcorder and I’ve filmed documentaries since 2007, and from last year I have been teaching in the program.... Anyway, I’m interested in videos and I also learned here to make natural ingredient cosmetics and I’m still making them. I’m very interested in learning new things.”*

As mentioned, working in the union has not improved her economic condition much, but has provided new experiences by which she has discovered things about herself and the environment around her: what she likes to do, what her strong points are, what her ex-husband’s life was, what her mother’s difficulties were/are etc. In doing so, she is empowered to attempt to lead her life actively rather than passively. This empowering experience has generated new perspectives about life, and with them new ideas about doing housework. She recommended to her daughter not to have children, because she wishes her children to live in self-improvement, not only to earn or to do housework.

This is unlike her married life. Before her divorce, she had indeed concentrated on bringing up her children. Because of her memory of insufficient care from her mother, she tried to give all to her children. Yet because of lack of intimacy with others (her mother and husband), she also wished to get emotional caring from her children. She also did not question women’s role as the one who should do housework, in line with male breadwinning ideology. Thus, in the past, she always gave priority to her family, and did housework and paid work: *“then I thought housework is what I should do, so I had even not thought it’s hard, everything depends on the mind-set”*.

*“(In the past) to have a job was just a tool for a living. Due to a job, family life can be decent, so the job is a tool and the main concern is family life. Yet now is different from at that time. Now I think to have a job is the same as to have family life. If I had to live only with family life, without a job I could not. Nowadays there is myself, this is the time to improve myself. There were many things I didn’t know, many things I should know, that’s why I’m doing this, for self-development, ...so it’s better to reduce housework to the minimum, the things that should be done. For a long*

*time, we have not mopped the floor of rooms in my house... when I was at home in the past I did laundry every day, but now I do it once a week."*

As seen in her story, in the past, as a mother and a wife she had taken housework for granted; that is, based on role engagement, she accepted it as her duty. Now, with loosening role engagement due to her divorce and her children growing up, her desire to have self-improvement through new experiences has reduced the room for housework in her mind. In passing this experience, even though she knows that she feels happier with her children than only having a job without children, she paradoxically recommends her daughters not to have children. This reveals her clear recognition of the difficulty of balancing in individual life and a work life, currently one of the hottest issues in housework studies (Bielby and Bielby 1989, Borchorst and Siim 2008, Hogarth and Bosworth 2009, Sohn and Park 2014). Thus, as an alternative solution, she stated that if her daughters did have children, she could take care of the children so that her daughter could have a job. Then her daughter would have decent family life and self-improvement.

As she was reflecting her life living as a housewife and as a divorced woman with job, the thing that stood out was the implication that the work in housework had not helped with self-improvement, but the job had. Thus, to have time for self-development, she chose not to put much energy in doing housework. This meets her desire for balance between her individual life for self-improvement, her family, and her working life.

#### *For choosing own life style- MinSu*

According to Minsu's (CH 2-H) explanation, his life involves doing works given to him with his full effort; "*without any hobby, like a workaholic, reflecting my life there is no myself, just continuing to be loyal to an organization*", his case seems to be incompatible with having one's own choice. Nevertheless, his life seems to be full of process and effort to keep the way of life he chose. Compared to the case of EunJu, who mainly focuses on self-development, he wishes to have a family, a job, to be within a social movement, and to play a man's role. This is his particularity in generating the meaning of doing housework. Apart from the men's role, the basic direction for his choices had been decided in high school. Since joining in social movements in high school, he became aware of the equality idea, and he strongly

agrees with the need to share housework. However, as the eldest son, husband, father of three children, and as a human rights lawyer, there has been no time for himself. In this regard, to release his everyday burden of work, he has reduced housework to the minimum as a practical option that is compatible with the direction of his life.

MinSu was born in 1973, the eldest son with two siblings, and received secondary schooling in Gwangju. He has three children (9, 6, 4 years old) and works as a lawyer specialized in labour problems. Adding to living in Gwangju, he called himself the *JeonKyoJo* (Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union) generation, which implies that to join a social movement is a very natural process.<sup>6</sup> Thus, after entering university to study law, he joined the social movement for 5 years and then did military service. After military service, there was no job for him even in civil society organizations, due to the economic crisis and IMF bail-out in 1997. Thus, reminded of his dream to become a human right lawyer, he studied for 5 and half years. One year later and following his marriage, he passed the bar exam and at the time of interview had worked as a lawyer for 7 years.

When he was a university student, he met his wife as a co-activist, and both share the gender equality idea: *“in my consciousness housework should be equally shared, not as charity but like eating meals every day”*. Based on this mindset, according to his wife he is an exemplary husband, in terms of not drinking alcohol and returning home at times he and his wife have arranged: *“I come back home at 10 every day, and at that time my wife is also so tired from doing a variety of community activities, so she lets everything be, not in a neat way, and then I wash dishes”*. Even though he comes home normally around 10 p.m. because his wife is also busy with community activities, he may also need to take care of the 3 children when he come back home. After sending the children to bed around 11:30 p.m. he mostly does paperwork at home until 1:30 or 2 a.m.

*“From morning to evening until I come back home, I do not do any other thing, only work, there is even no time to look at the news on-line or read newspapers, I only read the newspaper of Labour Today<sup>7</sup>, at least the titles, have a meal in hurry, and am always running.”*

Because of this extremely busy schedule, his wife has also complained and recommended he reduce his work. As an owner of his office, the decision on the extent he works is his own. However, his work is not only for earning money but also helping labourers. He said that whenever there

are labourers who need him, he cannot reject them. If a labour union cannot afford to pay his fees, he sometimes works *pro bono*. He gave an analogy of running a car or a bicycle to compare his situation. If he suddenly reduces the speed, the bike could fall down. Moreover, not only this way of living due to being a human rights lawyer, but also as the eldest son, because he needs to work hard to earn money for his parents. Like many elderly people in Korea, his parents do not have their own income: no pension, no savings, and no insurance. Thus, he fully supports his parents.

Even though the couple do not think that the man should be the breadwinner, on a practical level he is a sole provider. His wife receives living expenses, from which she separates the cost for living and a kind of salary for taking care of three children. After spending what she needs, she has a savings budget for travelling with the children. In fact, to see a certain amount of money as her salary would be a way of recognizing her housework rather than having a separate budget. When she worked in an environmental organization, she also paid for living expenses, yet because of the big gap between his income and her income<sup>8</sup>, her contribution did not have meaning in terms of the family's living costs. After having the second child, she quit her paid work and instead she tried to recognize her housework for three children. This is her story of resolving the gendered sharing of housework.

In this situation, MinSu has never recommended to his wife that she earn money, as might other men in this generation. This is not because of the matter of taking care of the three children. He absolutely agrees that his wife should do community activity regardless of earning money; this indicates his strong consciousness of gender equality. However, within his strong gender equality idea, he also seems to have a strong role engagement with being a breadwinner. This might derive from the social structure, in which most men's incomes are higher than those of equivalent women. Thus, without his income, this family would be in big trouble, but there is no such consideration regarding the woman's income. However, as shown in the following quotation, he intentionally denied the recommendation to have a job for earning money.

*"I think it's right to reduce housework. When children go to a daycare centre, women have time for socially, economically, participating; ah it's not to make them to work, I don't mean for them to have to work regularly; for working what they want to do, not as a job, if they just stay with children they cannot do anything."*

This quotation recommends reducing housework for women to give them time to do what they want, but this is not for any economic contribution to the family. To explain this, because of the concept of work is nowadays always connected to earning money, he repeatedly denies the connection between work and payment. Instead, he recognizes the desire of doing something for society irrespective of payment. His *pro bono* work shows that he also believes this in relation to his own work. Thus, based on their strong sense of gender equality, the couple agreed to cut the connection between the role as a wife and housework, plus they agreed to reduce housework for children. Yet there is no question about the connection between men and breadwinning. This is not only true of MinSu, since while (as seen in JunSik) men in this generation vary in terms of sharing housework, they almost all have a strong belief in the breadwinner role.

Conjugating this gender equality idea, this couple obviously recognize that as human beings they have their own desires for a specific lifestyle. And then they give more priority to their desire, which means they strategically minimize housework; *“I don’t know, but my wife also wants to participate in social activities and I also want to do paid work, and then anyone can do housework, but we wish to reduce it to the minimum; it’s the reality... I eat out every meal so really hate to eat out, but even to cook is stressful. I clean the rice and wash dishes, but if my wife suggests eating out, we eat out.”*

Even though they have agreed to minimize housework, he does not think the family is trivial nor that doing housework is worthless. Rather, his family is more significant than he is. In fact, thanks to the difficulty in fulfilling daily housework demands, he knows the value of housework. As well, as a lawyer, he clearly understands that the value of housework is increasing in law. Since the revision of family law in 1990, the sharing proportion of property in divorce has increased for full time housewives from 30 % to 50 % of total property, but regardless of his understanding of housework value, he has made a decision to minimize it for the lifestyle the couple chose: the wife does community activities and he does (mainly) paid work.

In this regard, no matter why there is a priority given to community activity rather than to housework, the unwillingness to do housework is clear in this couple. Indeed, the wife clearly revealed her sense of its meaninglessness and her unwillingness to do it: *“I think there is no meaning in*

*housework, just should do helplessly, so I do not do it carefully as well. I don't want to do it well; the more I spend time in it, the more I feel angry."*

### 7.1.2 Well-being of family

The well-being of family as the meaning of doing housework has been generated by those who have clearly recognized the effect of housework in improving the quality of family life. When this is compared to the meaning of survival, it is noticeable that the meaning of well-being goes beyond the physical safety of family. That is, this meaning also includes non-material values such as emotional well-being and promoting the self-fulfilment of family members. In this regard, in terms of the main factors that generating meanings according to Rosso et al. (2010), this meaning has revealed a close relation between value and meaning.

In the case of single mothers (3, 6), this weighty valuation would be an expression of thankfulness to their mothers, who do housework instead of them. The husbands with full time housewives have recognized the significance of housework, pointing out how harsh it can be to raise children in the dual earning conditions of current society, together with the difficulty of raising children. These two groups share the meaning that would persuade someone to do housework due to its significance in everyday life. This attitude to assign a weighty value to housework as a person who does not do it is actually very different from that of those in the early industrialization generation. Their assessment of housework is actually similar to idea put forward in the professional housewifery debate in early modern Korea (Kim 1999a, Hong 2014), although at that time this was in terms of its high valuation by an elite group that employed external ideology imported from Western society.

In the case of full time housewives (FWC 1-W, 2-W, 5-W, 6-W, 7-W), they are the ones who do the housework in male breadwinning families, yet they mentioned that this duty was "*not for women, but for those who stay at home full-time.*" An interviewee who was praised for her good housework practices by others in the group interview said "*there is no problem in doing housework for me because I'm not staying at home, just going out.*" She may do housework well, as others said. However, her rejection of their praise im-

plies that as a woman, doing housework well was not positive. This is exactly matched with the common testimony; *‘I’m not such a person who is good at doing housework.’*

Instead, in this group the focus of housework is child rearing. This is related to their previous, sub-optimal paid work (FWC 3-W, 5-W, 6-W), since the initial point at which they decided to become full-time housewives tended to be after giving birth, with taking care of the baby indicative of the particularity of role engagement as a mother. This is in line with the socially imposed centrality of child rearing in the modern family, which provokes intensive mothering (Hays 1998). This is also compatible with the shift in women’s main identity from being a daughter-in-law to being a mother, and so passing from pre-modern to modern society. In this sense, the practices of doing housework related to child rearing would be seen as for family well-being, as shown with the case of JaeEun (below). Another example would be the full-time househusband, MinHo, who puts his full effort into doing housework, relying on the meaning of well-being of family. In this meaning making, his particularity is his political ideology to pursue his goal of achieving democratic family unlike his original family. Interestingly, recently, due to the devaluation of his housework by his wife, he has experienced some emotional difficulty about his contribution to the family as a full-time homemaker.

To show the ambiguous relationship between the significant meaning assigned to housework and its practices, the cases of MinHo and JeaEun will be detailed.

*Reversed gender role and the devaluation of housework- MinHo*

MinHo was born in 1964 as the eldest son in a poor family. His father was a barber in his elementary school, and after school he always had to help his father, so when his friends had a trim he had to sweep the floor. He found this part of his life somewhat gloomy. On special days, he had to deliver gifts like apples or pears to the president or vice presidents of the school, yet there was nothing for his own family. Even though his parents worked hard, his family could not escape poverty. He remembered scenes such as his mother walking with large loads on her head while his father went ahead alone and his mother followed with their three children. All of these memories depressed him and also shows the absurdity of patriarchy. In these gloomy days, to read books in the library as his sole consolation

and this was a good memory to him. He was good at writing and painting, but his parents did not allow him to become a writer or a painter, because they thought that he would be poor with those jobs. In his story about childhood, he focused on poverty and on the inequality between mother and father, the president and the barber in the school, and other students as customers and himself as an assistant, all of which had made him very sensitive to equality and absurdity. This is his particularity in meaning-making of doing housework.

In the second year of high school, he learned of the Gwangju Uprising, and after entering university with a major in Politics and Diplomacy, he joined a social movement. In the last year of university, he lost sight in one eye due to being hit by a stone in a demonstration. As a result, as this was a symbol of opposition movement, he lost the chance to get a job in the formal business or government sector. He took lectures on literature in the *Hankyoreh* Cultural Centre<sup>9</sup> helping to organize the lectures, where he met his wife. Preparing marriage, he started to sell flowers as a street vendor, and took lectures about marriage. He eagerly wished to achieve a democratic family, and had a written agreement on married life. Achieving a democratic family was, in addition to a way to hold on to ideas learned from social movements, one of means to overcome the inequality and absurdity he saw in his parents' lives. These wishes and beliefs were his particularity in generating housework meaning.

In telling his story in answer to the open question, he spent 1 hour 10 minutes: 10 minutes about his childhood, another 10 minutes on meeting and marrying his wife, and the other 50 minutes was all about his daughter. This indicates how important the relationship with his daughter is in his life. After giving birth, his wife requested to him to take care of the baby so that she could keep her job without parental leave. Afterwards, for about 14 years, he has been doing all kinds of housework as a full-time house-husband with the authentic meaning of well-being of family.

He said that for first three years, his daughter never had food from a factory, not even a single bar of ice-cream. In fact, at first, the couple had agreed not to have children, but after 5 years married life his wife wished to have a baby. The wife had a difficulty getting pregnant, due to some physical condition. For this reason, he learned to make a fermentation with a special plant and served it to his wife, and then she got pregnant. To avoid the prevailing competitive school life, the family moved from Seoul to Jeju Island. His daughter took formal schooling only for two years.

Until his daughter entered alternative middle school, he had done home-schooling: memorizing poems, painting, playing on the beach, walking trips, etc. The father and daughter had done all of these activities together. Thanks to this, inversely to conventional wisdom, the daughter uttered the word, 'father' first, instead of 'mother'. One day when his family joined a program, the baby cried in her sleep wishing to sleep with her father who was in another room with men. Thus, the mother took her to him and cried coming back to her accommodation. At the time of interview, the daughter was in an alternative boarding school, and she usually had called to him, which made the mother feel jealous. Even though this is reverse in terms of gender, it is exactly the same as the close relationship between a child and mother in the early industrialization generation. This actually shows that following the care theory develops relationships (Himmelweit 2000).

His enthusiastic efforts to do housework well for family well-being did not have a good result. One year before my interview, his wife complained about his inability to earn money. She interrupted his employment, and criticised his incompetence as a breadwinner man, making him felt being betrayed. He said,

*"When I was a child I had lived according to my parents wish, due to poverty I couldn't do what I wished. Being married for 20 years I've lived according to what my wife wanted. Now I've heard 'you are an economic incompetent', I sometimes think: should I live like this? I really want to live for me for the rest of my life."*  
(MinHo)

In fact, his wife acknowledged that, compared to any other full-time housewife, he had done far more housework and raised the daughter very well, which she could not do. Nevertheless, among all interviewees in this generation, she was the one who considered housework to have the least value in terms of calculating it in monetary value: about 600 USD a month. Furthermore, the wife saw the meaning of housework as the necessary labour: *"do simply, in the case of food I like to eat vegetables without complicated cooking process, because it is simple to wash dishes."* In result, whatever the reason for the mismatch between this couples which will be deeply interpreted in chapter 9, the noteworthy point is that his enhanced sense of gender equality has enlarged the space for wife not to share housework. But then, in terms of ignorance of the value of housework, the wife is exactly the same as male interviewees and BokSun in the early industrialization generation.<sup>10</sup> Because they do not share it, they ignore it.

Overall, in the reversed gender division of labour in this couple, the wife has none of the factors that would give significant meaning on housework. She is free from the traditional gender role, kept her job, and has a less intimate relationship with her daughter. In contrast, the husband has many reasons to consider housework significant: he left his job, has an intimate relationship with the daughter, and is (a bit popularly) known as a full-time house-husband.<sup>11</sup> He experienced the private sphere of being human (Elshtain 1981) by rearing his daughter. However, the overall situation resulted in the devaluation of housework by the wife, which has threatened his sense of the meaning of doing housework as the well-being of the family. This derives from the ironic situation that even though they reversed gender roles, they did so without gender equality between them, sharing neither housework nor breadwinning work, and the effect of this is threatening their relationship.

*Intensive mothering for well-being of family*

JaeEun was born in 1971 into a relatively affluent and gender equal family background. Even though she has no brother, her parents do not have any problem without a son, and in this atmosphere, she had not experienced gender problems. When she married, the atmosphere in her new family was fairly different. At family meal times, the daughters-in-law had to serve foods one by one in a western style, and thus they would not enjoy the meal. She felt very awkward at first, yet tried to understand this different way of family life. A year later, her father-in-law changed the way of having family meal, to have everyone together, lest daughters-in-law should be interrupted in their meal.

She has only daughter, who was in the first year of middle school at the time of interview. For about 5 years after the birth, the couple took care of the baby together, each working half a day. At that time, she was a freelancer video editor and her husband ran a small publishing company. After this, the husband's company went bankrupt and she became a full-time employee. Then her husband got a job, in which he also had no time to take care of their child. At that time, even though her income was better than that of the husband, she chose to quit her job to take care of the baby. Afterwards, she organised her life around doing everything for her daughter, such as helping her make friends by inviting visits from children (and their mothers) who would be good as friends for her daughter. To help her daughter get along with her peers, she also helped her keep current

with popular culture. She would research Korean pop song singers that peers of the daughter liked and teach about them to her daughter, search popular soap dramas, summarize the storylines and teach these to her daughter, sometimes showing these to her daughter as a schedule. In this way, indeed she controlled everything for her daughter, including both academic things and peer-relations. As a result, her daughter earned top grades in school.

She does not think that to get good grade is the most important goal. However, as a result her rather introverted daughter can, with the good grade, be in the mainstream and not be ignored by others. As well, this work widens the boundaries within which daughter can choose a job in future. Even though her husband does not agree to her way of caring, thanks to the good grade, her husband accepts it. Nowadays the couple has accepted a pattern of living in which the husband comes home only on weekends, so as not to interrupt the atmosphere of study for the daughter. The wife does not have any complaints about being a full-time housewife, because her husband also does not spend the family income on himself and he does much housework on the weekends. When she came to the interview, her daughter said to her, *“you may not have anything to tell about housework; father should do the interview.”* Compared to her, her husband has the superior skill in doing housework, and indeed likes cooking and is good at it.

In this couple, roles changed when the wife began to take care of their child full time. She decided to do this even though her income was bigger than his and she liked her job while her husband did not. Furthermore, the husband was better at doing housework than she was. She explained the choice mentioning gender division of labour, but this was not the only rationale. Her choice was significantly influenced by her sense of a lack of caring from her mother, which became her particularity in meaning making around doing housework. And then, this is not only her story. Actually, her husband also felt insufficient care from his parents in terms of supporting his study. Based on this, the couple agreed their lifestyle should focus on the child, and particularly on her study.

*“My mom started to do voluntary work when I was in the third year of middle school; then she began to work in an NGO. She may have enjoyed her work and being recognized by others. In housework she was not satisfied. So, she just left us to do that work even though it’s not for earning money. I may have some disquiet about that, and I want to care for my child only, being immersed on it. However,*

*I'm fearful that because of me, my daughter may have a wrong thought, so I explained again and again to my daughter that to take care of a child is not only way of life for a mother, a mother does not necessarily care for her child in person. ...to get married is not a necessity in life, you do not need to get married, or even though you get married you may decide not have children."*

This shows very well the point of the transformation in her life from the gender division of labour in current Korean society to the low birth society in post-industrial Korean society. In other words, individuals' reflections on their own life paths and their desire to fill in a missing part, shows the possibility to transition from the houswifization of her life to the dehouswifization of her daughter (Ochiai 2014: 210-211). In her case, to overcome her insufficient care from her mother, she adhered to a strong role engagement as a mother, and has always focused on caring for her daughter. However, through this process, missing the opportunity to keeping her job, she has realized the lack of something. Thus, she repeatedly recommends that her daughter choose differently. In this context, the ideology of professional housewifery of the early industrial society (Kim 1999a) has exposed the side-effect of the life mode. The side-effect would trigger the ideology of early feminism, i.e. to put priority on having a position in the public arena (Elshtain 1981).

Indeed, the lack of sufficient care by mother or parents was mentioned in others stories, such as co-housing 4, 5, and full-time housewife couple 1. The meaning of the lack of care was not limited to physical care. The reason why MinHo and JaeEun do not ask to their parents to take care of their child is partly because of limitations they see in the grandparents' care, which would be mainly feeding and bathing, namely physical care. For them, based on their experience of no difficulty for food, they wished to receive emotional and/or academic support, which is the basis of the intensive parenting in Minhó's case. As well, this would be the point to meet with widespread middle-class culture in housework in the male breadwinning family system, in the first modernity (Ochiai 2014: 210-11).

### 7.1.3 Obstacle to Everyday Life

Meaning in everyday life is based on identification with or rejection of existing roles and ideas. The meaning of obstacles in everyday life is based on strong emotional reactions, for example to reject doing housework due

to gender inequality or the unwillingness to prioritize housework. In line with a study revealing young women's active negotiation for constructing an autonomous self (Budgeon 2003), the two women discussed below share a strong autonomous selection of their identity: they do not want to be traditional women and they give a higher value to being working women. When it comes to comparing this generation with the early industrialization generation, in which most women did paid work as well as housework despite the lack of time, their rejection of unequal work allocation by gender is clear. In this case, they have struggled to meet basic needs which usually can be filled by doing housework. They have prepared strategies to meet these needs, such as using community dining or preserved foods, hiring someone to help, or receiving help from parents.

*Strong role engagement as a worker*

The wife of dual earning couple 1, HyunSuk, was born in 1971. Because her mother had worked running a dressmaking shop, from her final years of elementary school she helped with housework by washing dishes, cooking rice, doing laundry, etc. In her estimation, her father did not fit the literal meaning of breadwinner. As well as not fully providing his income to his family, her father was not a caring person. He always put himself first, rather than children or family. In this context, her mother had to meet family needs, whether economic or emotional. When her parents bought a house, her mother was the one who made and fulfilled the financial commitment. Despite her mother's bigger contribution for family, she felt the hierarchy between her parents was the reverse. This was surely because of the patriarchy in Korean society at that time, but she also felt that her mother's inferior position was in part due to her inferior schooling and her informal work. In interaction with her parents' life, she decided not to live like her mother, who was always sacrificed, and chose a husband who would be a good father.

For her, regardless of her marital status, by her mother's strong suggestion and her understanding about the hierarchy of her parents, to have a job was unquestionably the way forward. This commitment to be a worker is her particularity in generating the meaning of doing housework. As a worker in a big Japanese IT company, her working conditions are fairly good in terms of salary and benefits. Also, her position in the company is high compared to others who are of a similar age or started their job careers with her: she is right under the executives. To get fast promotions

she has had to work very hard, *“especially to overcome my handicap as a woman and my school background, which is not so good”* (HyunSuk). Her husband called her *“a real working woman”*. This depiction is even clearer when it comes to comparing her with the wives of dual earner couples 2 and 4, who have given up promotions so as to have time to be concerned with their children, accepting the motherhood penalty (Aranda and Glick 2013). For HyunSuk, role engagement as a worker has always been primary. She said, *“I chose two: my work and my daughter, and gave up two: to become a good daughter-in-law and a good wife.”* Her decision to take these two roles shows the distance she feels from the early professional housewife ideology, which focused on becoming a wise mother and a good wife (Kim 2010).

As well, her decision is her way of having a work-life balance. Nevertheless, the balance is always shaky. To keep to her decision, her mother’s support has been fundamental. Her mother has strongly insisted she should have a job and an independent life. As well, to take care of the baby, her mother quit her work and moved to be nearby. Three months after giving birth, she went back to work. Without her mother’s help, working in the company and taking care of a child (6 years old at the time of the interview) would have been almost impossible. Nowadays, the everyday routine is as follows. In the morning, her mother comes to her house to take the granddaughter. After giving the child a bath, breakfast and preparing all her things, her mother sends the granddaughter to kindergarten, from which the child returns to her grandmother’s house at about 3 p.m. In the evening, HyunSuk comes to mother’s house first, and eats dinner there with the daughter, then comes back home with her daughter. After having her daughter shower, she puts her daughter to sleep, and around 10 or 11 p.m. her husband comes home. This is the normal schedule on weekdays. Thanks to her mother’s help, her work time is not limited by motherhood, and she is able on occasion to work late into the evening or even overnight. During the weekend, in general, the husband does housework such as cleaning the house and doing laundry while the wife takes the daughter to a private academy for ballet, swimming, or piano. Sometimes on the weekend they take trips together as well. For several years there has been no rice in the house and her daughter once asked her: *“why you don’t cook? Don’t we have rice? I answered, now I have to go to work so I don’t have time, later if I do not go to work, I’ll cook for you”*. This quotation represents her work-life balance.

Her answer symbolized how hard it is to become a normal worker who always gives priority to work over family or self-care as a married woman in capitalist society. In her memory, nobody verbally taught her daughter that cooking is what mothers should do, yet she never asked it of her father. This interaction indicates the high role engagement as a mother in this generation. Overall, the clear point is that by transferring a major part of housework to her mother, she can make decisions about her work and her daughter. Despite the harsh, tough circumstance in which a working mother raises a child, she has also learned much. She said that her daughter is the only person who can change her, now that she is over 40 years old. The experience of raising her daughter has, she says, made her a calmer and more tolerant person than ever before. Even at her work, co-workers gave similar evaluations of this change.

Unlike HyunSuk, who absolutely depends on her mother's help, dual earning couple 2 use a variety of means to meet the basic needs usually met through housework: help from the wife's mother, hiring someone, buying an automatic dishwasher, using laundry services, and sending children to a private academy. When the children were too young, the wife's mother had done everything from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., commuting every day, although now she also has to care for her sick husband. The everyday schedule for this couple is as follows. In the morning, the wife's mother comes to send children to school. In the afternoon, a hired woman comes to do housework from 12 to 7 p.m. Between 7 and about 9, the second child is at home alone while the first is at a private academy. The wife returns home around 9 or 10 p.m. This is the most troublesome period for the wife, while the husband (who comes back home after an everyday drinking session) does not feel trouble at all. In this case, despite the effort to prepare solutions, she feels everyday obstacles to balance her life scheme albeit she does find it bearable: "*around 3 or 4 p.m. I always wonder where my children are and whether they went to the private academy, or I have to answer phone calls from the children or from a staff member of the academy, who never call the father*". This couple worked in a bank, but the time each has to concentrate on their job is fairly different. The wife mentioned her husband as a 'couch potato' because at home he never does any housework. This couple is an example of unequal sharing of housework in a dual income family. In this case, as mentioned earlier, the wife is giving up promotions as a means to balance between her work and her family. Nevertheless, no solutions

could change the housework meaning as an obstacle in everyday life with a serious problem of work-life balance.

*Gender equality as a tenet of life*

In the last case, they (DEC 3-W, CH 3-W, 4-W) show that they feel housework to be an obstacle to gender equality, thus they consciously or unconsciously wish to ignore housework in their life. In this case, before having a child, relying on the social movement experience the couple had in common, the problem was not serious, and a verbal or nonverbal agreement sufficed to live in line with their ideas and not with traditional roles and norms. However, after having a baby, who needs at least one adult for the whole day, the situation changed. The exception was the dual earning couple 3, who have a full spectrum of help from a mother-in-law and from the wife's sister. The wives of co-housing couples 3 and 4 said that at least for the period in which they took care of their children full time, they could not live as themselves, while there was no change in the husband's life. However, this perception is not only for the wives. Actually, the husband of co-housing 3, who took care of their son for 1 year by taking parental leave, mentioned that over time he experienced a disappearing of himself.

Taking a slightly closer look at the case of the wife of CH 3: like the wife of dual earning couple 3, the wife thinks she is *"not such a person who knows how to do housework"* and to take care of baby. She sees housework as something forced onto women in concord with traditional thought, thus she does not want to do it. She said, *"before marriage I lived with my sister and in the evening even though I felt hungry, since I don't know how to cook I just went to bed saying I'm hungry"*. However, thanks to her husband's practice in gender equality, e.g. his taking the lead in cooking and taking parental leave for full period, her negative mind-set regarding housework has step by step weakened. She did go back to work earlier than the date her parental leave ended. Her husband replaced her, but nevertheless, her daily life schedule is not easy as half of a dual earning couple with a 30 month old baby. Only in the weekend does her husband cook for the family, and on weekdays they eat mostly simple frozen foods.

In the case of YoungHee (CH 4-W), the mismatch between her gender equality idea and her high role engagement as a mother and the lifestyle of her husband as a Korean working man has threatened their everyday life. Because of her mother, who seems unique, she had a high role engagement

as a mother. From childhood, due to their different traits, she did not get along with her mother. Her mother, who was a sport player in her school, had hurt her heedlessly because YoungHee is very sensitive. For her mother, doing sport is the most important thing she does. When YoungHee gave a birth, her mother gave money to hire someone to help her instead of caring for YoungHee in person as would be normal for a Korean mother of a daughter. When she gave a birth to her second child, she chose a day care centre which was far from her house for her first, who was 3 years old. Thus, she had spent three hours a day taking her firstborn to the centre (and back), carrying her newborn on her back. Even though YoungHee lived in the same building with her mother, her mother did not help, because she was busy with her sports. YoungHee said, *"I feel thankful to my mom, who taught me that motherly love is not innate; on the other hand, I'm sorry for my mom in that my mom did not give me the same as any other mother would."* In this sense, she wishes to be a mother who is more than perfect as a mother. This is her particularity that is in conflicting with her another particularity of gender equality idea in meaning-making of housework.

After entering university, she joined a social movement and met her husband. They shared a political viewpoint on life. Nevertheless, when they get married she worried about married life. Thus, she clearly told her husband,

*"I don't want to wake up, tie your necktie, say goodbye in the morning when you go to work. I will not cook breakfast yet you also have your hands, so if you want to eat you can.... I don't want to be sacrificed and live in the shadow of husband and children. Then he said he will live in the shadow, live your life however you want."*  
(YoungHee)

She even changed the way of celebrating national holidays at her in-law's house, by sharing all the housework for the holiday with her husband and her brother-in-law. In her case, with the promise between the couple and the acceptance of her in-laws, before having a baby there was no problem in this couple; the husband worked and she did political activities as a member of a left-wing party.

However, since having children, she said that in everyday life there were always a lot of tears. And then, as mentioned, she thought that whereas she could not live as herself, her husband continued his life unchanged. Two years ago, she joined in the co-housing and her children also become elementary school students. Then she gave up doing housework, giving

her rice-cooker to the common kitchen. This would be the symbol of giving up housework showing the strength of her decision not to cook at home. For two years after that the four family members did not have meals together at a table except during a family trip, which was a special event for children. Her husband has done housework such as cleaning or laundry in weekends, as well as taken care of the children on weekends, without her. On weekends, she spends time on her own activities or herself. She explains thus: *“it is the gift I give to my husband enabling to keep the seat as a father, without it there is perhaps no relationship left between father and children, like any other ordinary family.”* As well, she clearly declared to her husband, *“for me, there is no you as my husband; instead, you will be left as a father of my children.”* Actually, her husband is a typical Korean man who as the eldest son always focuses on his job and being a breadwinner.

In that she never thought about her job as a way to be independent, she now regrets this. She seems possibly to have become insidiously accustomed to the customary gender norms in the male breadwinning family before encountering gender equality ideology. When she married, she told her husband, *“I will continue to do social activity so it would be you who earns money.”* Considering this, even though she planned to avoid conventional gender norms, she may have lacked an overall idea of the whole private sphere. At the time of interview, even though she revealed strong role engagement as a mother when her children were infants, she later rejected the way of mothering that is extremely focussed on child rearing. She thinks that current Korean society forces intensive mothering (Hays 1998). Dreaming of a different family and marriage system, she plans to live alone someday when her children have grown up, yet the husband wishes to live with her, even in the manner of their current, everyday lifestyle.

In investigating the meanings of housework, the intransigent housework dilemmas discussed in chapter 2, such as its devaluation, gendered practices, how dirty work is dumped onto the marginalized, and its relation to the ever-elusive work-life balance, have shown how complex it is. Even though in many studies these dilemmas have been studied by focusing on one issue, interviewees' life stories prove their connectedness. For example, in early industrial society, the devaluation of housework linked to gendered practices was the salient diagnosis in feminist studies (Secombe 1974, 1986, Wharton 2000). By comparison, in this generation, other dilemmas related to gendered practices, e.g. of dumping dirty work onto the

marginalized, the problem of work-life balance, and the motherhood penalty, have been revealed.

As already shown, rather than a simple axis of gender, class, or educational background, housework is valued on the basis of various particularities (Heller 1984), and through these, this democratization generation has engendered three basic meanings of doing housework: necessary labour, well-being of family, and obstacle for everyday life. Over the course of the whole life, these meanings are generated in interactions between individuals and external conditions, in which dominant cultural norms have been spawned (Mead [1934]1967: 158). Through these norms, the generalized other comes to actors, mostly via significant others. These connections with external structures via significant others generate meanings, activating the specific individual particularities that construct the individual's social reality. This is exactly in line with the epistemological stance of intermingling objectivity and subjectivity discussed in chapter 3.

For example, the particularities of political ideology and gender equality are interacting with increasingly widespread gender equality ideology in the democratic transition of Korean society, while identity as a mother or as a worker is strongly connected to the gender division of labour. For the women interviewed in this study, these interactions have been via parents, husbands, and mothers, as seen in the body of their life stories. Furthermore, in this period, the distinct external feature is the integration of gender equality ideology and the male breadwinning family system. The intermingling of these two properties defines the common direction, namely (in this generation) the generality of the practice of housework and ideas around doing housework. In this democratic period, this generality has largely resulted from the overlapping of modern and post-modern life modes by compressed modernity (Chang 1999). In other words, respective practices of doing housework overall reside in somewhere between the housewifization of male's heavy-duty breadwinning practices and comparative women's dehousewifization of having own choice for life style (Ochiai 2014: 210-211).

This mismatched life mode has been vocalized by interviewees; *"I'm not such a person who is good at doing housework."* The housewifization of the male breadwinning family implies little sharing of housework by men. Women's dehousewifization denotes assigning priority to doing something in the public sphere, thereby alienating private area. This could be community activity in the co-housing case or just having choice in the case

of the meaning of necessary labour. This mismatch between housewifization and dehousewifization will necessarily result in a severe care deficit unless families are supported by a good care system provided by the Korean government. However, the conventional solution of establishing a good public care system may still ignore “the own dignity and purpose of the private-familial sphere in becoming human” (Elshtain 1981: 334). This would mean the care deficit in private area would not really be solved.

## 7.2 The Value of Housework: Vague embodied value vs. desiring non-material value

Regarding the value of housework in this generation, there are two remarkable features. Firstly, most interviewees in this generation have a relatively clear idea about the monetary value of housework. However, this knowledge is simply exogenous information. As with the academic trend of counting the economic value of care (Kwon 2006, Moon et al. 2002, Smith 2007, Yoon 2014), interviewees tried to calculate housework value as if it were paid work. However, instead of having the opportunity to enjoy this value, counting housework in this way only confirmed its auxiliary status. Secondly, while the desire for care with a non-market value is burgeoning, the conditions in which to enjoy that value are not. For example, Minho, who focused on the non-material value of housework, was not successful in his family. In SuYoung’s case, her housework practice was meant to enjoy non-material value but was strongly supported by outsourcing a part of the housework, namely by dumping dirty work on to the marginalized, which is not an attractive option (Anderson 2000, Cheng 2003, Choi et al. 2008, Parreñas 2001). At the same time, a partial move toward non-market value can be seen in the desire to get sufficient caring from parents, not only physical but also emotional support and guidance (FWC 7, CH 4-W, CH 5-W) is. Hereafter, these two features will be presented in detail.

### *Monetary value of housework*

Unlike the early industrialization generation, in this generation most interviewees have an idea of how to measure the value of housework. Counting care by its market value is prevalent. In this, they are being informed by media, and they compare housework with the wage of a paid domestic

worker, or compare to the husband's income or to non-specific paid work. In this way, they suggest the value of housework is a proportion of the husband's income or of the income from some other form of work. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, measuring care by its market value is a conceptual fallacy (Himmelweit 2000, Van Staveren 2001). In those chapters, this conceptual fallacy is discussed in the abstract. Here, using my interviewees' measurements of housework value by market value, a two-fold flaw can be empirically discussed.

Looking at the measuring process, first, interviewees had already been informed about the monetary value of housework, with amounts ranging from about 1,000 USD to 3,000 USD per month (Mediadaum, 2006; *Money Today*, 2016).<sup>12</sup> Then, because this is a wide range, my interviewees have tried to calculate it by themselves using the salary of domestic labour, which already has a certain market value. However, considering that domestic work is at the bottom of wage scale, and very near temporary construction work in occupational prestige scores among 30 occupations (Choi et al. 2008), the market value was unlikely to be satisfactory to most of my interviewees.

Thus, my interviewees took pains to clarify the difference between paid domestic work and their housework. Most interviewees agreed that in their housework there is both physical labour and also management, guidance, scheduling, and provisioning for the whole family's life. These are the roles they see (though are unlikely to measure) as the main tasks in modern housework, especially focusing on the upbringing of a child. This is possible also because technical advances have much reduced the physical labour aspect of housework, yet in a complicated social order it is more and more important to arrange a good education for children, and this has become more and more significant in the function of family. The case of JaeEun is an example of this: she spends all of her energy and time in what could be called intensive mothering (Hays 1998). Meanwhile, in this measuring process, overall, my interviewees thought that about 1,000 USD per month might be similar to the monetary value of so-called house chores (preparing meals, doing laundry, and cleaning house). This was the going wage of paid domestic workers working 28 hours a week.<sup>13</sup>

In fact, those who did buy substitutes of housework spent considerably more than this. For instance, full time housewife couple 2 has two small children, 1 and 4 years old, and have hired a baby sitter from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. for 800 USD per month (20 days). This covers only taking care of

one child, because as a full-time housewife she spends the time to concentrate on the first, who feels a sense of loss of parental love. And then for a live-in Korean domestic worker, she could pay about 2,000 to 2,400 USD. She calculated the value of her household's housework in this way: "*especially, in my case, I cook and make clothes myself, so the value could be more, about 3-4,000 USD, in a normal case, maybe 2,000 USD.*"

Most interviewees presented a similar value, in the 2,000-3,000 USD range. The lowest was 600 USD, mentioned by the wife of Minhø (FHC) and the maximum was 5,000 USD in the case of a man in a group interview. Interestingly, many interviewees compared housework value to the income of a husband or a job. For example, the wife of co-housing 3 thought the value of housework might be 60 % of an average income whereas her husband felt the value would be the same as the amount of GDP per capita. Full time housewife 6 valued her housework as equal to her husband's income. A remarkable point is that in this generation, in contrast to the early industrialization generation, men assigned more value to housework than women. This might prove the demise of the power of Confucian ideology to devalue housework. Alternatively, the high valuation could reflect the care crisis: care is no longer taken for granted, and thus they realize more its significance. Nevertheless, since men are valuing housework more yet doing less than women, the high valuation may be no more than vague praise or putting a progressive attitude on display. At any rate, as with the different valuations of housework produced by varied methods of measuring in academia, the individual calculations make very different assumptions, and do not cluster around any exact value.

Apart from the uncertainty, the accidental flaw in all ways of converting housework value into market value is to see housework as having auxiliary status to paid work. As the wife of full time housewife couple 4 mentioned, "*we can calculate the value by ourselves, but if the husband earns 1,000 USD and the housework value is over that, it would be ridiculous.*" What she said plainly shows the perception that no matter how we value housework, exogenous income is the basic income source in family economy. In relation to the gender division of labour, this perception is one of the fundamental reasons for the hierarchical order between housework and paid work. Such calculations cannot reveal the use value of housework, and make it impossible to consider housework's contribution to family economy in monetary terms.

The significance of the contribution women made in early industrialization, yet with no way to perceive it, was one of the main issues in the previous chapter. By distinguishing gendered role division from gender division of labour, women's enormous contribution to material family life became visible regardless of women's inferior status. Similarly, in the case of the single elderly in current times, due to their considerably lower incomes, they do more housework, yet their reasoning cannot include the housework. Among the interviewees, for example, while one elderly man (SME 6) has a monthly income of about 1,000 USD, and can afford a washing machine, electronic rice cooker, and also eats out, an elderly woman (SFE 6) has a monthly income of about 300 USD, and to save on electricity she does her washing by hand, has no electronic rice cooker, and does not eat out. The woman may produce a certain value for her living by her housework, likely more than the elderly man. The reasoning behind positing housework as auxiliary to exogenous income and might cover some of the value she produces by her housework, but to measure housework as auxiliary to paid work is broadly in the same vein as measuring it in market value, and in SFE 6's housework lots of things are incompatible with market value.

To measure housework value is indeed hollow in everyday life. No matter how large the value, the monetary value does not come into an individual's hands. There is no way to convert housework value to market price or to make it a function of a spouse's salary. The fundamental problem is that this monetary value has no significant impact in everyday life. As the wife of co-housing 2 said; "*I cannot find the value by myself, I learn a lot how to measure the difficulty of housework and how many hours to spend doing it, so the value is equivalent with occupational work, I learn this kind of thing, yet I do not feel it by myself.*" This statement indicates that, indeed, the academic valuation of household labour is incompatible with its valuation or recognition by actors in everyday life. Terms like 'reproductive labour', which show the housework function in political economy, or 'care work' to affirm its significance in the public realm can only provide an exogenous valuation, not the an intrinsic one. Above all, in contrast with the early industrialization generation who embodied the value of housework, the vague embodied value of housework in this generation connotes the less significant material value of housework in everyday life under developed economic condition.

Estimating housework's market value produced a perception of its monetary value for this generation. Nevertheless, due to the intangible features of the valuation, as well as to its auxiliary status to paid work, these external valuations make no sense for actors in everyday reality. Valuation by market value has indeed covered the use value of housework, because no market value is considered as no value. Revealing the use value of housework is important in that it comprehensively clarifies the conceptual fallacy mentioned above, but also, as my interviewees made clear, because this fails to capture its essential elements. This is part of acknowledging the "private-familial sphere as having its own dignity and purpose" (Elshtain 1981: 334) in being human.

*Desiring non-material<sup>4</sup> value*

Although this generation are disinclined to recognise the non-material value in housework, in everyday life some of them show the significance of the non-market value of housework. For example, in their understanding of well-being of the family, they show an aspiration to enjoy the non-market value of housework. In the case of Minho, as a full-time househusband, his housework shows this non-measurable value. For example, his home schooling, given the government's responsibility for elementary education, would have a negative effect on his home economy. That is, he would spend more money doing home-schooling than the cost of sending his daughter to public elementary school, which charges no tuition fee. Nevertheless, to respect his daughter's happiness, he chose it. This negative market value could be one of reason for his wife's minimal calculation of his housework value. Given the income of his wife as a civil servant in no high position, the home economic condition would be not affluent. In this sense, as sole breadwinner, for his wife to enjoy the non-market value by her husband's housework might be difficult.

Turning to another example, to think about the desire in this generation to have sufficient care from parents or mother, this desire has partially resulted in the need for non-market value. As shown in the case of JaeEun, this desire would be connected to educational success, which would result in children's later economic success, and is partly also related to having emotional support. The wife of co-housing 5 was clear on this:

*"I thought my parents were good, but when I had difficulty my parents felt a bit cold and uncaring to me. My mother said, did you have adolescent problems? She doesn't*

*know how I'd passed the adolescent period even though we'd lived in the same house, because she was busy for a living, going out early in the morning, busy to cook, so I had to manage the problems alone. 'You didn't have adolescent problems, were a good child, good student,' such heedlessness.*" (CH5-W)

She felt the lack of something in her parents caring, and believed that because her mother earned money for a living, there was limited room to provide emotional support. Because of this experience, she wished to be a good mother, which is different from being a competent mother. Whenever her children have a need to depend on her, she wishes to be with them. Her desire to be a good mother rather than simply a competent mother would be in line with valuing housework that focussed on raising children.

*"If it includes the education at home, then it's difficult to measure with money. In fact, nowadays I feel sorry for my first, because we work together for a living, and we treated him like an adult; but we cannot go back to that time, I didn't know what he thought, just put him down with threats. We cannot speak about such a thing in terms of money."* (DEC 4-H)

This quotation is from a man, and actually many male interviewees suggested this kind of value, for which men think that mothers are more qualified than fathers.

Apart from the reality of gender differentiation in the role of emotional support, the desire for this non-material value has strongly relied on material fulfilment. Although the same problem of not receiving enough emotional support was present for the industrializing generation, they were less concerned about it. Having had to support the family in a condition of national poverty left little room for emotional care. However, those in the democratization generation who failed to receive emotional caring from their parents, had, through the country's economic development, more room for emotional caring for their children. This desire is indeed in line with the first modernity: within the gender division of labour, to give more love to children (Ochiai 2014). To describe this as phased needs would be not completely truthful, nevertheless, based on material fulfilment, they have largely come to realize more about the non-measurable value in housework.

The case of full time housewife couple 2 would exemplify this middle class culture in housework valuation. The wife, SuYoung, was born in 1980 and has a middle class family background; her father is a professor

and her mother is an artist. She married and has two children, 4 and 1 years old. After one year of parental leave for the second child, she quit her job to live in Seoul with her husband, who is a lawyer. She had been an assistant professor in a university in a mid-sized province, but she did not want to miss the period when she felt her children would absolutely need her care. Thanks to her skill in cosmetic treatments, at the time of her interview she earned around 2,000 USD per month working part time, just less than 8 hours per day, 2 or 3 days a month. In this sense, and given her husband's fairly good income, her previous job has little economic meaning to her. Relying on this economic affluence, even though she is a full time housewife<sup>15</sup> she has also hired a babysitter for 4 hours a day, as mentioned in the previous section.

Even though she has hired a babysitter to reduce her burden of housework, actually she puts some energy into a certain area of housework. She has planted several vegetables in her kitchen garden and with the vegetables she has even made *kimchi* for winter. She has learned how to use a sewing machine and makes clothes for her children. Because she produced material things, vegetables or clothes, with her work, her work would be recognized as work rather than housework by a rigid concept of work. However, for her it is also a way of caring for her family, like the other housework, rather than producing to meet material needs. Whatever she does, growing vegetables, washing dishes, or playing with her children, and no matter how it is measured or whether it is recognized as work or not, as long as it is not exchanged in market, the material value is irrelevant. If she was concerned only about the production of material value, it could be better not to hire a babysitter, or to do full time cosmetic treatments and hire a live-in baby sitter. However, she does this work for non-material value, to care for her family, and this cannot be substituted by market commodities.

*"If I put clothes which I made on my children, the clothes are what I want my children to wear."* (FWC2-W)

*"For me the focus of housework is food. Food is directly related to life, our health, so for me, that is the most important, especially food in early childhood, by eating good food now when they are young, later when they grow they can have good eating habits and maintain good health conditions, so I cook everything myself, normally not eating out. That's why I do housework, to do something for my children, because it's connected to their health for their whole lives."* (FWC2-W)

This woman obviously differentiates between her labour making clothes and farming vegetables and the same labour in the early industrialization generation. The focus of her labour is not material survival, and indeed for her, it is emotionally fulfilling to instil good habits in her children. Yet the same labour in the early industrial period focused on material fulfilment. Her practice of enjoying the non-material value of housework has become possible as outsourcing trivial house chores. Thus, like outsourcing some domestic tasks according to preference, not because of a time deficit (Van der Lippe et al. 2013), she distinguished significant tasks by putting non-material value on them, but not on trivial tasks. In this demarcation, her economic affluence allows her to transfer the trivial tasks to others, in line with dumping dirty work to the marginalized.

*“Then we may hire someone, I think, to earn more money for hiring a person is wiser than that my husband helps to do house chores.” (FWC2-W)*

*“...to do cleaning, what I ‘must’ do is different from doing it when I wish to. If I ‘must’ cook, the food is different from the food I cook imagining how much my children will enjoy my food.” (FWC2-W)*

The first remark shows, in the upper middle class, a couple’s compromise: to use market to reduce their housework burden rather than share it equally between wife and husband, as discussed in chapter 2. This solution is possible owing to the income gap between the husband’s high income and a domestic workers’ low salary, and thereby helps to maintain the poor working conditions of (often migrant) paid domestic workers (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Lee and Nam 2009, Parreñas 2001). In the second quotation, which house chores are physically trivial is not fixed. Some chores, depending on the boundary of choice or their context, can be either merely physical chores or efforts with special emotional value. In this differentiation, the core standard for judgement is the difference between duty and choice. Then, in her case, the basic condition to guarantee the change from duty to choice is economic affluence, i.e. the ability to transfer a chore to another when one does not wish to do it. Only within this boundary of choice are tasks weighted in favour of their non-material value. Here the emotional value she puts in her housework looks fairly different from the mentioned emotional value of gratitude and love relying on sharing micro-moment experiences. In her valuation, to put specific value in her housework is unidirectional, rather than sharing and having resonance between doer and receiver.

To be sure, her perception is not a new one. Actually, from the advent of the “new women” or the “professional housewife discussion” (Kim HyunJu 2007, Kim 1999a, Hong 2014, Kim and Lee 2013), this way of assigning non-material value has been implicitly pointed out. It is explicit as well in an early modern novel (in 1918) by *Rha Hye-Seok* (famous as a writer and painter of the first generation of Korean feminists) in which the work to make fire in the kitchen is differently depicted depending on whether it is done by a servant or by the main heroine, a “new woman” who studied in Japan: the servant does it with complaint whereas the main heroine enjoys doing it, sensing music in the sound of the fire (Seo 1997). In this novel, the author suggests finding other values in housework beyond material value, as a modern woman. However, in the story, the value is found by someone who is free from doing it as duty. That is, the concept of “new woman” who should find the non-material value of housework, may be generated only when it is at least *possible* to have someone else do it, so without capturing the value in the body. This exogenous valuation would be not much different from its devaluation by Confucianism: both are unlikely to recognize the real value of housework.

For contemporary post-industrial Korea, this value clearly has been enjoyed in SuYoung’s everyday life. Indeed, in her case, she would belong to the next generation following the democratization generation. She has an 8 year age gap with her husband, and was the youngest of my interviewees. In 2008, she married and her married life is defined by the culture of Korean post-industrial society. That is, her attitudes and perception about the non-material value in housework is remarkably revealed by her relatively young age and her original, middle class family background. Compared to dual earning couples 1, 2, and 4, full time housewife couple 1, and co-housing 2, all of whom must be fairly affluent as households in the highest quintile<sup>16</sup> SuYoung’s conceptualization of non-material value is remarkable given that, within this group, SuYoung’s household monthly income is the lowest due to their relatively young age and single earner status.<sup>17</sup> This couple, in addition to having a generational gap, have different original family backgrounds and differ in their sense of equality.

For most other interviewees, in their natal families, both mother and father had worked very hard for material support, as in the early industrialization generation. That experience prioritizes economic safety and would obscure the desire for non-material value. In addition, in fact, given the equality idea in this democratization generation, to hire someone for

their housework would also provoke uncomfortable feelings due to the class inequality in it. Other solutions are sought. For example, in the co-housing, a dining program exists for dinner. At first, each family brought one food and they shared all food together, but later they hired someone for cooking. When the wife of MinSu (CH 2-W) was told about this program, she actually stopped sharing in it (she mentioned this in her answer to the question on what she thinks about co-housing as a middle class activity). She cannot confidently speak to the fact of hiring someone for their food, which is in the same vein as the “nanny question” (Tronto 2002) in domestic work studies. In the recognition of this class inequality, actually they also endeavour to invite the woman who cooks for them to many kinds of village programmes. That is, they have tried to make the relationship go beyond the employer and employee relationship, which is fairly distinct from SuYoung’s perspective, as one who feels comfortable in the market relationship.

Consequently, the value of housework for this democratization generation embodies little value and they tend to perceive housework as auxiliary to paid work; their perspective on housework has three important aspects. They believe it has little material value; they disagree about its moral value, and they desire its non-material value. Firstly, their belief that housework has little material value resides in the discrepancy between their embodied value of housework and their knowledge of its monetary value by external valuation. Secondly, their moral position is centred around their disagreement with social norms that allocate housework to women, which, as will be shown in detail in the next section, leads the weakening or rejecting of its moral value. Thirdly, the desire for the non-material value of housework is not only insufficiently fulfilled but also has complex aspects. For example, the case of SuYoung shows the possibility to enjoy the non-material value of housework, but supported by market rather than equalizing the sharing of housework within the family, at the cost of class equality. This relates to the dumping of dirty work onto the marginalized (chapter 2) and thus cannot be solution for diminishing inequality in care at the societal level. Overall, despite desire for the emotional values that can be embedded in housework, in this generation, enjoyment in the positive emotional values of gratitude and love is rarely shown.

### 7.3 Customary norms in the democratization generation

In order to understand the concrete context of gender inequality of the early industrialization generation, chapter 6 discussed the differences between conventional ideas and the features of gender division of labour. For that generation, the gendered role division derived from Confucian patriarchy (men for the public arena, women for the private arena, which included production). In Confucian patriarchy, women had a duty to family subsistence under the male head of the family. In this context, the shift between the generations from a male head of household to an aimed-for ideal of a male breadwinner is profound.

The democratization generation has experienced economic growth that has fulfilled, for the most part, the conditions needed for male breadwinning families, with sufficient social prosperity to allow a member of the family to be a dependent (Pfau- Effinger 2004), and at the same time, the democratic transition of Korean society further weakened the Confucian social order. The most significant environmental feature for this generation (in parallel with economic growth that has meant the absence of extreme poverty among them, at least while they raise children), is societal democratic transition. As mentioned in chapter 5, roughly since 1990, economic development has allowed at least one member of each family to be free from earning duties, thereby extensively and generally realizing male solo breadwinning family in marriage. Confucian social order, such as the *Hojiu* system, has also been substantially weakened. In addition, the increase of (class and gender) equality ideology is a feature in this generation.

In this context, the gender division of labour (men for market work women for housework) has become the general family order, yet this order conflicts with the gender equality idea. That is, between housewifization (giving more love and money to each child) and dehousewifization (making value-driven lifestyle choices) (Ochiai 2014: 210-211), the gender division of labour would be the life mode of the first modernity whereas gender equality would be within the second modernity. However, in the Korean case, compressed modernity (Chang 1999) has intermingled these two periods, and ambiguous or conflicting customary norms coincide. In this sense, by elaborately understanding the conflicting customary norms, the housework practices of this generation can be illuminated. Thus, in this section, the specific contexts of the gender division of labour and

women's role in the democratization generation will be depicted in relation to gender equality.

*Democratization and gender division of labour*

Democratic transition influenced my interviewees. For example, the experience of joining the social movement became a turning point in many lives, an opportunity to rethink traditional customs and the social order. The core of the social movement was to realize justice and equality, and to challenge unfair social orders by getting back stolen rights: political rights from dictators and economic rights from capitalists. This boosted their sense of equality, even in everyday life. Therefore, those who have social movement experience or exposure have more sympathy with gender equality, as shown in table 4.1. In addition, they have explicitly learned the ideas of feminism, either by independent study or directly as a subject at university (DEC 1-H, DEC 3, 6, FWC 4, FWC 5-W, FHC-H, and CH).<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the direct experience, owing to institutional changes, several of my interviewees without social movement experiences were exposed to the increasing sense of gender equality in Korean society as a whole. They would have been affected by the 2005 abolition of the *boju* system, since this system was relied on in the clan and patriarchal family order (Cho 1994). Also, they would be aware that family law had been modified to include equal sharing of couple's property in divorce as well as sibling's equal rights to inheritance (Kim 1994b). All of these variations have been brought about via a societal democratic transition, and their impact would have been enhanced by the significant increase in gender equality attitude among Koreans between 1979 and 2010 (Na and Cha 2010).

In terms of housework, this indirect link between social democracy and individuals' life experiences has been shown in the practical matter of who controls the products of paid work. In contrast to the elderly generation, in this generation women have fairly equal power to control or allocate the products of paid work in a couple, regardless of whether the couple is single earner or dual earner. This power to control the outcome of paid work has been linked to the concept of gender division of labour (see Edholm et al. 1978: 121-123). Among my interviewees, apart from those who ran their own business, most husbands gave their income to the wives, and are given back monthly pocket money: wives allocate the family

budget for family well-being. In the case of full-time housewives, this supports autonomic acceptance of the gender division of labour relying on the sense of equality (FWC 1-W, GI-FH); *it's the same with husbands, we do not use much money for ourselves, but men also do not spend much money on themselves; all the money is spent for our children* (GI-FH). This is exactly in line with the idea of the first modernity, which focusing on spending more money on and giving more love to each child (Ochiai 2014: 210-211). To do so, these couples have reduced fertility and employed a gendered division of labour. Their compromises are utterly different from those of the substantial breadwinner type in the previous chapter, where husbands have the power to control all the income in the household.

Needless to say, compared to the early industrialization generation, this power to control the product of paid work must in some way indicate increasing gender equality. In fact, this phase is consistent in some ways with the concept of professional housewifery, in which the wife manages household in a modern and scientific way (Kim 1999a). The position of housewife was equivalent to that of husband, together running their family according to the gender division of labour. In some sense, this idea had been a desire of elite women, and also, later, of ordinary women, since the early stages of the modern age (see Kim 2012, Kim and Lee 2013). However, unlike conventional ideas about the gender division of labour, in this transition from the early industrial society to democratic society, the modern gender relationship approached gender equality, weakening the feudal gender hierarchy.

Nevertheless, this still shares something with the traditional gendered role division: women for family/private arena and men for society/public arena. Looking at the case of dual earning couple 1, this is clear. For instance, in the case of dual earning couple 1, the wife's income is higher than that of the husband. Putting aside a certain amount of money as pocket money, the husband transferred his income to his wife each month. While he shows his wife his income statement on a yearly basis, he does not know anything about home economy, even about his wife's income. Because his wife once complained that he does not concern himself with home economy. In the interview, he asked me how much he should know about home economy. He is torn between his wife's complaint and the traditional way of men, who should not interfere in how to spend the money at home: *"in particular, there is no way to intervene in home economy, as I've*

*learned from my elders; that is the case when thinking about not living together, that is the thing I should not address, I think like that.*"<sup>19</sup>

As a result, compared to the older generation, men have a clear responsibility as breadwinners, but women expect to manage the home, which is exactly in line with the professional housewifery idea of early modern Korean society (Kim HyunJu 2007, Kim 1999a). When I asked if his reluctance to know more about his home economy was due to his smaller salary compared to hers, he answered no: "*it's not a matter of volume of money. We earn a certain amount of money, and my wife manages our family with that money. If I need to contribute more money, my wife will tell me, and then, I'll reduce my pocket money*" (DEC 1-H).<sup>20</sup> Although they are a dual earning couple, it is clear that managing the home economy is her role, while his is earning money. The democratization generation entrusts the home economy to the wife; this includes control over the whole income earned by the husband, and simultaneously increasing gender equality and staying within the legacy of traditional gendered role division.

Within this idea of a gender division of labour, which promotes gender equality yet is stuck in gender inequality, the wife's question went beyond the restriction of the prevalent ideology. She shared the breadwinning role, and invited her husband to share direct responsibility for family. This shows a possible path toward a genuine end to the long-lasting private/public divide, a main apparatus for gender inequality from the early industrial period. This possibility is in line with the idea of reconstructing the public and private to affirm that the familial sphere has "its own dignity and purpose" (Elshtain 1981: 334). This would offer an alternative to the romantic ideologies in which women are inferior, as well as an alternative to second-rate, sometimes feminist ideologies that erode the meaning of private family life (Elshtain 1981: 322). Although this possibility cannot be further examined through my interview texts, this point does need scrutiny.

In this democratization generation, regardless of the blurring between the gendered private and public spheres, the gender division of labour both increases gender equality by overcoming the feudal gender hierarchy, and limits genuine gender equality because it gives men the nominal breadwinner role. This makes it clear that roughly equating gender division of labour with gender inequality is incorrect, and helps to reveal the gradual changes in gender equality in everyday life.

*Gender equality under the stabilization of men's breadwinning role*

For this generation, the stabilization of the male breadwinner system has been the salient feature, and this has had three specific repercussions for women. Firstly, the breadwinning role is not shared between genders. Secondly, son and daughter will experience different parental expectations in relation to becoming a full-time home maker. Thirdly, men and women have different meanings attached to having a job.

Those who have high sense of gender equality, such as the co-housing members, mostly agree to the idea that housework should be shared intra couple. Based on this, male members have made an effort to do some housework, or at least they do not complain if the wife does not do housework at the customary level. They try to adjust to the situation or to find alternative ways to manage it. For example, in co-housing case, by hiring a person who cooks for them, they manage their programme of having dinner together in the common room. Sometimes, when husbands (CH 2-H, 4-H) have a chance to have dinner with family on a weekday, they want to have it at home only with family, not with all the people in the common room, but they understand how difficult it is for wives to have dinner with small children every day. Thus, they have accepted this way of having dinner all together every day.

At the same time, they never think about why the wife does not earn money and share the burden of breadwinning. Meanwhile, the wives are busy doing community activities: in the case of CH 4-W, she gave up doing housework, seeing it as an obstacle to everyday life; CH 2-W does housework, but mostly taking care of her children. The husbands accept these choices from their wives based on their shared belief that community activities are more valuable than housework. This compromise, i.e. focusing on community activities while shrinking housework, implies a priority of the public area over the private sphere (Elshtain 1981). Yet, regardless of this priority that is given to the public sphere, no demand for the wife to earn money was ever uttered in any of my interviews. Instead, I would hear husbands say, as (FWC 4) did: "*I never think about how good it would be if my wife earned money*". Frankly speaking, I also did not question anyone about it. I did not ask "*Why do you do full-time paid work, sharing housework, while your wife does not share doing paid work?*"

Secondly, the customary gender norm embedded in the male breadwinner ideal has been clearly revealed in the answers to the question: "*what would you think if your daughter did housework full time and what would you think if*

*your son, or son in law did housework full time?"* For this question, everybody recommended the daughter "make her own choice", not because of husband, circumstances or others. This recommendation supports focusing on choosing own life style, that is, the second modernity (Ochiai 2014: 210-211). Yet, for a son or son-in-law, except for DEC 4-W who strongly opposed that her son do housework full time, they said *"if the couple make the decision I don't care about it, but because of social pressure it might be not easy, so I would say to think about it more."* In this answer, the acceptance that a man might do housework full time is vocalized, but with certain conditions: this must be a joint decision and the wife must have the ability to earn enough money to support family. They must also be able to deal with the social pressure, and the influence on children. These issues were not voiced in relation to women as full-time housewives, only for full-time house-husbands.

In these answers, there is an implied ideology related to customary gender norms, including women's insufficient ability and men's sufficient ability to be breadwinners. This presumed higher competence of a breadwinner compared to a home-maker shows the priority assigned to the public sphere over the private sphere, along the lines of conventional political thought, the early feminist ideologies (Elshtain 1981) and Confucianism. Within this train of thought, women can be breadwinners when they have enough ability, but men are expected to be breadwinners whatever their ability or qualifications. My interviewees never mentioned their son's or son-in-law's ability to do housework full time. As well, the given norms for sons would be in line with the logic of the first modernity, i.e. giving more money for each child rather than having one's own choice of lifestyle (Ochiai 2014: 210-211).

Indeed, the unquestionability of the male breadwinning system is remarkable. It can be seen in very conventional situations, but also in the case of co-housing and of dual earning couple: wives do most of the housework in addition to working in their jobs. Whether working in the same bank (DEC 2), or earning more than the husband (DEC 4), the husband could be 'a couch potato' at home (DEC 2) or even not know how wash towels on this own (DEC 4). The wives have for the most part accepted this situation, because they recognize husbands as the main breadwinners. With one exception (DEC 1-W), even in the case of female interviewees who earn more money than their partner (DEC 1, DEC 4, CH 3), the wives consider their partners to be the primary earners.

In these differing situations between co-housing and dual earning couples, the extent to which they have a gender equality idea is one key to their actions and understandings. Nevertheless, in both situations, the belief that the husband is the main breadwinner is shared and unquestioned. This also means that men are free from being primary care givers, and that women can be also free from needing to be breadwinners. This is complex, and somewhat compromises gender equality in the mixture of modern and post-modern life modes found among the democratization generation.

Thirdly, the meaning of doing paid work for almost all of my male interviewees has been for family.<sup>21</sup> For example, MinSu (CH 2-H), as a human rights lawyer, has been fairly satisfied for his job helping labourers; nevertheless at a basic level he has felt there is no time for himself in daily life. Instead, all of his work is basically for family, and he does not pursue any individual interests in everyday life. Compared to this, the wife of dual earning couple 4 said, *“as a person who has a high school education, honestly speaking, thanks to my job, people have treated me well; my work has formed me.”* Also, the wife of dual earning couple 2 said, *“having a job is only for myself, so 10 % or 20 %, and the others, of course, my family is the all the rest.”* In other words, for both, men and women, the family is the most important. For men, between the family and having a job, there is no clear demarcation, and even if they enjoy their work, the job is for family. For women, however, there is a clear demarcation, in which having a job is for them. This different perception of jobs between genders is evidence of the existing gender roles: man as a breadwinner and woman as a primary care giver. This is also very different from the early industrialization generation, where women always said everything was for the family.

Co-housing case 5 also revealed different interactions between job and gender via the role in the family. The couple had worked in the same company, yet when their first child was ill their attitudes and choices were fairly different. The husband had continuously focused on his work while the wife had cried a lot and finally chose to quit her job. From the wife’s perspective, her husband is a person who likes to be recognized for his ability, thereby feels happiness, but he said his work is all for the family. From the husband’s perspective, when his wife cried taking their first child to day care centre, the wife was childish to cry, and was not concentrating on her job. That is, the human instincts toward their baby were activated in different directions depending on acquired roles: one having sympathy for the baby’s sadness and the other concentrating more on his job in order

to support decent conditions for the baby. Based on their different role reasoning, they are less likely to understand their partner's attitudes and emotions. The same could be seen in the case of the wife of full time housewife couple 6, who also asked to her husband whether he would have a job if he were not married. He said, "*I would have a job.*" By this answer, she thought that her husband's strong engagement with work is for his fulfilment, rather than for the family. However, given the embodied customary norms are similar for a father or a man more generally in this generation, having a job is not separable from having a family.

These examples clearly show different perceptions on their occupations between genders, via their customary norms for family, in which both genders have difficulty understanding the other's practices around family and job. Their different perceptions are basically rooted in their different customary norms. The new customary norms and their effects on the perception of occupation are obvious. Their respective economic conditions also have an influence. For example, in families where both incomes were necessary for basic family living, the meaning of an occupation for both would be for family. Or, in the case of single mothers, the job position would influence the meaning of the occupation. For example, single mother 5, a telemarketer, is focusing on earning money as a breadwinner for her two children, thus her job is all for her children. By comparison, single mother 3, as a high position civil servant, sees the meaning of her job as for the public good as well as for earning money.

But in this generation, the male breadwinning norm is the main factor determining different gender-based practices in their families and their jobs. This has produced not only different perceptions of jobs but also different attitude toward daughters and sons, and these gendered practices would meet with the concept of gender identity or gender attitude (Brickell 2011, De Casanova 2013, Han and Hong 2011, Poortman and Van der Lippe 2009, Seong 2011). Furthermore, considering the increased room for choice by daughters, this generation also show the dilemma of men in the first modernity and women in the second modernity, enlarging the conflict between genders.

*Women's role: from being a daughter-in-law to being a mother*

The last distinct feature in this generation is its abandonment of the role of daughter-in-law as Confucian familism decays, and a concurrent and

remarkable focus on the role of mother. This can be seen in the case of full-time housewives like JaeEun (FWC 7-W), who made an autonomous choice to concentrate on a mother's role. Even though many do not feel fully satisfied, they still feel this is acceptable. As for the role of wife, the commitment depends on the respective couple's implicit or explicit agreement. This draws attention to the indistinct nature of the ideology around a good wife. The "women's role" in this generation is somehow different from the professional housewifery ideology of becoming a "wise mother and good wife" in the early modern Korea (Kim 2010). That is, in relation to these two roles, most household in this generation believe that at least in their own family they have achieved a certain level of gender equality. However, this may be due to the weakening of Confucianism, in which the norm for daughters-in-law was physical work and receiving guests with good hospitality (Cho 2001, Lee 1995). Abandoning the role of daughter-in-law seems, in this respect, to have aided gender equality.

The dismantling of the Confucian social order changed the position of the role of daughter-in-law from the primary women's role to a perfunctory role. In other words, the meaning of marriage is not becoming a daughter-in-law in an extended family, but becoming a wife or mother in one's own family. As a result, most female interviewees do not consider their in-laws as immediate family members. They saw their in-laws as beyond the boundary of their immediate family. And then, given that housework is for family members, doing work for in-laws is not considered to be doing housework. Indeed, for female interviewees doing this work is no more than a historical legacy. Depending on the in-laws' expectations concerning the role of daughter-in-law, conflict over this change can be a serious intergenerational problem. The conflict is between the desire to be a guest and the expectation one will act as a servant.

Compared to the elderly women, who had followed Confucian norms in their in-law's houses, in this generation, even when they do some of this work, they do not think of it as a norm (FWC 4-W, GI-FH). This conflict burst into the open during national holidays, when the symbolic norms are explicitly imposed on women. As mentioned earlier, this provokes a 'national holiday syndrome' in Korea. Many of my interviewees mentioned the emotional stress around national holidays. However, this is not because of the quantity of labour as shown in many media, but mostly because of the unfair atmosphere, in which they are treated like household servants:

*“yes, the work is not too heavy, like the past, but the feeling, I’m also a precious daughter in my original family and in my house I and my husband are equal, but when I go to in-law’s house I feel like I’m lowered to 80 % ... So, coming back home I complain a lot to my husband and my husband says: Why are you always complaining whenever we visit my parents’ house.” (GI-FW)*

Literally, national holidays total around 1 week in a year, thus, if they agree to do it, it is not such a big problem in terms of the bulk of work. However, the core of national holiday syndrome is the mismatch between gender unequal norms in Confucianism in the parent’s generation and the gender equality norms in this democratization generation. Most couples in this generation have a settled, agreeable order, yet that become useless in the in-law’s house.

Another slightly different example has the same issues. FWC 5-H is the first son of his family and as such, with a full-time housewife, he has never joined in doing housework for the holiday. Yet he believes the old tradition is unreasonable. He wants to change the culture in line with current beliefs, yet he cannot convince his parents to change and he has felt physical pain around the holidays due to the unacceptability of this. Thanks to his gender, his reaction supports the point that national holiday syndrome is the matter of unfairness or unacceptability, rather than an objection to the actual work.

This section discussed the concrete features of customary norms around doing housework of the democratization generation. This democratization generation has, firstly, not accepted gender inequality. Secondly, owing to economic growth, men have embraced the breadwinning role, resulting in a gendered division of labour. Thirdly, the meaning of having a job differs by gender: for men, the meaning is for family while for women, it is for themselves. Fourthly, in the interactions among the gender equality idea, the gender division of labour and vestigial Confucianism has changed the ideology surrounding women’s roles as daughter-in-law, wife, mother, and worker. In this generation, most women have a strong adherence to a redefined role as mother, and less (if any) commitment to the other roles. They reject the daughter-in-law role of Confucian familism and exclude in-laws from their perceived boundary of family. At the same time, the strong role identity as a mother is inconsistent with the role identity as a worker. For men, however, there is no felt conflict between father and breadwinner.

As a result, gender equality is restricted by the basic life mode of the sole male breadwinning family. In this generation, interlocking life modes (Heller 1984) mean that even though the gender equality idea has become generalized, the practical way of achieving it varies, due to the overlapping of housewifization and dehousewifization (Ochiai 2014: 210-211). The conflict among different customary norms is provoked by compressed modernity, in which the life modes of pre-modern (parents' generation), modern (male breadwinning family), and post-modern (choice for own lifestyle based on gender equality) overlap (Chang 1999). Under these life modes, with weakening gender norms, the moral value of housework become pointless.

#### 7.4 Discussion

This chapter presented the meanings, values, and customary norms of doing housework in the democratization generation, using symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969) to look at housework practices and to investigate the meanings of doing housework rather than simply measuring the time spent in specific subcategories such as cleaning, cooking, gardening, caring, and provisioning. While such a conventional approach can reveal the gender gap in housework practices, the approach used here aims to understand housework practices through, for example, actors' emotional distance or commitment, desire, and intentions, to find the reasons underlying the current care situation. By doing so, this chapter offers alternative ways of comprehending the interplay between increasing gender equality ideology, ongoing gendered practice, and the effect of institutional factors on actors' practices of housework.

From actors, the most important change has been the shrinkage in everyday practice of doing housework from the early industrialization generation to the democratization generation, which has revealed a move from strong commitment, "*as a woman I should do it as far as I can,*" to emotional distance "*I'm not the person who is good at doing housework.*" This would be the key to comprehend care deficit. The shrinkage is in this stage connected to the vague embodied value of housework and the priority given to the public sphere over the private.

This chapter, by clarifying specific customary norms, offer a clue to decipher the discrepancy between increasing gender equality ideology and

gendered housework practices. As shown, in this generation women's gender identity has narrowed to a mother identity rather than a daughter-in-law or wife identity. By reducing the housework previously assigned to a daughter-in-law or a wife, a woman can pursue her increasing gender equality ideology. In the same vein, a father anchoring in a consolidating breadwinner identity earns money to fit his identity, and can keep his gender equality ideology by not pushing his wife to do housework whether for his natal family or for himself. In this sense, the phenomenon of increasing gender equality ideology and continuing gendered housework practice can be explained. This overcomes the mistake of equating gender identity to gender attitude in examining gendered housework practice (Kroska 1997, 2000). Instead, this study spells out changes in gender identity itself. It also shows the upper middle class strategy to outsource some part of housework as a way of addressing the discrepancy between the two.

As for the shrinking of housework practice, rather than regarding this as the matter of subjective distaste, this chapter reveals its institutional basis. Under compressed modernity, this generation balances between a male breadwinning family system and increasing gender equality ideology (Chang 1999). Their housework practices range between housewifization (giving more money and love to children) and dehousewifization (focusing on self-fulfilment and choosing one's own life style) (Ochiai 2014: 210-211). The most common mix is the modern man (male breadwinning freeing men from housework) and the post-modern women (women giving priority to self fulfilment: dehousewifization). This could explain how Korea spends the least time in unpaid work and child care among OECD countries. That is, despite the decay of Confucianism, current conditions prioritize public over private.

In addition to the institutional basis of the shrinking of housework practice, from the side of actors, the inability to enjoy the embodied value of housework among this generation should be considered: they recognise little material value for family, little moral value for those who do housework, and only a vague non-material value. Together, these – especially the lack of embodied value – can lead to a worsening care deficit, thereby damaging emotional well-being. This would partially explain phenomena mentioned in chapter 1: the very low level of subjective happiness among children and adolescents, the high Korean suicide rate, the very low level of perceived social support. Given that these surveys are from the perspective of care receivers, while the interviewees here are from the side of

care givers, the poorly embodied value of care givers would not necessarily translate into the little embodied value of care receivers. However, in that if the care givers feel no value in housework, the likelihood they will deliver considerable value through their housework is minimal, so this interpretation is somehow reliable. This does not mean that the care in the early industrial period was better than that in current Korean society. As seen in the information from the early industrialization generation, generally speaking, there was a lack of food and it was common to leave children at home alone, thereby not fulfilling even basic care needs.

The shift in actors' desire for things to get from housework offers some insight into the gap between the two generations. That is, with national poverty and a strong Confucian order, the early industrialization generation saw the material and moral value of housework while the democratization generation, experiencing rapid economic development and the decay of Confucianism, shows a desire for its non-material value: emotional caring, guiding for future, and cautious concern about everyday habits. The desire for non-material value is exactly in line with care theory, which suggests a gradual shift from seeing housework as work to seeing it as care (Himmelweit 2000) by increasing child care while decreasing physical tasks (Gardiner 2000: 96-99). In this sense, the move of the desire from material and moral value to care value would be in the direction of enhancing the quality of care for both, doer and receiver.

Nevertheless, considering how little the embodied value of housework is valued in the democratization generation, the desire for care value seems not to be well positioned in everyday life. Care includes not only meeting demands or carrying out physical tasks, but the relational and emotional care, something mentioned by interviewees and to which they were unwilling or unable to assign a money value. An ethical aspect of housework, care value increases via the micro-moment experiences of sharing emotional value of gratitude and love. This is not always straightforward. For example, when parents push children to go to good university as a way to guide children towards a better future, the children could feel gratitude but at the same time could negatively judge it as based in parental self-satisfaction. There can be varied causes and reactions in any concrete context, but only in the former case can the parents and children share and enjoy the emotional values of gratitude and love, thereby giving care to each other. This means that rather than assuming direct caring in any form as

the loci of care value, the ways in which caring (of all types) boosts emotional connection and communication should be given special attention.

In sum, compared to the early industrialization generation, the everyday practice of housework in this generation has shrunk: *‘I’m not the person who is good at doing housework’*. This may be due to the lack of emotional values of gratitude and love that accompanies the stage of dehousewifization, and also to the priority given to the public over the private sphere. The next chapter considers the unique function and purpose of the “private-familial sphere” (Elshtain 1981: 334) in everyday life, to fully address the drivers of the shrinking of housework practices and its decreasing meaningfulness.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This quotation is representative of many others. Whether in group interviews or individual interviews, most interviewees expressed some variation of this.

<sup>2</sup> This research does not rigidly distinguish class. Instead, it uses a rough division based on income: if earnings are not much above the minimum wage, e.g. around 2,000 USD per month, the family is described as working class. In the research I did not ask about exact wages, but by interviewees’ occupations and interviewees’ approximate answer, could make reasonable assumptions. For example, those who work in a bank would be in one of top income categories, with around 8,000 USD per month. In this generation, original family backgrounds are largely from the working class, due to Korean economic underdevelopment in their parents’ generation. Thus while class differences might reflect some differences in attitudes towards doing housework, class differences are not straightforward in such a rapidly changing environment; also, see SuYoung’s case in section 7.2.

<sup>3</sup> In her case, she did housework from a young age because her mother had to earn money due to poverty. However, for her birthday and for those of her siblings, her mother always prepared a birthday table with special delicious dishes such as birthday beef seaweed soup, white rice, and several Korean traditional foods. Whenever she received such a special meal, she felt respected, even though in ordinary life her mother would beat her. This might be called a birthday party, yet I think the atmosphere was different. In a birthday party, the main theme would be to congratulate a person on having a birthday, but in her case, it is more to show respect or to express thankfulness for the person as a being.

<sup>4</sup> The concept of “socially necessary labour time” is the factor to determine the value of commodity at the societal level, by which the price of a commodity is set. If an individual capitalist finds a way to reduce the time for producing the specific

commodity by technological innovation or intensifying labour, the capitalist can get more profit from selling the commodity.

<sup>5</sup> I met her when I was in her position in the union and she was struggling to set up a trade union as a hotel maid in a subcontracting company. However, I heard her story for the first time in my interview.

<sup>6</sup> The Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union was established in 1989 as an illegal union; it was legalized in 1989. Due to the illegality, there were massive layoffs and struggles in schools. Those who were high school students in the period experienced the struggle to protect teachers and were called the *JeonKyoJo* generation. Many of them joined social movements after high school and some chose to go to factories to join the labour movement, which was also new at that time. Thus, in the sense of having the same experience and engendering similar perspectives to social political issue, they are called a generation. Nevertheless, this term is used only within social movement groups, not by the whole Korean society.

<sup>7</sup> This is the specialized newspaper for labour issues from the side of labourers.

<sup>8</sup> In Korea, the salary in local civil society organizations is around the minimum wage.

<sup>9</sup> The Hankyoreh Cultural Centre was established by the *Hankyoreh* newspaper in 1995. The *Hankyoreh* newspaper was first issued in 1988 with donations from about 27,000 ordinary people. The point of the *Hankyoreh* newspaper was to offer a counterpart to the three major newspapers, in which press comments had always been pro-government. Lectures in the Hankyoreh Cultural Centre would similarly aim at discussing counterpoint perspectives rather than the mainstream, right-wing viewpoint.

<sup>10</sup> Actually, as shown in the previous chapter, in the early industrialization generation, devaluation operated by giving priority to the public arena in connection to class and gender. Thus, mostly those who did not do housework in person had power, which made the devaluation operable. In her case, her relationship with her husband might also have affected the devaluation, in that her husband had a higher social reputation as a person who did the politically right things, while she acted to earn money. She may have wished to create a balance, partly by devaluing what he did. This can be interpreted within the hierarchy of political action and labour for physical life by Arendt ([1958] 1998). In this sense, this also compatible with the hierarchy of private and public in Confucianism.

<sup>11</sup> As mentioned in chapter 4, he is somewhat well known as a house-husband, appearing on TV programmes and publishing on the topic.

<sup>12</sup> *Mediadaum*, "The value of housework? varying in statistics," 12 Sep. 2006.

*Money Today*, "International Domestic Workers Day, the Value of Domestic Work in Korea?," 16 Jun. 2016.

<sup>13</sup> According to interviewees who do paid domestic work, because the intensity of paid domestic work is very harsh, a 28 hour work week is normal.

<sup>14</sup> The term “non-material” is compatible with two other terms (non-market and non-measurable) employed in this section.

<sup>15</sup> Even though she earned quite a lot of money, her working time was very short and she only worked when there was a request. Also, she and her husband recognize her as a full-time housewife. Her lifestyle is closer to that of a full-time housewife rather than a working mother. Thus, I categorize her as a full-time housewife rather than working wife.

<sup>16</sup> Their household income level (100,000 USD per year) would be in the highest quintile, as defined in a press release from Statistics Korea, (Statistics Korea, 2013: 32).

<sup>17</sup> Among employees in this interview, the income of those who worked in a bank or a big private company (Japanese IT company) at the top is around 100,000 USD. Hence, the income of dual earning couples (2, 4) is potentially double that. In the case of Co-housing 2, the husband’s income as a human right lawyer is similar to that of the husband of SuYoung.

<sup>18</sup> Interviewees who did not clearly mention that they learned feminism from study, have (if they had social movement experience, which most did) studied feminist ideas, at least superficially.

<sup>19</sup> In his statement, there is a point which may conflict with my interpretation of the elderly, in which men have all power as the head of household. Nevertheless, power and responsibility are not the same thing, and the point that women have the primary responsibility for family is exactly in line with my interpretation. The extent to which a particular man uses that controlling power within the household would vary by context.

<sup>20</sup> In his case, the function of his job is not only to earn money. As a person who joined a social movement at university, he chose to become a teacher as a way of continuing social movement work and at the same time be economically independent. As a teacher, he also joined the teacher’s union. Even though compared to his friends and his wife his income is small, staying in this job gives him pride: he has been faithful to the dreams of his youth and he is contributing to a better society.

<sup>21</sup> In this generation, there is no category of single men or women, due to the basic criterion that interviewees have their own family and children.

## 8

## Shrinking Meaningfulness of Doing Housework

In the previous two chapters, interviewees in the two generations show the effects of interacting with rapidly changing socio-economic and cultural conditions: with regard to housework, they perceived very different meanings, values, and customary norms. This generational shift in housework beliefs and practices can be seen in the difference between the early industrialization generation's "*as a woman I should do it as far as I can*" and the democratization generation's "*I'm not the person who is good at doing housework.*" Both vocalize their generation's attitude in a way that reflect their respective external conditions: Confucianism for the elderly and gender equality ideology for the younger generation. Above all, this increasing unwillingness to do housework, can explain the care deficit from the side of the potential care givers.

Nevertheless, the findings here are still insufficient for full enlightenment regarding actors' psychological commitment to or distance from housework. Given that a reflection on external conditions is not such an unconditional reflex, the psychological dynamics that are engaged in compromising with external conditions also offer insight. Above all, to comprehend actors' desires regarding housework practices in the context of shifting external conditions could be basic to finding solutions to the care deficit from the actor's side. Hence, in this chapter, the dynamics of psychological commitment to (or distance from) doing housework will be explored, using the lens of recognition theory (Fraser and Honneth 2003) with the framework for meaningful work (Rosso et al. 2010). This will allow a comparison of the meaningfulness of doing housework between two generations, to clarify the reason actors are withdrawing from housework practices.

Firstly, though, I need to make it clear that the psychological dynamics shown in this chapter are primarily from the perspective of women, basically because men were/are not the main actors in doing housework in

either generation. In the early industrialization generation's case, relying on a Confucian order, men were largely free from doing housework and felt shame if they did it. In this generation, all housework was done by women. In the democratization generation, relying on a male breadwinning family system, men are also not considered to be primary actors in housework. With one exception, however, men in this generation show little change: the psychological dynamics around doing housework are similar. Bearing this in mind, the perspective of men is employed to make comparisons in this chapter.

This chapter consists of an analytical introduction that will integrate theoretical perspectives (8.1), and explain meaningfulness for the early industrialization generation (8.2), and for the democratization generation (8.3) before integrating them into a discussion of the care deficit (8.4).

## **8.1 Recognition and the four properties for meaningful work**

To interpret the meaningfulness of doing housework in this research, a framework was offered in chapter 3 (see figure 3.3), based on Rosso et al. (2010). In this framework, there are four properties that support meaningfulness in work: autonomous/competent self, contribution, self-connection, and unification. Meaningfulness mainly comes from agency (autonomous/competent self and self-connection) and communion (contribution and unification). This is in line with individuation, namely the self embedded into community and simultaneously the self as separate from others (Davis 2013). In this regard, agency does not indicate an individualistic entity; rather it is the side of the self that is separate from others. This framework suggests that if doing housework enhances the embedded self as well as the individual self, then actors will feel meaningfulness in doing it. If doing housework damages agency, even while fulfilling communion, its meaningfulness would be shaken. This is like the distress mechanism that can arise from the inconsistency between one's own gender ideology and gender role expectations from others (Kroska 1997: 304-305). As such, this framework can explore the meaningfulness of doing housework in relation to housework's influence on the self via gender ideology and role expectation.

Furthermore, in that the framework penetrates individuals' identity, it could be effective in illuminating the meaningfulness of doing housework

in relation to gender identity. That is, due to their gender role identity as women, women may find more meaningfulness than men in doing housework, fulfilling properties of self-connected or unification. This is consistent with previous studies that show different gender identity/gender role attitudes as one of the causes of gendered sharing of housework (Davis and Greenstein 2009, Davis and Wills 2013, Kroska 2004) and even with gendered meanings men and women have regarding specific housework tasks (Kroska 2003, Poortman and Van der Lippe 2009). In this regard, the framework reveals the meaningfulness of doing housework particularly in the connection with actors' identity, not only about gender but also as a worker or in terms of a desired self.

Despite this operability, when it comes to applying the framework to the two generations in this research, it actually seems to be unable to interpret the discrepancy between the women in the two generations. As shown in chapter 6 and 7, in the early industrialization generations, women have shown their agreement with putting their full effort into doing housework, whereas women in the democratization generation did not. As seen, the main cause for this difference seems to be gender equality ideology. The above-mentioned framework is insufficient to fully explain why women in early industrialization accepted gender inequality despite their perception of its injustice, whereas women in the democratization generation did not.

There, in the literature, ways to see this more clearly. For example, as reviewed in Kroska (Kroska 1997: 305-306), some researchers have clarified the cognitive adaptation or mental revisions: for some actors, dissonance is not problematic despite disparities between ideology and reality, attitudes and practices. Also, studies have revealed positive affective meanings that women assign to specific housework tasks, causing them to do more of that task and to spend more time with it (Kroska 2003, Poortman and Van der Lippe 2009). Whether the explanation is cognitive adaptation, mental revisions or positive meanings, each would be based on particularities in the agent's life path, so would be consistent with, for example, the link between attitudes within the democratization generation and the shared experiences that engendered them. They are equally consistent with the idea that almost all women in the industrialization generation would accept gender inequality in everyday life. Nevertheless, the studies neither reveal the individuality, nor give clarification of the collective practices of actors caught in huge shifts in external conditions.

To address this, and to interpret the different female attitudes in the two generations, this chapter examines other standards for getting recognition in pre-modern and modern society, specifically those already identified by recognition theory (Fraser and Honneth 2003). According to Honneth, to get recognition from others is a basic condition for being oneself (Honneth 1996); this is in line with symbolic interactionism, in which mind, self, and even society have created by the interactions between actors and others and external conditions (Mead and Morris [1934] 1967).

Recognition theory (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 130-150) suggests a number of factors that determine recognition in pre-modern and modern society. In pre-modern society, the single factor for getting recognition is to be a member in a community, a status or honour conferred by that community. In modern society, that single factor has split into three spheres: love, law, and achievement. These three spheres correspond to the three value domains in Van Staveren (2001) of giving, justice, and freedom. While the connection of three spheres and domains will be fully employed in the next chapter to discuss re-conceptualizing housework, here, only love is relevant, reciprocal loving care for each other's well-being via the connections of love and marriage (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 139). That is, actors can get recognition by giving in the love sphere, and in some cases, doing housework may support recognition in this sphere

Applying recognition theory to generations shows that the early industrial period was not a pre-modern society. However, as shown in chapter 6, in relation to doing housework, this period was under the intense influence of the Confucian order, by which no individual had identity without being a member of a clan family (Kwon 2013: 205-209). In the case of the early industrialization generation, to become a member of their community would be the primary precondition for getting recognition. This precondition becomes the main impetus for women to accept severe gender inequality and inferior status. Women in this generation, after completing their role as women, received recognition for what they have done for the family, from their children and/or husbands, through which they have their own position in their own family and in the husband's clan community. This feature of recognition is compatible with the main identity of women at that time, namely becoming a daughter-in-law, in Confucian terms (Cho 2001, Kim 2010). When they fulfilled the requisite labours of this position, they would get recognition in the love and law spheres. To

be a member of the family and the clan community would denote their legitimized status in the larger society, where the family and clan community belonged. As well, by the recognition of mothers' sacrifice from adult children and having a close relationship with children, both shown in the case of the women in this generation, shows that women also received recognition in the love sphere. All this recognition is based on completing women's role within severe gender unequal circumstances and from an inferior position.

In contrast with the early industrialization generation, the dynamics to gaining recognition in the democratization generation is more complicated. Firstly, by equality in law owing to the revision of family law (Cho 1994) and the abolishment of *hoju* system (Nam 2010), women in the democratization generation do not hold an inferior position. In this sense, doing housework is not inferior to other work in terms of recognition in the sphere of law.

Secondly, the recognition in the sphere of love for the democratization generation is somewhat paradoxical. Given the modern ideology of romantic love and marriage (Kim Keongil 2012) and the discussion of the professional housewife, who should do housework out of love for family members (Kim HyunJu 2007, Kim 1999a, Hong 2014, Kim and Lee 2013), this generation seems to get a great deal of recognition of housework in the sphere of love. Or, to get recognition in the sphere of love seems to be at least the main way of getting a reward for doing housework. However, as seen in the previous chapter, this generation does not articulate this clearly, possibly because at this life stage (raising children) those who would in the main give the recognition or the sense of gratitude are too young to give it. However, more fundamentally, the gender division of labour means that doing housework is not considered to be a special sacrifice for family. That is, in the early industrial period, based on self-abnegation women had shared the emotional value gratitude by children, thereby sharing the emotional value of love, but in the democratization generation, ways to share and enjoy the two emotional values are not obvious. This damages recognition in the love sphere, and this damage minimizes the recognition for housework, which is indeed the main housework dilemma. This will be analysed in relation to "contribution" in following sub-sections. Yet the point here is the effect of the vague recog-

inition in the love sphere on the self separated from others, when considering the unique function and purpose of the “private-familial sphere” in being human (Elshtain 1981: 334).

Lastly, given that individual achievement is the leading factor for getting recognition, doing housework would deprive a person of opportunities to achieve by earning money, the major way to visualize individual achievement in modern society. However, whereas this can show the different recognition by genders, the loss of this opportunity is the same for women in both generations. Thus, between generations, the contribution to material life should be considered. As shown in chapters 6 and 7, compared to the early industrial period, the contribution to material life by doing housework has reduced, and this shrinks the individual achievement that can accrue from it.

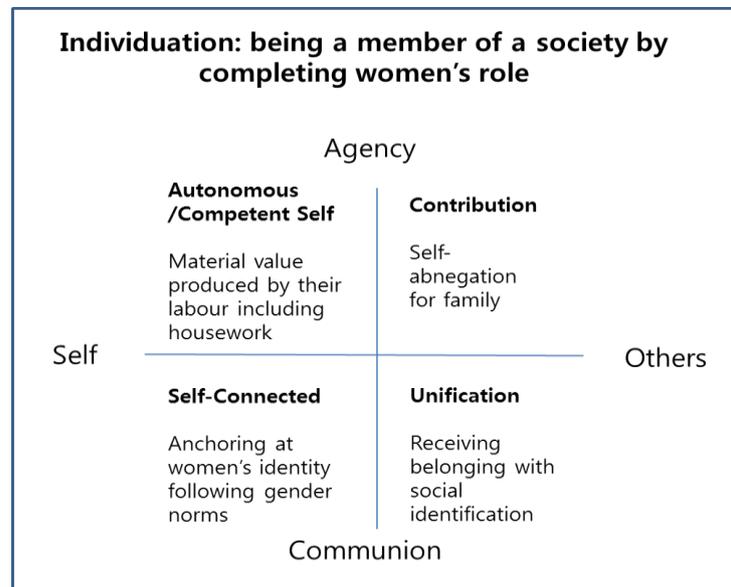
This interpretation is based on housework’s vague, non-material value and diminished contribution to family material life in the democratization generation. The social meaning of housework as needed for the survival of the family in the industrialization generation has a different embodied value. However, for both generations, there is no way to compute the exact proportion of housework’s contribution to material life, omitting the things women in the democracy generation valued in their own housework. Furthermore, if reckoning value as market value, that value would increase in line with the development of industrial society. For example, the hourly wage of paid domestic work in Norway must be bigger than that in Korea, but it is not the true that the contribution to material life of the income of paid domestic work in Norway is bigger. Market value only make sense in terms of proportion within a particular context. Also, if it could be considered a market value, when it came time to consume it that value would be embodied as the share it contributes to the material life of the household. The poorer a society, the bigger the contribution to the material life of housework (or unpaid work). In the poorer Korean society of the early industrial stage, women’s work, which was inseparable from housework, would have made a larger relative contribution to material life.

Overall, due to the different factors that affect getting recognition, by doing housework, a woman in the early industrialization generation would receive recognition, while people in the democratization generation would receive less recognition.

## 8.2 The meaningfulness of doing housework in the early industrialization generation

In this early industrialization generation, intermingling with need to conform in order to receive social recognition (Fraser and Honneth 2003), the specific properties in the four mechanisms all operated to boost the meaningfulness of doing housework. As shown in chapter 6, at that time, norms around women's roles were not restricted to doing housework, and included any type of work needed to support the family. At the same time, housework was part of maintaining and supporting the family, so doing it well was also a way to receive recognition.

**Figure 8. 1**  
*Meaningfulness of doing housework in the early industrialization generation*



As shown in figure 8.1, women in this generation found recognition in doing housework for four reasons. Of these four, the two main ones were the material value produced by their labour and the acceptance of gender

norms, but all four areas make a contribution. In this section, the specific features in the four categories will be discussed.

*Autonomous/ competent self*

In the early industrialization generation, housework offered women two sources of support for an autonomous and competent self: the ability to do housework well and the significance of the material value produced by work and housework. In this generation, many women interviewees conveyed, with the sense of confidence, their ability to do housework well: “I don’t like to leave things scattered about, so if I clean, everything should be shining and glittering. I do housework very well” (SFE 5). This sense of achievement is, however, not simply due to the ability to do housework well. Basically, the acceptance of housework as a women’s duty has generated the room to enjoy the achievement. This attitude is exactly compatible with the finding of the positive relationship between women who have a favourable attitude towards and more responsibility for certain housework tasks and child care, and thus they have higher standards for it than men (Poortman and Van der Lippe 2009). This mutually reinforcing relationship between attitude/ ideology/ identity and housework practices is a core argument in gender identity studies (Davis and Greenstein 2009, Davis and Wills 2013, Kroska 2004). They have done their best in their housework, and the good outcome produces a sense of competency. This mechanism is evident when this generation is compared with the democratization generation, where gender equality ideology is the first consideration.

Secondly, to consider the material value of housework is basically to anchor at the meaning of doing housework as the survival of family, as in the analysis in chapter 6. This is based on the presence, in early industrial society, of both severe national poverty and a legacy of Confucianism that defined this role for women. As well, due to the poor infrastructure under the under-developed economic conditions, there were few opportunities to substitute housework, enhancing the characteristic of housework as production. For example, as mentioned in the category of co-breadwinner, when women did laundry they unstitched clothes and re-sewed them again, so they actually produced the clothes. Faced with the lack of a water supply infrastructure, water was available only through women’s labour. These women were able to survive through their own labour, despite the Confucian hierarchical gender order, and they revealed their confidence as being autonomous and competent selves.

As mentioned in chapter 6, substantial breadwinners feel autonomous and competent. As the wife of elderly couple 3 said, “*I’m the one to (earn and) save money raising children, to send them university, to marry off them, so I’ve done everything if there are family events that require big money. Last autumn, my husband bought grain with about 300,000 won (300 USD) solely by himself, for the first time in my entire life.*” Here, she reveals her confidence as the one who has successfully completed her duty to raise children and keep the family through her own labour. In this case, even though her competent self as the one who economically supported her family has been emphasised, she was also the one who did all the housework, which could not be substituted by commercial things.

### *Contribution*

The second mechanism for getting meaningfulness from work is contribution to others, by which one can get self-efficacy, significance, or interconnection (Rosso et al. 2010). To be sure, the main contribution of women in this generation was the material value they produced by their labour, so in this sense, the spheres of autonomous/ competent self and contribution overlap. However, they can be distinguished by the existence of self-abnegation in the contribution sphere. That is, in the sphere of autonomous/competent self, the main factor is the quantity of sharing in material life, while in contribution, the main factor is anchoring more at self-abnegation, as a way of giving. In fact, this is one of features of care, being awarded recognition for self-abnegation (Himmelweit 2000). This distinguishing feature of self-abnegation is clearly revealed when it is compared to voluntary activity in this generation. Voluntary activity is the same as housework in terms of its lack of monetary reward and its contribution to others. However, at least in this generation, the properties of receiving recognition from housework and voluntary activity are different: housework via self-abnegation and voluntary activity via self-efficacy.

For the early industrialization generation, priority was given to housework over voluntary activity, so only after completing housework could women do voluntary activity. To think about this, look at *BokSun’s* comment: “*mothers should do housework first. I always said serve the family first then come here to do voluntary activity. If they do not do housework and care for children, and then do voluntary activity, it is not voluntary activity.*” To emphasize doing housework first both explicitly shows the strong gender norm of women, and implicitly says that, fundamentally, voluntary activity for women is to

serve the family. That is, her words imply that compared to doing voluntary activity, doing housework is harder and offers no benefit to the one who does it, so it is authentic self-abnegation. In this sense, if a woman in the industrialization generation does voluntary activity without doing housework, then the voluntary activity would be a choice based in self interest.

According to her, voluntary activity is enjoyable activity because it is done with a lot of people together, and not because it is a sacrifice or contribution to others. She said, *“to do voluntary work is meaningful because we do it together. In a big space, we make kimchi every year, then pack it in 20 kg containers and deliver it [to military camps]. We did a lot, because we do it together with many people, and it was a great deal of fun.”* As seen in chapter 6, doing voluntary activity was primarily for the self rather than for the recipients; in her middle class household there is not much for her to do thanks to domestic workers, but being idle made her unwell; thus, her husband recommended voluntary activity. This definition of voluntary activity probably applies only to activity by those with high economic status, and the activity seems to be a bit far from contribution to others. In her case, thanks to the activity, she had a social position as the leader of an organization, which may have provided her with a sense of self-efficacy. In addition, thanks to co-volunteers, voluntary activity for her was enjoyable, which may give the sense of interconnection with society.

In their current stage of life, many interviewees in the early industrialization generation have joined in some voluntary activity, sometimes getting a small amount of money and sometimes not. For them, the main reason to do voluntary activity is to have a schedule for daily life, and a secondary reason is to help those in need. As well, by helping others they also get emotional consolation for themselves, comparing their condition to that of those who need their help. *“To work for others is fruitful and enjoyable. To get help from others is not enjoyable, uncomfortable, and painful. To give help is happy and delightful”* (SFE 1).

Among domestic workers, housework can also provide emotional consolation. In their case, some have occasionally done the same work as a voluntary activity, and as one pointed out: *“even though we don’t receive money, the work we do is the work they cannot do. We are in the better position than them because we can do the work”* (DW 5). Thanks to their better position, those who do housework as voluntary work receive an emotional benefit, which is one reason their activity feels meaningful. Considering that conventional

knowledge about voluntary activity views it as the symbol of sacrifice, this perception looks somewhat awkward. However, the sense of self-efficacy is one of factors that gives meaningfulness to work “by contribution” (Rosso et al. 2010); getting emotional consolation via the sense of self-efficacy would indeed be a central motivation to do voluntary activity. Moreover, getting emotional consolation is different from wielding clout that relies on a sense of superiority. Rather, in this case, emotional consolation would be acknowledging the inevitable care need of all human beings. That is, the realization that I am not the one who is old or poor would expand into the comprehending that all of us are the same and will have difficulty at a certain life stage. This understanding is the one of factors in the ethics of care, by which we participate in giving care to fellow citizens (Sevenhuijsen 1998). This acknowledgement of need has something in common with reasons to do housework in early industrial society, when the work was authentically given.

However, as discussed above, recognition was offered only long afterwards. At the time, the housework contribution attracted no reward and was thereby a sacrifice supported by internalizing gender inequality. Its nature as a sacrifice would be the basis for children (and husband) having the emotional value of gratitude, as receiving without any contract to give back. The emotional value of gratitude only comes out in the condition of no rule of reciprocal giving (Fredrickson 2009: 41). Furthermore, giving care with no contract to return it is within the principle of circulating goods and services in the giving domain (Van Staveren 2001) and in reciprocity (Polanyi 1977: 35-43). As pointed out in chapter 3, in this domain, there is still the logic of give and take, yet unlike the market, where exchange is between two points with the same presumed value, the circulation of goods and services in giving move more symmetrically. In this symmetrical arrangement, the one who receives is expected to give back, yet neither exactly to the one who gave nor with the same things. This would be in line with a man’s hesitation or embarrassment to call the things his mother had done for him “work” (see chapter 4). That is, given that work is the main human activity in the market, even though he might not distinguish the difference between market exchange and the care he received from his mother, he felt a difference. The things his mother did for him were not conditional on his returning something of equal value back to her.

Through this sacrifice, most of the elderly women in this study had a better relationship with their children than did the fathers. The wife of elderly couple 3 confessed that her daughter praised her as great person even though the mother does not know how to read and write, and her son was always concerned for her but not for her husband. Elderly husbands have also started to recognize the hard work their wives had done for family.

*“My wife had to work in a shop, a factory, and coming back home she had also to do all housework for our big family. At that time, married life was hard for women, we even had no tap water, so I remember that at the crack of dawn, my wife brought water on the yoke and cooked rice, did the laundry. She really had a hard time, so I feel very thankful to her.”* (EC 6-H)

According to Honneth (1996), based on the recognition from others, actors can get self-respect, self-confidence, and self-esteem as the basis to form their identity. That is, since individuals can be themselves only in interaction with others, there were not many options for women in a family to become a “self” in early industrial society, where achieving this recognition from children and husband would be the life-goal.

Based on a later sense of thankfulness in the case of elderly couples, husbands have started to share housework. This sharing has generated mutual caring as companionship: *“now wherever we go we go together, so everybody said to us, you have really good relationship”* (EC 2-H). And his wife said, *“even though he and I are sick, I feel thankful for him to live alongside me.... This is the happiest time in my whole life.”* Actually, they lived in a house with no private toilet and a leaking roof. Nevertheless, she feels happiness in her good relationship with her husband. This good relationship is grounded on her husband’s recognition of her hard work throughout their married life and its contribution to family support, sharing micro-moment experiences of the emotional values of gratitude and love.

### *Self-Connection*

The sense of self-connection is a core of identity (Ezzy 1998: 162), by which one maintains the authentic self. Therefore, if doing housework does not match how one thinks about oneself, doing it hurts self-concordance or identity affirmation, which diminishes the meaningfulness of doing it. For women in the early industrialization generation, doing housework was never problematic: it was in line with their identity affirmation.

Actually, the problem of self-connection is particularly clear in the case of single, elderly men. Living alone, they have to do housework for themselves, and this makes them uncomfortable. According to Kim YoungHye (2004)'s research, the emotional well-being of elderly Korean women is not negatively influenced by sharing housework, whereas that of elderly Korean men is. She sees this as the result of women's acceptance of the role, in contrast to men are taking on housework through external coercion. Similarly, among interviewees in the early industrialization generation, elderly single men reported that doing housework was difficult.

In the case of elderly single men, housework was not only physically, but also emotionally difficult. The core of this emotional difficulty is the damage to self-connection: they believe that real men should not do housework. As two elderly men said: "*when I clean rice I don't use my hand, just pour water into the pot and spin it by spatula and drain the water out till only clean water is left ... I think what a hard life in my later years*" (SME 6), "*I feel strong pity for myself ... why I have to do this, which opposes our tradition, I feel deep anguish in this way of my life*" (SME 7).

They were not living the life they expected. Coming from affluent family backgrounds, they attended university had affluent marriages, and enjoyed relatively good health. But after divorce or separation for some other reason, they need to do housework themselves. This situation has provoked a mismatch between who they were and who they are. That is, in the past as typical men, they were free from housework and now they are not ordinary men because they have to do what they feel women should do. This damaged self-concordance has provoked emotional distress, which in single elderly men was demonstrated by a resistance to doing housework.

These opposite examples paradoxically reveal that women's self-connectedness in doing housework relies on the acceptance that this is a norm for women, from which they can extract meaningfulness.

### *Unification*

According to Rosso et al. (2010), unification can be reached via belongingness, namely through social identification or interpersonal connectedness. In the industrialization generation, the main mechanism for unification was belongingness, e.g. being a member of a family, which was the major way of women got social identification. As explained previously, in

this pre-modern culture, belonging to a community meant following the norms of that community as the means to receive social identity (Fraser and Honneth 2003). Owing to this, in this early industrial society, people were recognised by others according to their assigned roles: first son, second daughter, first daughter-in-law in the (clan) family, etc. In this sense, for women, doing housework was directly connected to supporting their social identity. Other boosts included having a son, which had special meaning in the family-in-law, and thus to take care of a son might be especially significant for daughters-in-law.

One case in particular well shows the significance of belonging in the family as the source of social identity in that period. An elderly man has lived separately with his wife for 25 years, without contact even with his children. With only 200 USD from the government each month, he has to manage his livelihood, which is severely restricted. If he divorces and submits documentation to his lack of contact with his children, he can get more social benefit. However, he does not want to divorce despite the long period of separate living.

*“Divorce, there is no place for her, she had one brother and two sisters, and the brother passed away in the Korean war; her mother passed away one year after our marriage, and her father also passed away long time ago. So, there is no place for her belong to. That’s why I think it’s better for her to belong in my family, so I do not divorce. In divorce, the woman has to be separated and go to her hometown, then she would have to make her own family registration alone; there is no place for her.”*  
(SME 5)

At the first, I could not understand what he meant because his divorce seems to be only a matter of documents. Moreover, as mentioned, the system of family registration had already changed in 2005 with the abolition of the *hoju* system. However, he lives his life in line with the Confucian social order. He only mentioned her brother who passed away, not her sisters. This is because if there was a man in her original family, when she divorces her family registration would traditionally be as a member of that man’s family. Because there is no man alive in her original family, if she divorces she would be the only one in her family registration. He considers this as having no place in society, no belongingness, so she could not be a social self. He sees cutting the social connection in exchange for money as inhumane behaviour.

Actually, in line with studies that discovered changes in the perceived value of family or children (Joo et al. 2016, Kim 2015), the husband of

elderly couple 1 said about his sense of changing family value in current Korean society:

*“Compared to past times, the traditional perspective about family has changed a lot. In the past, the family was a very important thing, the matter of children, the matter of family tree too. So, everybody has thought that to destroy family or to leave the family was not be possible. But nowadays, I think this has changed.”* (EC1-H)

In this early industrial society, one’s position in the family tree guaranteed a particular social position, a social identity. The interviewee actually mentioned that to work for the clan family was also a kind of housework. That is, as an observer, he is aware of the change yet that does not denote his agreement with it.

An elderly single woman who was a war orphan revealed her dream for belonging in a family. *“In my case, in the past I thought: if I get married I will give birth as much as I can. I really wished to live in a family, to love each other, with husband, with my children, to give my love and to receive love from them. That was my wish”* (SFE 6). In her case, because she had no family, she was eager for this sense of belongingness more than others. Actually, her wish to have a family, and to thereby share a sense of love, seems to be well matched with modern ideology about family, which could provide recognition in the love sphere. Her wish for this been saliently revealed by her sense of lost belongingness.

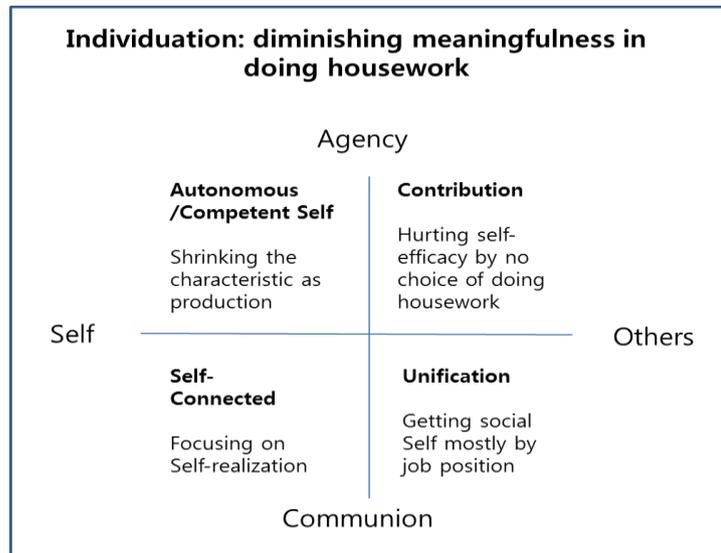
These examples show the fundamental significance of belonging to a family in the early industrial society, which is not felt in the democratization generation. The belongingness to a family provided this generation with unification and a social identity. In this sense, for women to do housework was, like meeting the other norms in society, basic to a unified sense of self and to social identity.

### 8.3 The meaningfulness of doing housework in the democratization generation

The entire democratization generation, regardless of gender and practice, shares a psychological distance from doing housework. Nevertheless, gender norms mean that women feel its meaningfulness or meaninglessness more intensively than men. In terms of “contribution”, there is little recognition of sacrifice by a mother for her family nor of husband and

children as care receivers, and thereby little meaningfulness. Instead, individual achievement is the leading cultural ideology (Fraser and Honneth 2003) and this has coloured the previously mentioned four pathways, particularly in the context of gender equality in law and in overlooking the sphere of love.

**Figure 8. 2**  
 Meaningfulness of doing housework in the democratization generation



*Autonomous/competent self*

For the autonomous and competent self (see figure 8.2) in the democratization generation, there are two mechanisms that diminish the meaningfulness of doing housework. First, housework lost the characteristic of production, which means that doing it as a full-time occupation means becoming dependent, thereby losing the autonomous and competent self. This is in line with the concept of gender division of labour (Kim 1994a), which was the starting point of housework studies including the domestic labour debate (Kandiyoti 1988, Himmelweit and Mohun 1977, Folbre

1982, Beneria 1979, Seccombe 1974). This feature of dependency prevents the construction of a sense of a competent self with the ability to do housework (well). In addition, as stated, the poorer a society the larger the contribution to material life made by housework (or unpaid work). Thus, in the richer Korean society experienced by this democratization generation, housework makes a smaller contribution to material life. Second, when measured by market value, the achievement of doing housework cannot compete with that from other work in the labour market, and its value is only vaguely sensed. It has lost its embodied value. In this context, the loss of production value and the loss of individual achievement are main factors that decrease the meaningfulness of doing housework in this pathway to an autonomous/competent self.

Initially, for paid domestic workers, the income from their paid work, provided some confidence to the autonomous self. Yet this confidence was not linked to their own housework, even though the work is nominally the same between own housework and paid domestic work. This suggests paid housework fits the prevailing ideology of individual achievement in terms of getting recognition in this modern society.

*“I’ve worked as a domestic worker, to earn money. With that money, if my children want to eat something I can buy it, which make me so happy. Before, because I didn’t have money, when my children asked me to buy something I said to them ‘I will buy it for you later’, but now, it’s ‘mom I’d like to eat that’, and ‘ok I will buy it for you’. I feel so happy at what I said, to buy what my children want to eat.”*  
(DW 3)

As a domestic worker, she had monthly earnings of around 1,000 USD. Because this is not big money, most of my interviewees in the democratization generation are not attracted to paid domestic work, but as DW 3 shows, it can suffice for those who accept the work. She feels herself to be an autonomous and competent because she is able to satisfy her children’s needs. In contrast, for one’s own housework, the measured monetary value is theoretical, and cannot provide monetary value in their daily life. Given that in current Korean society, to earn money is one of the main ways to receive recognition and be an autonomous self full-time housewives do not gain recognition as an autonomous self, whereas domestic workers do.

Furthermore, the passive attitudes in both genders towards housework supports the idea that it receives less recognition. In this democratization generation, neither gender considers itself to be the one who should do

housework as a norm. When they (women, for the most part) become the one expected to do the housework, they have little motivation for it, and have a negative stance towards it. Then, on the grounds of the little motivation to do housework, they do not want to do housework well: *“I’m not the person who does housework well. For food, I’ve tried to prepare foods for three meals, yet for cleaning and laundry I do not do this diligently”* (DEC 6-W). Like a study of men’s unfavourable attitudes (Poortman and Van der Lippe 2009), this is actually in line with the elderly men’s passivity and non-agreement in relation to housework: doing as little as possible. Even though, in each situation, someone does cleaning or cooking more than other chores, the shrinking meaningfulness of doing housework has led to a common passive attitude in much of this generation.

In this context, external recognition would be necessary for them to find meaningfulness of doing housework. Without this, they would not enjoy the outcome. However, in general they do not get enough social recognition due to housework’s shrinking role in production. *“For example, even though I can make knitted clothes by myself and put them on my daughter, this would not give any sense of achievement for me. I need to get recognition by society. I knitted as a sort of prenatal care, yet I don’t feel any happiness with only that”* (SM 7). SM 7 made it clear that to get a sense of achievement from doing housework, she needs societal recognition. However, unlike the early industrialization generation, where relying on the material value from housework could provide a sense of achievement, the outcome of her housework has little function as subsistence and has not proved its usefulness to the larger society, which thereby leads to no fulfilment to her. To knit her daughter’s clothes does not have any meaning for society, whereas the elderly women’s housework did.

The undervaluing of housework in material life is exaggerated by the conceptual fallacy of assessing housework value by its market value. As discussed in chapters 6 and 7, while the early industrialization generation had an embodied value of housework yet no idea of its monetary value, this generation has a clear idea of its monetary value (or at least of the value of those aspects that can be purchased) yet a vague embodied value. That is, by accepting that the way of measuring is market value, they think valuing housework from a market perspective is usual. *“Housework is not professional, one does not become a master by practicing skills; there is no award for the top in a laundry competition, so in terms of self-achievement there is no goal and nothing in housework. I think there is no sense of achievement”* (DEC 3-H). This reveals a

sense that, given its low value as market labour, housework has little embodied value, no real way to get external recognition, and no recognition in the sphere of individual achievement (2003).

In this regard, most parents do not wish their daughters to become full-time housewives:

*“I don’t want to tell to my daughter to live as a full-time housewife. I wish that my daughter will live with her goals and own achievement, thereby with the sense of accomplishment. Then, it could be different, the sense of accomplishment between in a society and in the family. In the case of a full-time housewife, even though they have a goal to do housework well, the fundamental goal or standard for life is the husband. But if they live as women with their own jobs, the goal would be for themselves and their own achievement. That is, if living as a full-time housewife, the position of the husband would be my position and the success of my husband would be my success.”*  
(CH1-W)

Thus, to become a full-time housewife is counter to having an autonomous self, because it prevents having one’s own goals in life. Even though, as mentioned in chapter 7, they could have the right to control the income of the husband’s work, this suggests that to have that right would be insufficient. Also, in terms of getting recognition in the sphere of individual achievement, as she clearly says, this is impossible as a dependent self.

### *Contribution*

Aside from financial considerations, for this generation the main factor giving meaningfulness to a contribution is to have choice. For them, to have a choice is the basis to becoming autonomous, so the characteristic of contribution would not be very clearly differentiated from the autonomous/competent self. However, the emphasis on having a choice to do housework also affects the way of giving (Polanyi 1977: 35-43, Van Staveren 2001), which differentiates the two spheres: the autonomous self and contribution. Women feel that they are being forced by society to do housework, rather than doing it by choice, and this distorts the characteristic of giving, since the giving seems not to be delivered as a gift, namely as “unexpected good fortune” (Fredrickson 2013b: 4) for those who receive it. Unlike the early industrialization generation, this generation has not yet received recognition of their housework contribution from children or husbands. In other words, because the giving is not considered a

gift, there would be little feeling of gratitude or sense of being cared for. In this context, this generation feels that doing housework lacks meaningfulness.

In this generation, most interviewees have mentioned choice to do voluntary activity as a main reason that volunteer work is meaningful. In contrast, doing housework is not seen as meaningful: *“voluntary activity is what one wishes to do, but housework is duty”* (wife of full-time house-husband). In this context, there is a little meaningfulness in doing housework for those who do it. Taking one more example, single mother 7 said *“even though voluntary activity and housework are similar, because of choosing the work with own free will it has more meaning; but in the case of housework there is no room for choice, it’s just a duty, so it could be difficult to see it as meaningful work”*. Indeed, the fact housework needs to be done is true for both generations. However, due to disagreement on the socially imposed gender division of labour, to do housework does not give any sense of competence, self-efficacy or significance to the younger generation.

It damages self-efficacy, because, as one wife said:

*“The thing I stress about is that I do housework for those who are the same as me. For children, I should take it for granted, and not feel stress. Even though I feel tired it’s not the sense of unfairness. In the case of voluntary activity, I can and should help them. In my case, if there was no husband, then I would do housework without stress, but if my husband is there, he does not do housework and I feel angry, and say, why didn’t you do anything.”* (DEC 5-W).

Thus, to do housework for those we should help is not problematic and is the same as doing voluntary activity. Particularly, based on relationships with love or affection, to do housework may give more meaningfulness. However, feeling that one has been coerced into doing work for someone who could do it themselves generates a sense of unfairness, and hurts those who do such work, as it is contrary to their autonomous choice.

In other words, if we feel we have to step in to help someone who is perfectly capable, then an unequal power relationship might be the underlying reason. Voluntary work because of an inferior condition is not voluntary work, and could be seen as forced work, and to do forced work must damage the sense of self-efficacy, which in turn diminishes the meaningfulness of the work. Then the person doing housework must lose self-efficacy, resulting in a shrinking of the meaningfulness of doing housework. This is also similar to the early industrialization generation gaining

self-efficacy by doing voluntary work for those who need it, but not for those who have more power than they do.

This emphasis on choice comes from the change in ways to get recognition as a member of a community, that is, the shift from needing to maintain given roles and norms to seeking individual achievement through love and law (Fraser and Honneth 2003). By this change, individuals are allowed to choose their own identities, shifting women's identity from daughters-in-law to mothers, workers and wives, as seen in chapter 7. They can, as the co-housing women show, prefer volunteer activism over full-time housewifery, in line with the belief that self-identity as a full-time housewife is below that of a volunteer (Thoits 2013: 378). This is in the same vein as young women's active negotiation for constructing an own self under the contradiction being an autonomous self yet having obligations (Budgeon 2003). In this context, feeling coerced into doing housework necessarily causes the loss of its meaningfulness.

To have choices in life would be the one of basic facts of modern society; we have been released from the coercion of pre-modern society. Furthermore, to have an equality ideology is also one of the basic facts in modern society, e.g. being unconstrained by any pre-assigned social status. Thus, doing housework as a result of an external force and without agreement, rather than as sharing micro-moment experiences of the emotional value of gratitude and love, is likely to create a negative mind-set both in those who do it and in those who receive it. Meanwhile, the conflict in couples about the unequal sharing of housework would make it more difficult to do housework as gift. Similarly, societal discussion on how difficult it is to raise children (particularly, to do it by social force) would enhance the discomfort of those receiving the care, so the care-receiver would also not enjoy the gift, taking little enjoyment in its gratitude value. Even though there is no obvious request for a contract on how to exchange care giving and care receiving, all of these aspects would damage the giving aspect of doing housework.

In other words, for the sphere of love in recognition theory (Fraser and Honneth 2003), the key to offering recognition related to doing housework in the early industrialization generation was women's self-abnegation for family, enduring inferior status and gender inequality. Compared to this, in the democratization generation, doing housework looks like an exchange with the husbands' paid work, with women and men enjoying equal positions in law and also having a strong gender equality ideology:

*“Mothers have done everything for children for their whole lives but children have taken that for granted. They forget all the deeds a mother has done in raising them. They think, it’s not only you who have done it, all mothers do housework and raise children; that’s your work”* (DW 4). Such attitudes towards mothers might be the same for the children of both generations, but the children of the industrialization generation later said they felt thankful for their self-abnegating mothers. The children in the quotation, based on the ideology of a gendered division of labour, would have seen doing housework and caring for children as women’s duty, just like men’s breadwinning role. In this sense, they don’t see their mothers’ work as either a special contribution nor as self-abnegation. Thus, there is little enjoyment in the value of gratitude for receivers, and then little sharing the emotional value of love between doer and receivers. This provokes little recognition in the love sphere, either between mothers and children or between husband and wife.

#### *Self-concordance*

In the democratization generation, in doing housework, self-concordance is damaged via two factors: gender equality and self-actualization. Firstly, a woman with a strong gender equality ideology would find this incompatible with doing housework. For example, YoungHee (CH 4-W), a woman with a strong gender equality ideology, has given up doing housework to overcome the damaged self-connection between the self who is equal to her husband and the self who had to do housework. In this sense, self-concordance also factors into situation in which the meaning of housework is an obstacle for everyday life. In a man’s case, a man (for example the full-time house-husband) who has high gender equality ideology could be led to change the gender roles in his marriage, thereby getting recognition in self-concordance by doing housework. However, this is very rare.

Second, the idea of self-realization is prevalent in connection with self-image. People in the democratization generation strive for self-actualization, which would be a concept unfamiliar to the early industrialization generation. For the democratization generation, to think about self-actualization or self-realization has become common sense. Then, to become a full-time homemaker is exactly opposite from achieving this. Even in the case of the full-time house-husband, he has indeed failed to achieve his own democratic family<sup>1</sup> which had been his goal in family life. Furthermore, to do more housework implies to lose space in which to achieve

self-realization. This self-realization is in line with individual achievement (Fraser and Honneth 2003).

Self-realization is generally interpreted as having a certain social position, which stands for having a certain job and getting promoted as a proof of recognition. In the case of women interviewees (DEC 2-W and 4-W) who have jobs but gave up promotions in order to spend more time with their children, they did lose a portion of their self-realization: *‘I’m not the person to work very well in my company. I do faithfully at least what I have to do, yet I do not take the initiative. Actually, I wish to take the initiative, but if I do I have to work more, and then I cannot check my children at home’* (DEC 2-W). In the same situation, a man is more likely to make a different decision. As one wife said: *‘My husband put significant meaning on his promotion. When he has family, he should think about family, too, but he didn’t. My husband said, ‘I have to do my work perfectly; then I can get recognition by others’. He has been eager to get this sense of self-achievement’* (FWC 6-W). As mentioned in chapter 7, this differentiation could be based on the different gender roles: mother should take care of children and father should be a breadwinner. However, the mechanism that diminishes the meaningfulness of housework still functions here.

Putting aside the matter of getting promotions, both men and women in the democratization generation have had taken on board the message that to have a job is the way of self-realization: *‘Without deep thinking, naturally I thought I must have a job, that as a person I need a job’* (DEC 1-W), *‘Because my mother was a full-time housewife, she said all the time when I was in secondary schooling that women should have jobs’* (CH 3-W). This message has come sometimes as an obvious push from their significant others, and sometimes as an invisible drive. The invisible push could be from “the generalized other” (Mead and Morris [1934] 1967) i.e. from culture, public education, or conventional wisdom. To be sure, in Korea this generalized other has been absolutely different from one generation to the next.

In this context, a single mother said: *‘I felt like there was no meaning in my life, and I wished to be free from child caring.... A long time ago, when I was a full-time housewife, as the first daughter-in-law, others praised me as a first daughter-in-law, yet my everyday life was so tired, there was no worth of myself’* (SM 1). Under the generalized other that women should do housework as their fundamental duty, women in the early industrial period do the same thing as she does, yet they receive from this a sense of self-achievement. By contrast, under the generalized other that who are you depends on your job, she does not have that sense of self-achievement. Her husband was a very

competent breadwinner, getting promotions rapidly. As a vice president of a big company, he had been used to getting all services in perfect way. Thanks to their affluent economic condition, her husband recommended hiring someone for housework, but at the same time, he thought that the main role of a wife should be to do housework for family well-being, and to do some activities in society that support the husband. For her, material affluence and the high social position accorded to her husband gave no meaning to her life, which made her felt emptiness.

She had majored in music and experienced performing on stage, and had once dreamed to study more and become a professional musician. However, life after marriage was very different from her imagination about herself. Now, after her divorce, even though she is not a professional musician, she is satisfied with her way of life as an assistant professor<sup>2</sup>, and does housework to the extent she needs. She said, *“to have a job is beyond earning money; by a job we can meet others and extend our social relationships. In this way, we can get a sense of achievement, of self-development.”*

This strong wish for self-realization is not only for those like her who had a special, clear dream. Other interviewees said, *“I had always thought I have to do something, some kind of work, and with that I would get a sense of achievement. From the very long time ago, I have thought like that, to get the sense of achievement by having a job”* (SM 3). *“I don’t want to give up my activity in society. In some sense, I feel doing this is a kind of mission in my life”* (SM 4). That is, even though the jobs they have may not match convey a high social position, to have a job is in line with their common sense; without job there is no self, no self-realization. Male interviewees also agreed that to become a full-time housewife was not a way of getting self-realization.

*“In my opinion, in terms of self-realization, I wonder if those who were so-called ‘good wives and wise mothers’ in the Chosun dynasty passed away with satisfaction on their whole lives. I don’t agree with that. As a full-time housewife for one’s whole life, raising children and helping her husband, at that moment she might feel satisfaction, but at the end of her life did she pass away with satisfaction? I couldn’t agree with that.”* (FWC 4-H)

This interpretation of women’s lives in the *Chosun* dynasty is absolutely based on his perspective as a person who lives in current Korean society. Nevertheless, regardless of his agreement with the women’s lives during the *Chosun* dynasty, his perspective has shown the fundamentally unmatched relationship between being a full-time homemaker and finding self-realization.

In this context, most interviewees in the democratization generation, have recommended to their children that they make their own choices in decision-making, including decisions around marriage and having children. Unlike their own histories, in which marrying and having children were unquestionable, their recommendation implies opening the door to personal preferences. This quite radical solution for gaining self-connection by self-realization reveals how serious it is to damage self-concordance by doing unequal housework. This could also partly explain the current low birth rate, which is threatening Korea with eventual extinction (Coleman 2002). Certainly, their recommendation is not only reason for the low birth rate, but it is in line with the change in cultural ideology. This is indeed cogent with parents of the democratization generation recommending to their daughters that they have a job, in order to have the same status as men, while still anchoring in the life of marriage and having children. Currently, this generation recommends having choices in one's own life, in which marriage and children can be optional.

### *Unification*

For the democratization generation, unification with society, namely to have social identity, has been largely based on their job. In this regard, doing housework full time damages not only self-realization as discussed above but also their belongingness to society, because they would lack a social self.

In contrast to connection to a society via the (clan) family in the early industrial period, in the democratization generation, the family is not directly connected to a community or a society. As a full-time housewife said: *“Right after quitting my job, I was depressed. Suddenly I have no belongingness, so I had a serious depression. Nowadays, I’m also worried about my husband, when he retires he may have a more serious problem. The thing is, being without a sense of belongingness is very hard for people”* (FWC 1-W). After having her second child, she stopped her job, and she mentioned the feeling of isolation she felt, even though she had her husband and children. *“The cutting off with social life, when I do only housework without my job, the cutting off from society, I think that is not because of housework, but a sense of depression coming from the isolation, that’s why I think I don’t like to be home without my job”* (DEC 5-W). In her case, to be at home without a job denotes social isolation, in which an individual has severe emotional difficulty. This emotional difficulty could be partly from the sense of loneliness. But the sense of isolation

from society means that, rather than having subjective feelings of loneliness, there is no belongingness in society, and no social self.

Thus, to have one's own family, with husband and children, no longer guarantees belongingness to a society, and this is remarkably different from the reality of the early industrial society. This disconnection between family and society may have engendered the move of production from family to public (Cho 1986). That is, when the family had the function of production, the family naturally connected to the society where the family belonged, and the sphere of family would not be only a private arena. In contrast, a modern family is separated from the public arena. In this sense, even though parents experience very special feelings of joyfulness or maturity by having children, to take care of children is interpreted as an experience that erases the self in the younger generation. In this regard, doing housework was just a private matter, and unable to enhance a sense of unification brought by embedding into a community or a society, collapsing its meaningfulness. In fact, the disconnection of family from society would also relate to the decrease in value attached to family and children (Chin and Chung 2010, Joo et al. 2016, Kim 2015) because of a shrinking embedded self.

However, even though having a job gives a sense of belongingness, this does not mean they will be satisfied with their job in terms of self-realization, or self-achievement. *“Actually, the degree of satisfaction, always I want to quit my job. Even though we try to get the sense of self-realization via our jobs, there are relatively few people who achieve this. I wish to do more valuable work, but my job is not so valuable, so I have a low level of satisfaction with my job. Nevertheless, there is meaning in the sense of relating to society, of having a social life”* (CH 3-W). In this sense, even though having a job has ideally connected to get self-realization, in reality this is not so easy. Nevertheless, in current Korean society, having a sense of belongingness seems to be a fundamental function of having a job.

Also, some interviewees have intentionally attached a more significant meaning to their job than they actually feel. A man who works in a bank has tried to intentionally think that his job is helping people's economic safety and flourishing. Sometimes, he says this to his son, when his son asks about his job. Similarly, a man who works in a medical equipment company has to sell the equipment, and he tried to think that his job is for improving people's health. Similar stories show the conventional idea of a strong connection between having a job and getting self-realization, and

in terms of its idealistic features rather than reality. Unlike the conventional ideology about social identity in linkage with job (Ardichvili and Kuchinke 2009: 158-160), the discrepancy between the idea and the reality reveals the implausibility of connecting social identity only with a job, in terms of individual well-being. In fact, the desire for more significant meaning than what they do in their job shows a desire to be a significant self in a society. Then, in a hierarchical society, in terms of work prestige (Choi et al. 2008, MacKinnon and Langford 1994), social identity depending on job position may offer satisfactory identity only for some. This would lead to a demand to diversify the source of social identity to enhance individuation.

Nevertheless, the meaning of finding belongingness through having a job is weighty. As a man in a group discussion said, *"We are a dual earning couple; then, because of taking care of children, if one is asked to take the responsibility by a counterpart, and the counterpart also says you should, it's very difficult to quit the job. There is no one to give it up to, like the social self, we cannot give up that."* He has had lots of difficulty taking care of children, thus he thought that even though the family is affluent through their dual incomes, there was something wrong for the children. However, neither spouse wants to give up their social self, which is from their job.

#### 8.4 Discussion

In this chapter, the mechanisms that boost or shrink the meaningfulness of doing housework by fulfilling the separate self and embedded self have been discussed. In fulfilling the two paths of the self, the socially conceded standard to get recognition is the decisive influence, and entwined with actors' desires for recognition, thereby integrating objectivity into subjectivity. In the mixture of Confucian gender roles and the role of (clan) family as the main source of social identity, for women in the early industrial period, to do housework earning moral value is in line with fulfilling both the separate self from others and embodied self into society. In contrast, in the democratization generation, the leading standard of individual achievement under family isolation from society causes the lopsided desire for social self; eager for recognition in one area (achievement) they ignore two the other areas (love and law).

In this context, three points would be considered in relation to care deficit. First, from the side of actors, the unbalanced desire for individual

achievement gives a clue to the care deficit, inequality in care, and unrecouped work-life. Compared to doing something for individual achievement, whatever is done in the familiar-private area will not enhance the individuated self, so people are unwilling to do housework. That is, this lopsided desire toward individual achievement would provoke a neglect of care needed at home, or would find a solution such as dumping it onto the marginalized (if affordable) or willingly putting more energy and time into work, creating a never-ending housework dilemma and upsetting any possibility of a work-life balance.

Second, for individuals, this lopsided desire for a social self may threaten the fulfilling of the separate self. When thinking about the self separated from others, if only focusing on individual achievement, only those on top level in the achievement can be an enhanced self as a person who is superior to others. However, all of us need positive and strong self concepts for emotional well-being. Further, while the embedded self, namely social self can be based on the position in public area, the separate self from others can be based on particularities of individuals. Then the familiar-private area would be the loci to form and heighten the particularities of individuals. That is, unlike the role of (clan) family in the early industrial period, the purpose of familiar-private area for being human (Elshtain 1981: 334) in current Korean society would be as the source for enhancing the self separated from others regardless of individual achievement.

Third, in enhancing the self separated from others, the main means to take enjoyment in the positive emotional values of gratitude and love in familiar-private area must be part of everyday life. In this sense, the shift from self-abnegation to having choice as the pre-condition for doing housework should receive full attention. As seen in this chapter, in order to guarantee to receive housework as unexpected good fortune, (thereby raising a sense of gratitude) the men and women who do housework should be willing to do it. At the same time, this must be their choice. A gender division of labour without free choice would not raise the positive emotional value of gratitude for care receivers. With no choice or as exchange between those who do housework and those who receive it, the sharing of micro-moment experiences of gratitude and love will be rare, and thus without an ethical value of care. In this sense, to

elaborately reckon the way to enjoy the positive emotional value of gratitude and love is imperative, not only for fulfilling the self in the familiar-private area but also for addressing the care deficit.

This means that restricting the overwhelming market logic within this specific sphere will need an answer to the last research question; *what is the housework needed by a thriving family and a thriving self in current post-industrial Korean society?* This may elucidate the unique asset housework can represent in everyday life, and depict a way to enjoy non-material value of housework.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The lack of recognition of his housework by his wife despite the large volume of his housework symbolizes the failure to achieve a democratic family as well as little sharing of housework in equality, which hurts both him and his wife. The mismatch between what he gave and what his wife received resides in the fact that his giving is his way of achieving political rightness. To comprehend this point, deep interpretation is demanded, which will be in next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Despite her husband's hearty dislike and objection to her study at the Open University, she continued through to a PhD, and for 5 years she has taught at a university, which became her sole income source after divorce.

## 9

**Discussion: “Where is the Value of Housework?”**

This thesis elaborately construes housework dilemmas as not only due to changing external conditions such as modernization, urbanization, and industrialization, but also to changes in the interactions between these external changes and actors’ interpretations of them. These interpretations have acted in concert with the changing standard of getting recognition for enhancing the individuated self, which has weakened the meaningfulness of doing housework, thereby shrinking housework practices. As it shows, women in the early industrialization generation, despite the severe gender hierarchy in Confucianism, had received moral value by doing housework. In addition, their housework made a relatively large contribution to material family life, had moral value and was the way for women to attain recognition as members of society, namely getting a social self. In contrast, for the democratization generation, the leading cultural ideology of individual achievement, and the market logic that prioritised public life, have meant that housework is no longer a source for societal recognition, and actually weakens the social self. This context is so overwhelmed by market logic that those who wish to enjoy the care value of housework have lost the means to do this.

Hence, giving special attention to the desire for enjoying care value in everyday life, this chapter will elucidate the locus of enjoying care value, and the way to increase and enjoy it. To do this, two points will be elaborated confirming the “private-familial sphere as having its own dignity and purpose” (Elshtain 1981: 334) in fulfilling the separate self in the triad of recognition spheres. Firstly, the concept of work, and the conceptual fallacy to see housework by market logic, enhance the leading cultural ideology of individual achievement, and this must be readjusted. Secondly, the characteristic of giving as the way to enjoy the positive emotional value of gratitude and love, thereby transferring care value to fellow citizens and

society, is elucidated. Clarifying the different aspects of care in triad domains, the last section re-conceptualizes housework without payment in familiar-private arenas as ‘family care activity.’

### 9.1 To get recognition in a triad of human activities

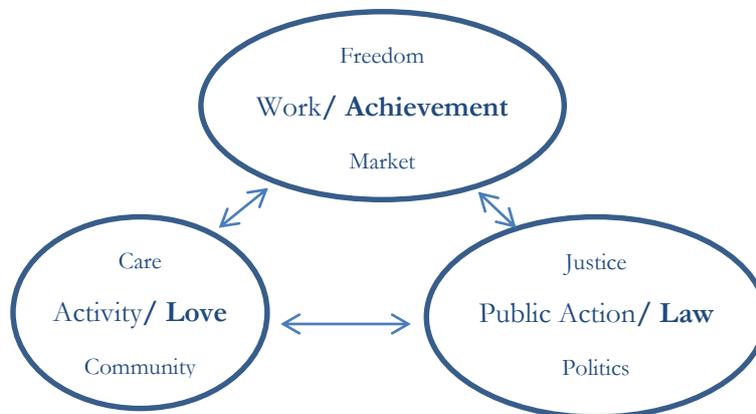
The aim of this section is to integrate the framework of the triad of human activities into their respective value domains within recognition theory, in order to deliberate how each type of recognition can gain via particular values and particular human behaviours. Given that actors form their own identity from the recognition by others, to get recognition is “a vital human need” (Honneth 1996: x) to be an embedded self in community and simultaneously an individual self separated from others (Davis 2013). This is then considered in terms of the democratization generation, for whom doing housework seems insufficient to provide such recognition. However, doing housework is only one activity among diverse human activities in everyday life. By all the other activities, actors could get recognition. Hence, the real problem might be that sensing the value of housework from the market or political viewpoint hides its functions and purpose in actors’ everyday life. This problem stems partially from the unclear boundary between housework and other human activities. In this context, integrating three different theories about recognition, economic value and human activity would help to clarify its own function and purpose in its proper realm in everyday life. This leads to a vision of how housework could receive real recognition in its proper realm.

As described in chapter 2, there are three value domains (freedom, justice and care) (Van Staveren 2001) and these have corresponding human activities (work, public action, and activity) (as adapted from the Arendt triad of human activities ([1958] 1998)). The three spheres (achievement, law, and love) within which to gain recognition in modern society by Honneth (2003) largely correspond to the three value domains and three human activities, as figure 9.1 shows.

Firstly, in joining the market, actors can enjoy of the value of freedom by being released from the restriction of material life relying on the direct outcome of work. As Honneth spelt out, “with the institutionalization of normative idea[s] of legal equality, ‘individual achievement’ emerged as a leading cultural idea under the influence of the religious valorization of

paid work" (2003: 140). In this sense, the sphere of achievement in getting recognition corresponds well to the market, where equal exchange is a basic principle. That is, by being independent (enjoying freedom) through relying on doing work in a market exchange, actors get a sense of pride, self-esteem and autonomy. As for the movement of goods and services, "exchange refers here to vice-versa movements taking place" (Polanyi 1957: 250) "between any two dispersed or random points in the system" (Polanyi 1977: 36). Building on equal exchange in market value, there is competition for profession status by which a merit based social hierarchy would occur (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 142-3), which would be the basis of enlarging individual choice. In sum, in exchange, the manner of allocation of goods and services is the movement between two counterparts with equal market value, yet within a hierarchy that depends on possessing abilities and talents.

**Figure 9. 1**  
*Human activities and values in triad spheres of recognition*



Secondly, in joining the political realm through political action, actors get social respect as individuals enjoying the value of justice. This is true in terms of legal relations, i.e. that "as legal persons [we are] owed the same autonomy as all other members of society" (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 142). In the sphere of law, all can be recognized as individuals without

hierarchy, and further, “with the demand that a minority communal culture be socially esteemed for its own sake” (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 167). Actors are thus not only legitimately recognized but also receive social respect, namely honour. In this (re)distribution sphere, the principle of allocating goods and services is to collect into, and distribute from a centre (Polanyi 1957: 254).

Thirdly, in joining to giving/ reciprocity, we enjoy the value of care/love by activity, whereby getting recognition as a precious person regardless of any other merit or honour. As mentioned in chapter 2, in the symmetry principle of allocating goods and services, there are two dimensions: unidirectional movement and a gift and counter-gift movement (Polanyi 1977: 38-39). In this sense (unlike market exchange) between counterparts there could be an unequal allocation of resources, yet in a community where allocation is still (in some sense) acceptably equal. In the sphere of love, “in intimate relationships, markedly by mutual affection and concern, [people] are able to understand themselves as individuals with their own needs” (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 142). In this sense, whereas the other two spheres describe a self embedded into community, the sphere of love would operate to form actors as separate-selves from others. That is, the sphere of love in recognition, the community for human activity, and the familiar-private sphere in actors’ everyday life, has the function of fulfilling separate selves from others regardless of merit or honour.

As Van Staveren pointed out, these triad spheres or domains do not operate separately. Rather, the triad domains are mutually supplemented and mediated by human behaviours. “Members of society can only make actual use of their legally guaranteed autonomy if they are assured a minimum of economic resources, irrespective of income” (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 149). Furthermore, by legitimating inherited wealth, the meritocracy-based individual achievement in markets distorted in reality. In the same vein, actors can have conflicts in the combination of different roles (Van Staveren 2001: 174), which is in line with the issue of work-life balance in current terminology. As Van Staveren spells out, a balanced enjoyment of these three values would be the basic condition for well-being. Similarly, a balance in getting recognition in three domains would fulfil the need for individuation, for the self to be both embedded in a society and separate from others.

Acknowledging the interconnection of triad spheres in operation is still insufficient to elucidate the unique function and purpose in each sphere.

For example, a domestic worker in this research worked in care work as a paid domestic worker in the market, joined a care programme as a care giver, and also does her own housework: for her, what would reliably describe which values she enjoys, and how? It will not be the same in all three realms, and they cannot be measured in the same way, given the incommensurability of the values and domains (Van Staveren 2001). In this regard, the point of what makes someone enjoy the different values should be scrutinized, so as to entirely comprehend the respective functions of the triad of human behaviours in getting appropriate recognition, thereby having a life that flourishes. To calculate this point, the discussion in the next section is of the concept of work and the issue of housework in two public arenas (market and political programme).

## **9.2 Inaccuracies in considering housework in the market and politics domains**

The inaccuracy in considering housework in the market is related to the conceptual fallacy of measuring housework value by market value. By considering housework from a market perspective, in line with the leading cultural ideology of individual achievement, the democratization generation has lost the embodied value of housework and perceives housework as auxiliary to paid work. Their perspective on housework in the political realm is best seen in implicit aspects of stories already mentioned. These are the full-time house-husband who chose to become a full-time house-husband with the goal of creating a democratic family, and the common dining program in co-housing. Both will be discussed below.

### **9.2.1 The central fallacy: incongruity between work and giving**

As other scholars have pointed out, characterizing housework from a market perspective is clearly a mistake. As stated in chapter 2, the domestic labour debate that sees housewives as members of the working class (Wharton 2000: 169-170) has faded through the acceptance that work in one's own household is not subject to the law of value by (see Himmelweit and Mohune 1977). In the same vein, Van Staveren (2001) made explicit that the distinguishing feature of unpaid labour is that it is a gift, relying on sympathy for care receivers, and the incommensurable character of

values, freedom, justice, and care. In this regard, any attempt to identify housework from market perspective would be insufficient. However, a large number of studies see housework value in terms of its market value. To be sure, this could be done simply to visualize a value and thereby to recognize its significance. Nevertheless, as shown in chapters 7 and 8, such an approach may provoke a loss of embodied value and the feeling that housework is mere auxiliary work, obscuring its genuine value and its function in human life. In fact, the endeavour to put housework into the “work” category enjoys strong support, in part to insure and heighten the rights of paid domestic workers, so without rectifying the concept of work the conceptual fallacy will not fade away.

*Extending work concept beyond the boundaries*

Definitions of work have various strands. Firstly, the concept pays attention to work’s physical demands. The Greek term for labour was *ponos*, which had the connotation of toil and even distress, suffering or sickness (Blanchette 1979: 259). The concept of labour used by Arendt ([1958] 1998: 79- 135) is in line with this, i.e. that to do labour meant to be enslaved by necessity. In this sense, this strand focuses on producing material value for physical life. In current society, this would go further to denote any market-rewarded work. Within this strand, the concept of work is Hegelian, built on the transformation of nature as the result of labour. Work, for Hegel (2005), was the deformation of the objective world and of oneself. That is, through the process of labouring, people learn that production is through their own hands, knowledge that transforms a subordinated slave’s spirit into an independent spirit that escapes from the restrictions of nature (Hegel, 2005). This strand is consistent with the idea of self-fulfilment, and with achieving a social self by jobs in current society.

The second strand of the work concept as a means of self-fulfilment was offered by Karl Marx. For Marx, labour can transform and mould both the objective world and the labourers themselves (2001: 236). This would shape people into a working class that confronts the capitalist system. To be working class means to sell one’s labour power to a capitalist; thus, those who work in the market are working class. This idea has consolidated as the “glorification of labour as the source of all values” (Arendt [1958] 1998: 85). This integration of work as a waged commodity and the labour theory of value captures work only in the market, and downgrades

other activities in non-market and therefore as producing no value. This concept of work, however expanded, is equipped with an inner logic employing a set of concepts about commodity, value, productive labour, and surplus value, as put forward by Marx.

As stated in chapter 2, these concepts are compatible only in terms of a market: value is the unit to measure "socially necessary labour time" (Marx 2001: 48) and to show "abstract human labour" (ibid: 47); In exchange, the commodity value consists of cost price and surplus value (Marx 1991: 118) and productive labour means the labour that generates surplus value. In this logic, the concept of value is not the same as the concept of worth. The 'value' is not the representative of all values human beings enjoy or use in everyday life. In fact, Marx also recognized the generation of use value from work: "work as a creator of use value and useful work is the life condition of human beings and the inevitability of nature regardless of the form of a society" (Marx 2001: 53). However, despite the recognition of use value which is not limited to market, while no one explicitly pointed out the concept of work is restricted only to the market, we all implicitly accept this.

To be sure, many scholars have brought forward new ideas to delete the boundary in this concept. For example, insisting on the right to work instead of the right to be employed, Gorz (1999) suggested to go beyond wage-based society. Illich (1981) coined the term "shadow work" to reveal how unpaid work is exploited in commodity-intensive society. Others have sought to go beyond the dichotomy within this work concept, by focusing on private family/ public work (Avdela 1999, Cook 1987) production/ consumption (Dupré and Gagnier 1996), non-economy/ economy (Van Staveren 2001), unpaid / paid (Van Staveren 2005), immaterial labour/ material labour (Ouellet 2015), work and gender segregation (Wharton 2000) and integrating the economy into society (Coltrane 2000, Mingione 2000, Polanyi 2001). Indeed, a tremendous number of studies have done, and all of these studies directly or indirectly extend the conceptual boundary of work so as to include most human deeds in the work category.

Extending the boundary of work suggests the notion of social organization totally determined by labour (Glucksman 1995, Taylor 2004). Building on this notion, Taylor (2004) offered a framework of six categories of labour: formal paid employment, formal unpaid work<sup>1</sup>, informal

paid activity, unpaid care, family work, and private domestic labour. Similarly, from the side of production, Elson (1998) discussed the three organizations of production: businesses, states, and households. The boundaries of the concept of work seem to be demolished by these studies, in which all human activities that produce goods and services in whatever areas (private or public) are likely to be named work. Thanks to the volume of these studies, to do domestic chores is usually seen as work, being acknowledged in terms of their function and production, for not only individual life but also society itself.

However, this confirmation of almost all human activities as work, seemingly accepted by the democratization generation, rather devalues housework. As discussed in chapters 7 and 8, the loss of embodied housework value was due in part to the diminishing proportion of material value provided by housework and in part by the impossibility of perceiving its non-material value by estimating its value in terms of the market. As well, the priority given to the public over the private has led to the cultural ideology of individual achievement, namely a market-oriented life mode. Instead of aiming to enlarge the boundary of work beyond market-oriented perspectives, the rule of the market seems to swallow up all human activities. This reinforces the hierarchy between paid and unpaid, and obscures the function of familial-private arena. Indeed, we need to overthrow the idea that the market rules all human activities, to shed light on (and appreciate) human behaviours that are not defined by exchange value.

*Incongruity of the work concept with the features of giving*

In order to shed light on the distinct function of particular human behaviours, this sub-section focuses on the way goods and services are allocated, as the locus engendering the respective value. As stated above, care in the market is for enjoying the value of freedom, while care at home is for enjoying the value of care/ affection/ love. However, what make the different value in the different realms is still unclear. What makes the different three values may be due, not to the specific goods or services, nor to the realm in which actors carry out an activity. In fact, for none of the three organizations for production (businesses, states and households), is there a specific good or service that should be produced only in one type. Where something is produced depends on the industrial contexts of a society, and that context hugely changes as production moves from family to public (Cho 1986) In other words, the respective value does not reside

in a specific good or service, or realm. Instead, the value is embodied among actors via their specific behaviours. Indeed, the difference is in the way goods and services are allocated rather than the goods and services themselves or the realm in which they are allocated. That is, even though "the propensity toward reciprocity rationales is manifest in two areas: the organization of household economies and of family reproductive strategies" (Mingione 2000: 27), the thing that forms reciprocity would be the way of giving, a specifically human activity.

Among the three ways of allocating goods and services (giving, exchange, and redistribution), giving is the way to make manifest the value of care, and thereby to enjoy its value (whether a care giver or a care receiver). This becomes apparent by connecting to the positive emotional values of gratitude and love. Giving is a way to cause a sense of gratitude. The positive emotion of gratitude comes out in the context of "acknowledging another person as the source of their unexpected good fortune" (Fredrickson 2013b: 4). "If you feel you have to pay someone back, then you're not feeling grateful, you're feeling indebted" (Fredrickson 2009: 41). Thus, only giving (no exchange or redistribution) is the source for enjoying the value of gratitude, which makes those who receive the giving willing to give as well. In this sharing experiences, the experiences of micro-moment events of love, the supreme positive emotion, are healthy and life giving (Fredrickson 2013a: 35). These experiences broaden and build the self in sync with others and urge mutual investment in each other's well-being (Fredrickson 2013b: 40-43). That is, "the momentary experience of love brings an urge to focus on the other person, holistically, with care and concern for his or her wellbeing" (ibid: 41). This describes the process of creating ethical care value through sharing positive emotional values of gratitude and love using a specific method to allocate goods and services, namely giving.

If parents make a contract with their children for the care they give to them as children (that they will get it back when the children are grown), the children might not enjoy the value of care. The children would feel the burden to pay back the debt. To do care work with no contract for equal exchange would not guarantee the value of freedom, due to the possibility of violating equal exchange. However, if someone needs care yet has no money to pay for it, and the government provides care through a care programme, one could receive this basic need as human being without feeling humiliation, by enjoying the value of justice. If one receives care from

family members as giving, then enjoyment can be derived from the sense of being cared for and loved.

Even though the need to “bring ethics back into economics” (Van Staveren 2008) is significant, we may forget that different ethics are operable in the triad domains. Without acknowledging the different ethics and by calling almost all human activity “work”, we would be applying the ethic of the market, namely equal exchange, to the other two domains. Even though housework definitely belongs to the domain of care (as in figure 9.1), without discussing the concept of work, the categorization is very complicated. Housework was categorized by Arendt as labour that focuses on maintaining physical life, a classification that relies on the classical political thought of the priority of the public realm over the private. Housework is also categorized as work by Honneth (2003: 153), who deals with housework as the matter of distribution in the same manner between workers and capitalist. Their perspective does not reveal the feature of giving. This not only overlooks the feature of giving with its distinctive values and its domains that Van Staveren has explicitly pointed out, but also makes no link with human behaviour.

In order to circumvent such a market-oriented life mode with its ideology of individual achievement, it would be not only practical but also logical to give a distinctive name to human activity in the triad domains. Hence, through “work” actors enjoy the value of freedom, based on which the actors are recognized in the sphere of individual achievement. It does not matter what kind of goods and services they produce by their work, producing cars as factory workers or emotional ease as psychological counsellors; the primary purpose of work is to fulfil workers’ material life. Through “activity”, actors enjoy the value of care, by which they can be recognized as separate beings from others relying on receiving unconditional robust trust and love which would be symbolized by the gift. Regardless of the content of the gift (emotional caring, foods, clothes, etc.), the primary purpose of giving is to care for the individual without any expectation of exchange and without the sense of rightness. The care in private-familial area allows one to be recognized as a precious being who is different from others. By “public action” in a political community, members in that community can enjoy the value of justice. Whatever the goods and services involved might be, the main purpose of public action is to adjust unequal distribution to fulfil the right to be respected as equal with others, thereby legitimately recognizing everyone in the community.

To do so, the centre has legitimated the collection of goods and services and organised to (re)distribute them. Through participation in this market and public action, actors recognize own individual achievement and can also gain an embedded self in their community as social beings.

The concept of work, as a study by Weiss and Kahn (1960) revealed using the work perceptions of 371 men, is not only an academic discussion but also one in everyday life. Even though their study was conducted a long time ago, the perception of work they found are not different from what has been found here. The most popular perception is that "work" is an activity we should do yet not enjoy. The second most common response was that "work" required physical and mental exertion; the third was that the activity should be productive; the last was the linking of the task with payment or a schedule. Among these, the former two are connected to ideas of toil or stress and the latter two are connected to the market. All of the perceptions were far from depicting the features of giving. Above all, the real problem would be the overwhelming priority given to the market perspective, and to following the ethics of the market in all of everyday life.

This is reminiscent of the man mentioned in chapter 4, who resisted calling housework "work", even though he already knew "housework" was the common term; for him, this was about mismatched ethics. His strong hesitation may be a manifestation of the incompatibility between what he felt he received from his mother (as gift without conditions) and the concept of work that includes toil, trouble or equal exchange. No doubt, as previously stated, his perception of the gift his mother gave him relied on his mother's self-abnegation, an ethic no one supports any more. Calling housework "work", in fact, worsens the care deficit by increasing unwillingness to do it due to its inferior status. The concept of work as toil or stress would mean that to care for children would be an unwilled duty for a parent, by which the children could feel the denial of self from parents rather than love. The concept of equal exchange imposes a debt on children to give what they received from the parent's housework.

Relying on the loss of embodied value of housework of the democratization generation, as reported in this research, it is possible to use the way of giving as the point to distinguish "giving" from "work". The loss of embodied value would be partially due to the diminishing proportion of material value by housework in life. Yet it would also be due to the loss of giving. That is, even though the democratization generation also do

housework, they give it while perceiving it using the lens of the market, leading to a domain conflict. They may be drawing upon the concept of work as toil or distress; then one who receives it may feel this as a refusal to give care or love, and that may trigger a negative image of the self as one who is not deserving of love. By the rule of equal exchange, the giving would impose a debt on the one who receives it. By evaluating from a market perspective, members of the democratization generation could see housework as unfulfilled self-realization. All of this disturbs the ability to take enjoyment in the housework benefit for both care givers and receivers.

### 9.2.2 Practicing housework relying on political perspectives

In the previous sub-section, I discussed the inconsistency of estimating housework by the market perspectives by pointing out the different features of giving from in relation to the concept of work. In this sub-section, the inconsistency of reckoning housework from the perspective of politics will be explained. Since the original aim of this study excluded care practice in the public realm, I do not have sufficient cases to reveal housework practice by the logic of public action. Nevertheless, to comprehend the distinguishing features of giving, somewhat different housework practices will be briefly described here.

The first example is the dining programme in co-housing. Even though this is not a public programme, the way of proceeding partly overlaps, in terms of collecting in and allocating from the centre. To be sure, there is no separate administrative apparatus in the co-housing, yet there is a monthly meeting among those who live in the house. This meeting decided to make the dining programme an “emancipation gathering for preparing dinner”; they collect money monthly for the program and offer the service, hiring someone who prepares the dinner. This way of serving dinner is different from giving. For example, if a household invited another household to have dinner together, the latter household may receive the dinner as gift. Thus, the latter household may invite the former household to dinner in future, as a counter-gift. When they prepare meals, they may care what kind of foods the visitors most like. However, in the co-housing programme there is not this kind of circulation of the service. The work of the person who prepare the dinner is in the relation of equal contract. In this sense, the service of giving dinner would not be received as caring.

In terms of serving dinner, material goods for keeping physical life would be the same as they would be in the case of serving it as gift, yet the relationship between givers and receivers would differ. There is not much sensitive caring and feeling of thankfulness. This is a programme largely to fulfil basic physical needs.

As husband (CH-4) said: *"we have the dinner programme, there is something a bit regrettable there. If we prepare and have dinner with children it could be enjoyable, but in my family, there is not that kind of chance."* His wife gave the rice cooker to the common dining space, and they normally do not have meals together as a family. Another husband (CH-2) also said: *"occasionally when I came back home early, I'd like to have dinner comfortably with my family, but in the common dinning we eat dinner very bustlingly. However, we choose it because I imagine the situation of my wife having dinner with three children at home. It's terrible."* These men reveal that the purpose of joining this programme was to fulfil basic physical needs, not concern about people in the programme. This need can be effectively met by the programme, which collects in and allocates from the centre.

The second case to discuss is the full-time house-husband family. As previously described, in relation to the well-being of family, this husband has done an enormous quantity of housework, well beyond any other full-time housewife in this study. He home schooled his daughter and prepared everything his wife and daughter needed. His wife also explicitly acknowledged this, saying *"my husband did almost all housework, in weekdays I only did washing dishes, in the weekends I did not do much."* Nevertheless, the attitude of his wife is somewhat different from the man, who rejected calling housework work. Not only did his wife value his housework the least among my interviewees, she did not feel she was receiving his housework as gift. In fact, the relationship of the couple had some problems. Although there were various reasons for this from throughout their marriage, the wife's lack of recognition for the husband's housework was a contributing factor. This lack of recognition suggests that his housework may not have been delivered as a gift to his wife.

The first reason for this would be her income. In line with the concept of gendered work division, as a breadwinner, she may think she has already paid for the housework her husband did. However, when it comes to compare her with the male breadwinners among my interviewees, her recognition of her husband's housework is extremely stingy. In fact, she thinks that even though she is the breadwinner of her family, her husband has

the decision power as the head of family. This is not because of census registration, but she feels this way. However, the husband also has similar thoughts, which he has sacrificed as house-husband because his wife requested this. About their creaking relationship, he said *“I don’t know where it became wrong. Anyway, I feel sorry that the important attempt did not go to the end successfully, to make democratic family.... I do housework wishing for my wife to achieve something in a society.”*

In fact, his attempt to achieve a democratic family gave many things to him. He published two books about his experience as a house-husband, and they received two awards as an equal couple from a women’s newspaper and a women’s NGO. He has also given more than 100 lectures, interviews, or appearances on TV programmes. Sometimes, the couple were interviewed together as a full-time house-husband and his wife. Throughout these experiences, he got a positive reputation as a progressive man, while his wife would feel a twinge of envy and jealousy in other’s eyes for her luck to have such a good husband. That is, his attempt to achieve a democratic family got him recognized as a politically correct person and has given him an embedded self in society. Even though he would not be recognized in the sphere of individual achievement, he already had honour in public realm. He said, *“almost all people respect me but why my wife does not, I don’t understand.”* In this sense, the wife may feel that he did his housework for his purpose, but not to care for her. When I asked why the couple share housework in that way (husband does almost all housework while wife only washes dishes) she said, *“just he does so.”* That is, even though the way of circulating goods and services is not the way of the political sphere, his attitude to do housework would tilt towards political rightness rather than towards caring for his wife. Such feelings would make it difficult for the wife to feel his housework as a gift, thereby greatly limiting the sharing of experiences of gratitude and love through housework.

In this section, focusing on the feature of giving, the way of allocating goods and services has been re-interpreted as the point at which values in three domains diverge. This has been examined in terms of the incongruity between giving and measuring housework by market value or conducting it from a political perspective, as a cause for the loss of embodied housework value. Above all, actors need to enjoy all three values, by which we can be recognized in the three spheres of love, individual achievement, and law (Fraser and Honneth 2003). As stated, this recognition is vital to

the separate and simultaneously embedded self. Doing housework is normally only connected to the sphere of love: it can support recognition as a precious person (regardless of achievement or reputation) in the familiar-private arena. But then everybody doing housework also needs to join actively in the other two spheres, by working and doing social/political action for enjoying freedom and justice, whereby getting the recognition as a social self. This triad of human behaviours is the basis for proper recognition in modern society, then this is only possible with the prerequisite of gender equality and having choice for own life style.

### 9.3 Housework as 'family care activity'

As stated in chapter 3, hitherto all conceptualization from domestic labour to care work has been strongly anchored at illuminating mutual complementary relations of two units, the industrial and the domestic (Seccombe 1974: 6), thereby considering housework as work. However, as discussed in the previous section, this subordinates the domestic to the industrial, embracing the leading cultural ideology of individual achievement (Fraser and Honneth 2003). As shown in the democratization generation, this deprives housework of meaningfulness, by weakening the individual self from others as well as the embedded self in society (Davis 2013), thereby losing recognition, "a vital human need" (Honneth 1996: x). This diminishing meaningfulness has provoked the shrinking in housework practice in everyday life, and created a care deficit in Korean society.

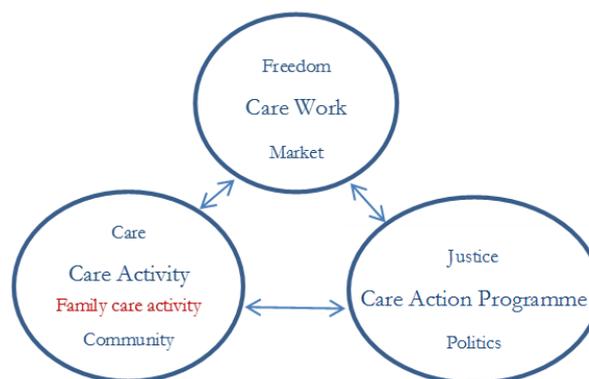
Hence, in order to side-step the long-standing priority of public realm over the private and to elucidate the feature of giving, I believe it to be necessary to re-conceptualize housework as "family care activity". Shedding light on the incommensurable functions and values of family care activity would be in the same vein with acknowledging the dignity and purpose of the private-familial sphere (Elshtain 1981: 334). The direct empirical data needed to discuss this issue are currently insufficient, given that no one seems to have hitherto considered the function and value of family care activity where it differs from the other two spheres in everyday life. Nevertheless, in this thesis, thanks to interviewees in the category of domestic worker, the different perceptions of care in the three spheres have been identified.

The difference can be seen among domestic workers because they do paid domestic work as well as own-family care activity; in this research, some are also care providers in state care programmes<sup>2</sup>. Their experiences with these activities cross the triad of spheres. In the following subsection, the different features of care in the triad of spheres will be delineated by integrating the triad human behaviours and values with domestic workers experiences, to show a re-conceptualization of family care activity.

### 9.3.1 Care in triad domains

Figure 9.2 shows care in the respective realms, each with its own functions, values, and operating logic for fulfilling care. The basic categorization is not new; indeed, this is in line with the care diamond of four realms: state, families, markets, and non-for-profits in (Razavi 2007: 20-23). However, compared to the care diamond, which categorized simply the realm of the providers, the categorization in figure 9.2 is more for comprehending the distinguishing features of care in relation to human activities in the triad domains. The distinguishing features of care in each domain is linked to different values, ways of circulating goods and services, and thereby different types of recognition.

**Figure 9. 2**  
*Care in triad value domains*



*Care in the market*

In the market, where the human activity is work, care work largely follows the logic of the market: equal exchange, and maximising efficiency to increase profit (Gorz and Handyside 1989: 114). Within this logic, different functions of care work for care workers and care receivers would be operable. For care workers, like all other workers, the main function and purpose of working is to support their material life, based on equal exchange between their labour and salary. As the domestic workers in this study made clear, they see income as the core reason for doing domestic work, and they absolutely try to fulfil their customers' requests as far as this does not infringe their equal contract. Where this is not the case, customers normally call their office to complain. *"If we do the domestic work in the way they don't like they immediately call to the office to change the domestic worker to another. ... At home, I am likely to do housework roughly, but in the customers' house we cannot do it roughly"* (DW-5). *"When I do it as my occupation, I have to do it completely"* (DW-2). *"If I do it in a customers' house then I get money. With the money, I can do what I want to do and help make our living. There is reward for my work, so it is different"* (DW-3). *"When I work in a customer's house for four hours, I should do everything, laundry, cleaning, ironing, in four hours, so I have to do it rapidly. They consider it no wonder because they hired me, paying money"* (DW-7). These women reveal the logic of equal exchange: money customers paid domestic workers to do housework.

In the group interview with working women who are also care workers as nurses, income as the primary reason for work was also revealed. *"I've never thought such as angels in white. I think that I've worked this due to my income. Actually, we have done everything, in the emergency room we have to clear away dung, all kind of dirty works, due to the income"* (female 3). *"We do this work because of money and because it's our work. But others think you work because you are an angel in white"* (female 2). Depending on the individual personality, the expression of the degree would differ. For example, in the interview, woman 1 expressed her joyfulness when communicating with patients as one reason she is well matched with the work. Nevertheless, that income is the basis of work must not be underestimated: they work in the market.

Considering this, the purpose of working in market is surely not to meet some moral obligation in relation to care receivers (Engster 2007: 50) nor to develop relationships, as discussed in care theory. In this sense, imposing a care penalty<sup>3</sup> (England et al. 2002) or demanding excessive "emotional labour" (Hochschild 1983) violates market logic. In fact, to

avoid excessive expectations, interviewees have emotional strategies. *“In the emergency room we are not kind, I think exactly that we don’t need to be kind, if we are kind it’s also good, yet no need to be kind. Just do your work well”* (GI-FW-female 3) *“When I have a customer for a long time we may become friendlier, yet I have a distance on purpose, because when we became friendlier, the customer would treat me carelessly and I also might work carelessly, even in a roundabout way”* (DW-7). *“I trained myself to think that customers are customers. I do not expect them to treat me well. I came here for working so just do work, then I am not hurt”* (DW-3). They have developed self-protective attitudes, avoiding unnecessary emotional burdens or hurt that could be provoked from the interpersonal features of care work. To be sure, they also expressed joyfulness at good relationships with customers. However, a good relationship is optional, depending on a specific customer and context, and is not at the core of market-based work.

As human beings, we all have sympathy for those who need care, yet in the market the workers’ rights to decent work conditions should be prioritized. The quality of care can be diverse, given varied working conditions, facilities in care centre, tools, and so on. This variation in care quality could expand the choice for clients as care receivers, that is, to fulfil different desires for care is the function and purpose of the care market. In this regard, care workers can enjoy the value of freedom as autonomous selves by being able to support their physical needs in life, while care receivers can enjoy the value of freedom through expanding choice.

#### *Care in the political realm*

In politics, the care provider in the current state system is the government. Workers provide the care in care action programmes, in which workers are guaranteed workers’ rights. Nevertheless, according to interviewees in this research, because of the way such goods and services are allocated, namely that the income of care providers is based on the government budget, not from payment of care receivers, the features of doing this domestic work differ from those in the market:

*“I have thought that to help others matters little to my life. I’ve never done anything for others, not been a volunteer. So, I think that is the good point, I felt that there are many people in difficulty. When I went to a single parent’s house, there was nothing to eat, clothes were not prepared... so I’m happy to be helpful for them. When I work without payment, above all I feel this is easy and rewarding, the*

*density of work is not hard. Because they get the service without payment they do not have high expectation and feel thankful to me. Even though the quality of work may not reach their expectation, they do not complain about it.*" (DW-6).

This raises two points: the feature of helping the marginalized and the lack of any possibility of equal exchange. In this condition, they feel rewarded as the person who did a good deed, a form of rightness. This would be similar to the sense of gaining a good reputation, though perhaps to a lesser degree. Above all, freedom from equal exchange is the main factor generating different features of the activity; actors feel emotionally easy and receive thanks from the care receivers. In this sense, the way of allocating goods and services is the factor that differentiates this sphere from the other spheres.

As for the value of justice, this relates not only to those who join in the care action program, but to all people. As citizens in a state, they have a duty to boost public debate and to participate in the political will that enables a decent care system, thereby guaranteeing their collective right to receiving decent care. "Caring democratic citizens will be concerned with employment policies, non-discrimination, equalizing expenditures in schools, providing adequate access to health care and generally making sure that all people are adequately cared for" (Toronto 1996, as quoted in Engster 2007: 68). The care duty and the rights of all citizens rely on the citizenry, and "most of us depend upon the care of others in our day-to-day lives and during times of particular hardship" (Engster 2007: 43). Thus, if they acknowledge the natural life condition, those who receive care through the government should feel no humiliation. As such, the chief function and purpose of the political realm in care is to keep open a public discussion of its system, allowing all citizens to maintain their dignity even in the times of particular hardship. This maintains human dignity for all of us, allowing us to enjoy the values of justice and recognition as equal persons: "If we have moral obligations to family and friends because they are vulnerable to us, we must also have moral obligations to fellow citizens and strangers, since they are likewise vulnerable to our actions" (Engster 2005: 58).

Nevertheless, the duty or obligation of care in terms of justice that we have as people should be differentiated from performing care in person. The mutual dependency in care we share with others exists, yet we must have a different level of affection for family and friends than that we hold for fellow citizens and strangers. Just as "justice should not then push care

to the margins” (Held 1995: 131), moral duty should not attempt to push us to have the same affection or attitude towards everybody. As has been argued by critics of the compulsory altruism in unpaid care (Razavi and Staab 2010), moral duty for care should be not imposed on us as a privileged norm in the political realm. As my interviewees have shown, different attitudes can be found among those who do care in the market and in care action programmes; we have the duty to set up and support a decent care system, but not the duty to provide the same care to all. Instead, the caring attitude can be expanded from experiencing ethical value of care in community.

#### *Care in the community*

Care in the community is giving (Van Staveren 2001). We do not give a gift by force or to get money, but out of willingness. We would not give gifts to those we do not like. If we did, those could be bribes brought about by a power gap in a public realm. If we were expected to give gifts to those we did not like, the unwillingness to accept such a role or norm would be exactly the type of behaviour the democratization generation in this research rejects. In this sense, in line with care theory in unpaid caring, unpaid care strongly depends on the relationship between care givers and receivers (Himmelweit 1999: 31). Unlike the care in market, in which care workers receive money or in the political realm, and providers may either enhance their good reputations as volunteers or receive money as civil servants, there is no reason to give care in the familial-private sphere if there is no relationship.

An affectionate or intimate relationship not only motivates care givers to give care as gift, but is also very necessary for care receivers in order for them to receive it comfortably. There is also a point to be highlighted that doing family care activity relying on intimacy does not equate with doing it with one’s best effort. The discrepancy between doing family care activity relying on affectionate and intimate relationships and doing it with one’s best effort was also shown in the domestic workers’ case. Domestic workers perceive paid housework and housework in their own home differently, which is actually in line with the care in affectionate or intimacy relationship. *“That is for family, for the comfortable life, for good health of my family, so it is my life for my family. Rather than calling it work, it is just caring for family, we think like that” (DW-4). “In my home, because I did it in my comfortable space, I don’t need for reward. Just if my children say, wow today it is so clean, then I feel*

*happy with that*" (DW-7). In the second quotation, at the moment of children's positive expression about her cleaning would be the micro moment experience of sharing gratitude and love. Because she does housework at home for her family, with this tiny positive emotional reaction, she feels appreciated enough for her housework without other rewards.

Despite the emotional reasons to do housework based on the familial relationships, for actors, this is the housework that receives the least attention: "*Housework at home is third in line; doing it as a volunteer or at a customers' house is almost the same; my house is the last. For things to eat, all three are the same because we need this. So, except for things for eating, cleaning my house is the last*" (DW-1). Because they do not have enough energy after their paid domestic work, regardless of their motivation of family care activity, they choose a less strenuous way of doing it. They are not restricted by contract or rule in doing housework, instead, they can do along with own willingness or the condition at that moment. Even though gender roles would still affect their housework, at home (not in market or public area) the reason for doing family care activity is also affection or the intimate family relationship.

This is very different from the 1920s ideology of professional housewifery relying on the norm of gender division of labour (Kim 1999a) which is shown in the quotation: "*How dare we measure in monetary value what we do for our family, for our precious people? There is my love. I think so. People say that the value of housework may be a sum of money, but we are creatures of the Creator. If we do not get married, then it's ok, but if we live together with children in a family, then do not measure it with money.*" This quotation implies that to give care is the deontological law as creatures of the Creator. As mentioned, in that this is based on the same moral value as Confucian gender roles, to keep to a high standard of this rule would guarantee a high reputation. In this logic, the love in this professional housewifery ideology is somewhere outside of actors as a thing women are meant to deliver. Unlike this, the love in ethical care value arises between care givers and receivers at that moment of sharing positive emotions, when doing housework delivered as gift.

The gift indeed manifests as something with no material reward and no enhancement of reputation. The gift thus also denotes that to estimate the care value by the logic of market or political rightness is unworkable. Instead, there is a counter gift, which would be caring in a time of need, or expressing thankfulness. And of course, any counter gift would depend on how the care receivers feel. As shown in the previous chapters, if the gift

is assessed using the logic of market, the care receivers may feel a debt and they may employ market logic when giving back. Alternatively, as shown in the case of the wife of the full-time house-husband, a receiver may not feel inclined to give back, feeling the gift was not actually a gift.

That is, how or the extent to which we do family care activity would differ by the degree of intimacy in the relationship, our acceptance of a standard such as putting priority to public over private, as well as the economic and social conditions of the family. If they prefer to earn money as much as possible, then they may spend time largely in paid work using substitutes for housework. Or, if they choose to have dinner together, then they may reduce other activities to save time for dinner. The economic condition also matters. However, this re-conceptualization is based on an economic situation in which the contribution of housework to family material life is not significant. A compromise between them all would lie in the locus of the unique function and purpose of care in the familial-private realm, and not a push to do it for a certain group of people by some deontological law. Thus, the gift is not indicative of any deontological law to give it full of love or as one's best.

Care in the familial-private realm has a unique function and purpose. Like a player behind the backdrop in a theatre, able to do anything without concern for the audience, care receivers in the familial-private realm can show something which cannot be shown in public or to strangers. With mutual trust based on intimacy between care givers and receivers, no one need worry about dis-benefit or dishonour; a care receiver can reveal the self. This may be particularly important at moments of hardship in life. Relying on this sharing within care, an actor can be recognized as the precious-self, irrespective of the larger society, and thereby be an individual self. This clarification of care in familiar-private realm does not mean the absence of conflict in the familiar-private realm. There is no community without conflict among members. Even in the condition of no deontological law to give care relying on full of gender equality and choice, individual's respective particularity would provoke conflict. In that individual particularity is a factor of being separate self from others, conflict in compromising care will always be part of everyday life.

As seen in CH 4, in which the wife gave the family rice cooker to the community dining space, between couples, there will be small factors that provoke care conflict. The couple agreed gender equal life style; the husband did not insist that women should do housework, the wife does not

think men should be a breadwinner. However, while compromising their everyday activities, they have not figured out their different particularities; the husband has a strong breadwinner consciousness as the first son in a rural family, while the wife wished to give more than perfect care to children relying on her deficit of being cared for in the past. Then, when their children were young, her expectation to share child care with her husband was not fulfilled and then she gave up doing housework. And now the husband feels the lack of enjoyment of the benefit of housework: no enjoyable meal time with family. Such cases can always happen. They can also be the loci for improvements. Acknowledging care in family with not only affection but also conflict, the point here is to elucidate the function and purpose of care in community in everyday life, which is not the same with care in market or in government program, thus the incommensurable values we all need.

There are various communities where we can share care, for example among friends, neighbours, within religious communities, and in the family. Among these, family<sup>4</sup> would be the basic for most people, relying on the characteristic of living together for a relatively long period. In families, all of us do the family care activities that are the theme of this research. Relying on this experience to be cared for in familial-private realm when they need this, human beings can feel empathy for others who need care, by which they may become willing to give care back; to have this empathy for others who needs care is the basis of moral theory (Van Staveren 2001: 40). Building on empathy or sympathy, the mutual dependency of human beings would bring us to develop a sense of the duty of care and our right as fellow citizens. Rather than encountered as external force like social norms, actors are using virtue ethics, by which they internalise ethics by enjoying the value of care (Van Staveren 2007). In sum, the function and purpose of familial-private realm in care is to save up the experiences of taking enjoyment in the positive emotions of gratitude and love, thereby expanding the ethical care value to fellow citizens.

Types of care in these three domains are interrelated. In all three domains, a caring attitude, including attentiveness, responsibility and responsiveness exists between care givers and care receivers (Sevenhuijsen 1998: 83, Van Staveren 2001: 39-40) and would be significant in terms of enhancing the quality of care. This is not to suggest that the degree of caring attitude would be the same in the three domains. In the market, to exceedingly empathise would provoke a care penalty. Depending on the specific

occupations, there would be a certain level of attitude as one of qualifications for carrying out the job. In family, persons may tend towards high levels of the attitudes that rely on the quality of sharing. There may also be more possibility of mistreatment, since the familial-private sphere is closed, in which case the state would need to intervene.

Admitting this interconnection, organizing everyday activities in three domains for decent care would need to be collectively negotiated for the broader system and individually for specific care practices. Then, to distinguish the function and purpose of the care in each domain is important to envisioning the balance for a flourishing life. Seeing an element of care in terms of the three domains is a way to reveal its respective function and purpose. For example, care work has been defined as “the occupations in which workers are supposed to provide a face-to-face service that develops the human capabilities of the recipient” (England et al. 2002: 455). This relation-based definition had been criticized as for excluding non-relational domestic work (Duffy 2005). A better definition might be that care work can include a broad range of human activities – unpaid care work (interactive care, household and social support care, supervisory care activities), care industries, interactive care occupation, and so on (Duffy et al. 2013: 162-164). Then, as previously discussed, the term “care work” would not denote specific features of the care and its incommensurable value. This discussion on the tripartite terminology around care in this section is an answer for the uncertainty.

### 9.3.2 Family care activity

A domestic worker said:

*“an activity is a thing I want to do, and work is what I should do.... When I do an activity I don’t expect reward, but when I work it’s for financial reward. ... I think housework may change like taking clothes to the cleaners, and maybe this will change our perception of it. Then family members may share some housework among themselves, and we may not think of it as work.” (DW-6)*

In fact, she roughly but accurately summarises the discussion in this research about re-conceptualizing housework as a family care activity. The perception of housework in current Korean society is changing, as care in the market is expanding our choice and the possibility to share among

family members is also expanding. This worker preferred to call this "activity" rather than work, and the clear difference between them would be a material reward.

In this subsection, remembering the dynamics of the lessening of meaningfulness to do housework in the democratization generation, four points (having choice, valuing gender equality, giving less priority to individual achievement, and finding a less distorted way of giving) will be considered as pre-conditions to enjoy care value by giving. Then, family care activity will be summarized in the context of balancing triad human activities in everyday life.

Unlike most existing studies around housework and care, this study has suggested that not restricting work by the boundary of the market is the basis of elucidating the different functions of its triad of human deeds in everyday life. This has a two-fold effect: it points out the priority of the public over the private, and identifies the unique functions of the private arena in life. Integrating social psychological interactions, the discussion clarified family care activity as the source of recognition, through which some attain a separate-self from others. That is, in the familiar-private arena, irrespective any achievement or honour gained or not gained elsewhere, all of us can be precious as the self we are. This clarification about the unique function and purpose of familiar-private arena can balance the on-going priority of public over private. Unlike the labour theory of value, which acknowledges value only in the market, this anchors at values residing in all three domains (Van Staveren 2001). Care value then can be seen when it is manifested among actors, at the precise moment of sharing positive emotional values of gratitude and love.

The balance between the three domains in everyday life is that they all link to having choice. Without balance (that is, under the dominance of individual achievement) choice is restricted to achievement in market. This is indeed limited compared to the genuine choice. With genuine choice, depending on their particularities, each individual would put significance in a domain that will help them to pursue their own desirable self-identity. As shown in the democratization generation, a desirable self-identity is incompatible with doing family care fulltime, due to the lack of an embedded self in society. Since choice is vital for being human beings in modern society (as Honneth (2003) pointed out) the only way of guaranteeing choice is to balance the above-mentioned three deeds in everyday life.

Another precondition for balance is gender equality. There is no doubt that to have gender equality in family care activity is basic to choice. As the wife of full time house-husband made clear, the gender division of labour, even when reversed, violates balance in the family. Furthermore, the gender division of labour is a condition that triggers the use of market logic within the family (Folbre 1982), by which, in a couple, there is an exchange of one's income for the counterpart's care. This prevents the feature of giving from being manifested between the couple. This triggering of market logic in the family differs from the domestic labour debate which considers market logic an ontological truth in capitalist society. Unlike the domestic labour debate, the triggering occurs when a couple estimates the exchange between the worth of work in market and family care activity in the family. Because there is no common way to estimate the worth in two different domains, they use the unit of value in market. This gives a false impression that it is possible to pay for the worth of family care activity, sacrificing the chance to enjoy and share care value.

Remembering that to manifest the values in three domains depends on the way of allocating goods and services, the distortion in the way of giving provokes the diminish of embodied care value by doing family care activity. This aspect remains clear in some cases, for example, the family care activity by the husband of full time housewife 7. He goes home only on weekends, but in the weekend, he prepares three meals, washes dishes, cleans house, does laundry, and prepares breakfast for Monday. Then he goes back to work Sunday evening. He said, *"I do housework for the whole day, then I feel that I give something to my family. To give my love, the expression of giving my love would be to clean house if it is dirty.... At any rate, I feel sorry for my family because I did not serve them so well, so I do not think that is hard labour when I do housework. I'm able to do something for my beloved, I feel happiness to give what I have."*

The daughter thinks her father does more housework than her mother. The mother, as full-time housewife, is focusing on raising her daughter, and apart from the special way of doing things for the daughter (see chapter 7) at least on weekdays she does all the family care activity that her husband does during the weekend. However, the embodied value of family care activity for the daughter would be bigger for her father than her mother. When the daughter got the information about our interview, the daughter said to her mother, *"you don't have anything to tell about housework because you do not do housework. My father should do the interview because he does*

*almost all the housework.*" This could be due to the scarcity value of the father's giving. Nevertheless, if he complained when he did the all tasks, the daughter might not want to receive them. Indeed, this showed the significance of the way of giving in embodying care value. The different ways in which the father and mother gave, meant that she felt much more value from the gift her father than that from her mother. Even though the mother chose to be a full-time housewife, as shown in the chapter 7, she constantly reminds her daughter that to have a job would also be a good way of life. Admittedly, to give this opinion is not a fault, yet the daughter may sense in it her mother's dissatisfaction with her giving. The husband does not see his cooking, cleaning or laundry as a sacrifice, and he enjoys the giving, by which his daughter also enjoyed his gift.

A distorted way of giving could also be due to the external imposition of care role, as in gender norms. For instance, because they did not autonomously choose to do housework and saw it as externally imposed, the democratization generation women (chapter 8) see little meaningfulness in doing family care activity. The external force exerted by norms with which they disagree would also hamper the feature of giving. This also touches on the equation of care ethics with self-sacrifice (Sevenhuijsen 1998: 58), and is the opposite of the virtue of care ethics (Van Staveren 2007). As stated, the virtue of care ethics is manifested among actors by their experiences of enjoying care value. If one does care because of external morals or norms, the discrepancy between what one does and what one enjoys would make the one who receives the care uncomfortable and unable to enjoy the care value.

In the early industrialization generation, women largely internalized such norms and their children received the gift with the sense of thankfulness, acknowledging the mothers' sacrifice. The internalizing of gender norms went hand in hand with renunciation of gender equality because this was the absolute single standard for getting recognition. They said, accepting inequality in it: "*it was the time to do so.*" Above all, in their children's generation, the men expressed nostalgia for their mothers' caring/sacrificing, whereas the women explicitly said that they did not want to live like their mothers. That is, daughter received the gift from mother both as a gift and as a symbol of inequality, possibly causing them to not fully enjoy the care value.

Integrating the triad value and human behaviour domains with the triad spheres of getting recognition elucidates the different values and functions

in getting recognition. This integration can be used to examine the different ways of allocating goods and services in each sphere, and this indicated the locus of enjoying each value, and re-interprets the concept of work. That is, values in each domain are not realized outside of actors; the moment goods and services are allocated by a human behaviour, the value is enjoyed by the actors, and embodied in the actors. Hence, doing housework while seeing it in terms of the market or in the political way as redistribution would not realize the value of care; these differences were reflected in the embodied knowledge of domestic workers who did care work, family care activity, and provided care in care action programmes.

According to the different functions in each sphere, the unique function and purpose of familial-private realm (Elshtain 1981: 334) in care is for actors to enjoy care value regardless of any achievement or reputation (Van Staveren 2001: 44-46), thereby being recognized as the individual self. Via sharing the positive emotional values of gratitude and love among actors by giving and receiving gifts, the care value that has arisen would urge them to develop a sense of sympathy/empathy for fellow citizens who would all eventually need care in the natural life process.

This re-conceptualization of housework as family care activity does not impose a normative duty to give it all our best. As mentioned, how to do it depends on compromises, on particularity among family members in, among other things, the desire for choice and gender equality. The balance among the triad of life realms is not fixed such as to allow time to be proportionally divided into each realm by each person. Instead the balance depends on actors' particularities, collective needs and abilities. Some would prefer to use market care more, to reduce some parts of family care activity. This would allow the extent to which family care activity is performed by family members to be as gifts, thereby allowing participants to enjoy the value of care. This re-conceptualization elucidates the enjoyment of the value of care achieved by family care activity. It must be balanced with the inevitable need for the value of freedom in the market through work and the need for justice in political realm by action, with all three required to become an embedded self in a society. To enjoy all three values is the basis, not only of a flourishing life but also of receiving recognition, a vital human need. This has elucidated the function of familial-private realm as a locus of valuable joys and satisfactions that have the same weight as the public realm in life, with no overweighting or underweighting of the value of care.

In sum, in the term "family care activity", family is the community within which one can enjoy care value, where the need to be recognized as a precious self regardless of own achievement or good reputation is met. Care does not mean the practice of direct care, indeed care is the value actors can enjoy in sharing micro-moment experience of gratitude and love. Calling housework "activity" instead of work elucidates the distinguishing features of the giving domains, thereby no longer giving priority to the public over the private. The key to guaranteeing enjoyment of the care value of family care activity is, for each of us, to have the balance among three domains in everyday life, thereby being an individuated self, separated from others yet embedded in society.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Formal unpaid work includes voluntary work in formal settings and, for example, internships without payment.

<sup>2</sup> The association to which the interviewees belonged is not in the pure business sector. The association has joined the government care programme, which guarantees seed money for the business, and in return the association should provide care for the marginalized who qualify for it. Thus, domestic workers in this association sometimes become care providers in the government programme, receiving a basic salary from the government seed money. For their other paid domestic work, they are paid by their customers. The proportion of their income from the two sources varies according to the branch association to which individual belonged. In this context, they experienced being care providers in the political realm.

<sup>3</sup> In that paper, authors use the term "wage penalty" to denote lower hourly payment in care occupations predicting low skill and qualifications (p. 455). This lower payment has been justified by normative assumptions that workers who have the motivation to help others will accept a lower wage, being satisfied by non-pecuniary rewards (Razavi and Staab 2010: 411). The fear of "commodification", which is "based on the belief that any activity will be somehow drained of social and moral meaning, and of love, when it enters the market" (Nelson and England 2002: 2) is also an aspect of the care penalty. All these perspectives would be due to not distinguishing the different features of care in the market from care in the other two domains. No matter how much workers have intrinsic motivation to help others, work in market should be exchanged equally. For those who do care activity in the community or political realm, the intrinsic motivation would have prominence compared to equal exchange. Those who choose to buy care in market may prefer to have a cool relationship with the care giver rather than being overly engaged

with social and moral aspects that can enter into fulfilling care. This social and moral meaning may vary, depending on their attitudes towards this sharing, even in the care of market, yet this would not be a chief criterion to assess care in the market.

<sup>4</sup> The concept of family also varies along spatial-temporal lines. In particular, to move the boundary of family beyond biological ties (Levy 2005) should be also considered. However, to discuss this is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The equating of love with care, despite the norm being imposed only on women, made it unthinkable to publicly question the meaningfulness or willingness to do family care activity. The logic of care is such that unwillingness to give care is seen as the absence of a loving family. Hence, the unquestioned expectation for women has been to do family care activity full of love. In this context, without considering actors' inner meanings, the care deficit has been dealt with as a matter of simply changing the external environment (to make it easier for women to act as they were "supposed" to act).

However, by focusing on the interactions between actors and ever-changing external conditions, this research revealed the dynamics of unwillingness of doing housework even in those who have a great love for their families. Frankly acknowledging the precariousness of the moral impetus for family care activity revealed disguised needs and desires in exteriority. That is, like the moral impetus that justified gender inequality in doing family care activity, the leading cultural ideology of individual achievement now justifies the priority of public over private. In this context, arguing against the encroachment of the public into the private, this research has uncovered the role of private-familial area in being human, then re-conceptualized housework as 'family care activity.' Family care activity allows actors to enjoy care value at home, and through this, regardless of merit or honour, they can be fully themselves: individuals and at the same time connected to others.

In elucidating the purpose of private-familial area and family care activity in forming and reforming 'the self', this research makes a three-fold contribution to the discussion: first, it argues against the priority of public over private, second, it clarifies care value as supported by the emotional values of gratitude and love, and third, it focuses on embodied value.

Firstly, at present, in studies from domestic labour debate to care theory, the priority of public over private is hardly questioned. This has driven the conceptual fallacy of measuring housework value by market value, thereby obscuring non-market housework value, which disembodied its value. In this context, going back to the discussion of the concept of work integrating different values in different spheres, this research distinguished three spheres of human activity: work in market, activity in community, and action in politics. This distinction offers a wider view than seeing society as work oriented, not by expanding work concept to all human deeds as conventionally done but by restricting work in the market to its narrow definition and then manifesting the roles of the other human deeds, activity and action done by and for flourishing individuals and society.

Secondly, embracing the shift from moral value to care value that those who do family care activity desire to enjoy, this research elucidates care values that arise among care givers and receivers at the moment of sharing the positive emotional values of gratitude and love. That is, at the precise moment of expressing gratitude (by those who receive family care activity) to the ones who do it, they can share positive emotion and feelings of love. This micro moment experiences engender a caring attitude, mind-set, or habit, which is a property of ethical care value. In this whole process, the way of allocating these goods and services, namely giving, is the key to generating the positive emotion of gratitude. This formulation is connected to the conceptual discrepancy of work in the feature of giving by the reason that work is for (material) reward. In addition, in that ethical care value arises in sharing experiences of positive emotional values by giving, the care value generated from not only direct caring but also household tasks as far as these are delivered as gifts. This insight uncovered ethical care value without measuring it monetarily and posited that its value in everyday life as a thing actors enjoy.

No doubt, the external environment largely defines ways of thought, behaviour, norms and rules, and even actors' preferred identities. Actors' practices have been produced, as argued from the interactionist perspective, by the interactions between actors and the environment, anchoring at perceived meanings. To comprehensively scrutinize housework dilemmas from the side of actors, this research initially traced the change of meanings, values, and customary norms of doing family care activity between two generations in Korea. This empirically revealed the decreased meaningfulness of doing housework, common expressions such as: *as a*

*woman I should do it as far as I can*” of the early industrialization generation to *‘I’m not the person who is good at doing housework’* of the democratization generation. Drawing attention to this change, this thesis argues that the shrinking of meaningfulness and increasing unwillingness to do housework resulted in little enjoyment of housework’s benefit. From the perspective of the actor in current Korean society, this is the context of the current care deficit: not only a reduced quantity of care but also reduced quality of care.

Thirdly, the little-embodied value of housework the democratization generation has enjoyed is the locus from which to search for value of housework. Unlike conventional studies that focus on valuing care, this research accepts that actors feel little embodied value. Then, if there is no value actors can enjoy in everyday life, there would be no reason to do it. Instead, the need to entirely outsource it would be urgent. However, a vaguely felt benefit did remain, and this research examined its source. In this regard, the research focused on the private-familial sphere, not simply in terms of society or political economics but more in terms of impact on everyday life. This showed a link with the theory of the individuated self (separated from others and simultaneously embedded self into society) and by uncovering the lopsided desire for social self, an attention to the vaguely fulfilled separate self has taken. In this sense, the unique purpose and function of family in life is to share care value through family care activity, by which one can be recognized as the precious self, thus being a separate self from others. Then, in the two domains of market and politics, one can also be an embedded self in society, based on achievement and reputation. Of course, conflict can always occur in everyday activities, depending on each individual’s particularities and external conditions. However, the current, little-embodied value of care cannot solve the care deficit in current Korean society. Solutions will need properly functioning care in the family and community, and these require recognition of care’s non-monetised value.

These three contributions have been brought about by starting from actors’ experiences. Starting with people’s memories and ideas about their lives allowed generation to be the main axis to figure out the shift in housework practices, rather than class or gender or some other theory-driven axis. As mentioned earlier, the term “generation” as employed by Mannheim already includes external conditions: generational common experiences. That is, even the significant class and education gaps between the

generations in this research are already related to external conditions of economic development and increasing gender equality ideology. Apart from this, the stage of my own life course would affect this research. If I had not tried to analyse my children's perception on housework (who have received my housework and seen the conflict for equality in it), my original research question (why we do housework?) would have been different.

This research has been able to link individual stories in a re-conceptualization of family care activity, using a mixture of inductive and deductive reasoning. This, I believe, brings actors and academic theorization closer. It vigorously anchors itself to interviewees' stories, and claims a different interpretation from conventional knowledge. Firstly, it elucidates a gendered role division, in which women had primary responsibility to support their families, exposing women's substantial contribution to family material life. This is rarely given attention in housework studies that employ the concept of gender division of labour. Secondly, the formation of the breadwinning consciousness has been illustrated, including men's strong role engagement in the breadwinning role and the good match between the role of father and having a job. That is, unlike conventional thought, in which men are seen as neglecting the family while focusing on their jobs, this research found men focusing on their jobs, in the stage of housewifization, for the sake of their families. Thirdly, the discrepancy between increasing gender equality ideology and gendered sharing of housework was interpreted as due to a shift in gender ideology, from the primacy of the role of daughter-in-law to that of mother, together with the increasing possibility to outsource some part of the housework. Fourthly, the decreasing embodied value of housework has been disclosed through an acceptance of interviewees' perceptions, not by employing in advance the concepts of work or care. All of these interpretations were made possible methodologically by the inductive method of analysing data.

I believe that this is anchored mainly in an epistemological stance that co-constructs knowledge through robust, inductive methods. Within this epistemological stance, my endeavour to comprehend what interviewees told from their own perspectives was a basic tenet from the start. This was why I used no pre-prepared questions in the interview and no pre-planned framework to analyse the interview texts. To comprehend their story from their perspectives meant seeing each as an autonomous being rather than as being confined or oppressed by a structure in which they live. For ex-

ample, a pre-set structure could easily view women in the early industrialization generation as oppressed by their patriarchal social conditions. It could also treat men in any period as beneficiaries of patriarchy ignoring their families. Of course, no researcher can remove all previous knowledge about the research topic. To try to do this, however incompletely, in the stages of interview and analysis, makes a huge difference in terms of addressing and exploring the actual data. It anchors at the belief that all of us have our own knowledge and reasons for our life paths. Epistemologically, I believe that actors are unique knowers of their life paths, and to comprehend their knowledge is one way of generating knowledge, thereby co-constructing it.

Co-constructing knowledge has been proven accurate through the validation of the analysis by the research participants. In this research, there has been no chance to communicate my analysis with my interviewees. However, I argue that developing research questions based on analysis of interview texts is also a means of co-constructing knowledge. The core of this research has been to reach a clear understanding by generating research questions from the data, co-constructing knowledge by giving authority to interviewees. I allowed the data to lead the research, and hope the participants will see their shared authority, since their data shaped the analysis and was not fitted to a pre-existing way of seeing.

I conducted the research by co-constructing knowledge for three reasons. Firstly, by not employing any pre-planned framework, instead of choosing a direction in which to see the data in terms of existing theory, I could ensure that the authority of the data absolutely belongs to researched. The interpretation that emerged differs from conventional knowledge. Without beginning with analytical tools such as gender, class, or age, I could see the clear difference between generations, which led to using generation as an analytical tool. That is, I followed the data. Secondly, the latter two research questions were also generated from the initial data analysis. Initially there was only a research question about the meaning of doing housework. While analysing the meanings and values, I found significantly different meaning-forming behind the customary norms in the two generations. This led to an examination of those customary norms, and provoked the second research question, about the shrinkage of housework practices and the relative meaningfulness of doing housework. It also generated a third research question, about the essence

of housework given its shrinking meaningfulness. That is, my data led me to go through the research procedures.

Thirdly, the research also employed deductive reasoning, where my authority as a researcher was privileged. In this stage, I had absolute authority to locate specific theories that fit the data, and to apply them. I believe that without this stage, I would be a representative of interviewees. Actually, many qualitative studies employ inductive reasoning as a method rather than an epistemology. The main aim of those studies to find a part of knowledge which would be not generalizable. However, in this research, by doing a deductive re-interpretation of inductive findings I am looking for generalizable knowledge, robustly anchored in empirical data. In the mixture of these three stages, which was initiated by the stories told by interviewees, this research has produced knowledge concerning family care activity and the value of housework.

As for the organization of this thesis, it seemed misleading to put theoretical resources into the early part, because this might obscure the process of integrating inductive reasoning into deductive reasoning. Nevertheless, it does follow a more or less conventional order, with theoretical resources shown in the early part of the thesis. Then, I put brief discussions about specific theoretical frameworks in front of the relevant chapters. This was basically because, without previous analysis of my data, the theoretical pieces are less clearly connected to the whole. This also enhances the transparency of my research procedures. Process in qualitative research is unlike that in quantitative research, so it is sensible that the presentation of findings and research processes would also differ. While some structural conventions have been adhered to for the convenience of readers, the final way of writing was varied to suit my specific research strategy.

Even though this research does not directly suggest political implications, to link the meaning of doing family care activity to individual identity does provide evidence against an instrumental approach in care policy. Just as a labourer is not a work machine, a woman is not for social reproduction. The aim of care policy should be enhancing the well-being of people rather than increasing the birth rate. Even more importantly, the discussion of gaining recognition in triad spheres by the triad of human activities may offer an important tool to re-organize a society to the benefit of actors' everyday lives. For example, while in education, both politics and economics are fundamental subjects, there is no subject of care,

namely family and community life. However, as one of basic spheres for everyday life, community, the familial-private area need emphasis. Unlike the conventional wisdom of modern individualization, by which one can be oneself free from traditional norms and roles, we are not free from the standards of public arenas. In this sense, to acknowledge the unique function and purpose of the familial-private realm would be the first step toward being the individuated self.

As for the limitation of this research, even though the two generations I accessed revealed significant differentiation in the meaning of doing housework, to investigate other generations would help to clarify discussion. For example, between these two generations there is the baby boomer generation, which could confirm the consciousness of gender division of labour in both genders. Particularly, in that this generation could be the last to accept the traditional way of life (e.g., the first son had to live with parents) they may show a variety of compromises around organizing care. Above all, in terms of receiving giving as a gift, their perspective as receivers would offer a great deal. However, because the aim of this research is to comprehend the meaning of doing family care activity, it did not include the perspectives of many receivers. To research the perspective of care receivers, and to distinguish the three human deeds and values depending on the way of circulating goods and services, would be necessary to confirm the different value they enjoyed.

I conclude this thesis answering to the question of what is family care activity with a male interviewee's statement:

*“the expression of giving my love would be to clean house if it is dirty”*





## Appendices

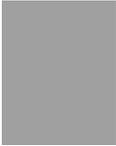
### **Appendix** *general information about interviewees*

|                              |             | Age | Education     | Occupation                  | children (age)             | experience in social activities |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Single Female Elderly</b> | 1           | 70s | None          | Waitress                    | son/ no contact            |                                 |
|                              | 2           | 70s | None          | waitress/cleaner            | daughter/ no contact       |                                 |
|                              | 3 (YeongJa) | 70s | None          | domestic worker /waitress   | daughter (34)              |                                 |
|                              | 4 (Bok-Sun) | 80s | Middle school | Volunteer                   | son in Canada              |                                 |
|                              | 5           | 70s | None          | Domestic worker/ Waitress   | no children                |                                 |
|                              | 6           | 70s | None          | waitress/ ran restaurant    | son/ dead                  |                                 |
|                              | 7           | 80s | None          | care for sick husbands      | 2 son, 1 daughter/ married |                                 |
| <b>Single Male Elderly</b>   | 1           | 70s | None          | temporary worker            | children/ no contact       |                                 |
|                              | 2           | 70s | High school   | police officer/ business    | son, 2 daughter/ married   |                                 |
|                              | 3           | 70s | High school   | office worker/ herbalist    | 2 children/ no contact     |                                 |
|                              | 4           | 80s | Uni.          | office worker/ business     | no marriage                |                                 |
|                              | 5           | 80s | Middle school | village headman/ gatekeeper | children/ no contact       |                                 |
|                              | 6           | 70s | Uni.          | civil servant/ gatekeeper   | son, daughter/ support     |                                 |

|                           |                |      |               |                                   |  |      |
|---------------------------|----------------|------|---------------|-----------------------------------|--|------|
|                           | 7              | 70s  | Uni.          | office worker                     | 5 children                               |      |
| <b>Elderly Couple</b>     | 1-H            | 70s  | college       | Teacher                           | 2 son, 1 daughter/<br>married-no support |      |
|                           | 1-W            | 70s  | Middle school | Volunteer                         |  |      |
|                           | 2-H            | 70s  | college       | Teacher                           | 2 son in China/<br>no support            |      |
|                           | 2-W            | 70s  | Middle school | waitress/ live-in domestic worker |  |      |
|                           | 3-H            | 70s  | High school   | musician/<br>office worker        | 2 son/<br>married-no support             |      |
|                           | 3-W            | 60s  | Middle school | factory worker                    |  |      |
|                           | 4-H            | 80s  | Elementary    | staff in Railways                 | 2 son, 1 daughter/<br>no support         |      |
|                           | 4-W            | 80s  | None          | varied jobs                       |  |      |
|                           | 5-H            | 70s  | None          | street vendor                     | son, daughter (living together)          |      |
|                           | 5-W            | 70s  | None          | street vendor                     |  |      |
|                           | 6-H            | 70s  | Uni.          | Business                          | 2 son/<br>married-no support             |      |
|                           | 6-W            | 70s  | High school   | help husband business             |  |      |
|                           | 7-H            | 70s  | Uni.          | Teacher                           | 2 son                                    |      |
| 7-W                       | 70s            | MA   | Teacher       |                                   |  |      |
| <b>Dual Earner Couple</b> | 1-H            | 40s  | Uni.          | Teacher                           | daughter (6)                             | yes  |
|                           | 1-W (Hyun-Suk) | 40s  | Uni.          | IT company                        |  | none |
|                           | 2-H            | 40s  | Uni.          | bank employee                     | son (14) daughter (12)                   | none |
|                           | 2-W            | 40s  | High school   | bank employee                     |  | none |
|                           | 3-H            | 40s  | Uni.          | civil servant                     | son (14)                                 | yes  |
|                           | 3-W            | 40s  | MA            | civil servant                     |  | yes  |
|                           | 4-H            | 40s  | Uni.          | IT company                        | 2 son (17, 14)                           | none |
|                           | 4-W            | 40s  | High school   | bank employee                     |  | none |
|                           | 5-H            | 40s  | Uni.          | staff of Railways                 | 2 son (14, 12)                           | yes  |
|                           | 5-W            | 40s  | High school   | childcare teacher                 |  | yes  |
| 6-H                       | 40s            | Uni. | Activist      | 2 son (20, 18)                    | yes                                      |      |

|  |                   |      |                       |                              |                                       |      |
|--|-------------------|------|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------|
|  | 6-W               | 40s  | Uni.                  | Activist                     |                                       | yes  |
| <b>F</b><br><b>u</b><br><b>l</b><br><b>-</b><br><b>t</b><br><b>i</b><br><b>m</b><br><b>e</b><br><b>H</b><br><b>o</b><br><b>u</b><br><b>s</b><br><b>e</b><br><b>-</b><br><b>w</b><br><b>i</b><br><b>f</b><br><b>e</b><br><b>C</b><br><b>o</b><br><b>u</b><br><b>p</b><br><b>l</b><br><b>e</b> | 1-H<br>(JunSik)   | 40s  | High school           | bank employee                | 2 son (18, 16)                        | none |
|  | 1-W               | 40s  | High school           | (ex) bank employee           |                                       | none |
|  | 2-H               | 40s  | Uni.                  | Lawyer                       | 2 children (4, 1)                     | none |
|  | 2-W<br>(SuY-oung) | 30s  | Ph.D.                 | (ex) assistant professor     |                                       | none |
|  | 3-H               | 40s  | Uni.                  | office worker                | daughter (20)                         | none |
|  | 3-W               | 40s  | High school           |                              |                                       | none |
|  | 4-H               | 50s  | Uni.                  | Business                     | daughter (19) son (16)                | yes  |
|  | 4-W               | 40s  | Uni.                  | (ex) activist                |                                       | yes  |
|  | 5-H               | 40s  | Ph.D.                 | Professor                    | daughter (12)                         | none |
|  | 5-W               | 40s  | Uni.                  | (ex) private academy teacher |                                       | none |
|  | 6-H               | 40s  | Uni.                  | building engineer            | 3 children (2 elementary 1 preschool) | none |
|  | 6-W               | 40s  | Uni.                  | (ex) office worker           |                                       | none |
|  | 7-H               | 40s  | Uni.                  | office worker                | daughter (14)                         | yes  |
| 7-W<br>(JaeEun)  | 40s               | Uni. | (ex) technical editor | none                         |                                       |      |
| <b>S</b><br><b>i</b><br><b>n</b><br><b>g</b><br><b>l</b><br><b>e</b><br><b>M</b><br><b>o</b><br><b>t</b><br><b>h</b><br><b>e</b><br><b>r</b>   | 1                 | 40s  | Ph.D.                 | assistant professor          | 2 son (20, 19)                        | yes  |
|  | 2<br>(EunJu)      | 40s  | High school           | Activist                     | 2 daughter (21, 19)                   | yes  |
|  | 3                 | 40s  | Uni.                  | civil servant                | son (16)                              | yes  |
|  | 4                 | 40s  | High school           | Activist                     | daughter (19) son (15)                | yes  |
|  | 5                 | 40s  | High school           | office worker                | son(18) daughter(16)                  | yes  |
|  | 6                 | 30s  | College               | childcare teacher            | daughter (7)                          | none |
|  | 7                 | 30s  | Ph.D.                 | guest professor/<br>business | daughter (13)                         | none |
| <b>P</b><br><b>a</b><br><b>i</b><br><b>d</b><br><b>-</b><br><b>D</b><br><b>o</b><br><b>m</b><br><b>e</b><br><b>s</b><br><b>t</b><br><b>i</b><br><b>c</b><br><b>W</b><br><b>o</b><br><b>r</b><br><b>k</b><br><b>e</b><br><b>r</b>   | 1                 | 50s  | High school           |                              | son (22), daughter (10)               |      |
|  | 2                 | 40s  | Elementary            |                              | son (24), daughter (21)               |      |
|  | 3                 | 40s  | Middle school         |                              | 2 son (19,15),<br>Daughter (9)        |      |
|  | 4                 | 50s  | High school           |                              | 2 daughter (34,32)                    |      |

|                                       |                 |                            |             |                    |                                  |      |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|------|
|                                       | 5               | 40s                        | High school |                    | 1 daughter, 1 son (adults)       |      |
|                                       | 6               | 40s                        | High school |                    | 2 daughter (Uni), 1 son (11)     |      |
|                                       | 7               | 40s                        | High school |                    | 2 daughter (18, 15)              |      |
| <b>Co-Housing</b>                     | 1-H             | 40s                        | Uni.        | Activist           | son(20) daughter (17)            | yes  |
|                                       | 1-W             | 40s                        | Uni.        | nutritionist       |                                  | yes  |
|                                       | 2-H (MinSu)     | 40s                        | Uni.        | Lawyer             | 3children (9, 6, 4)              | yes  |
|                                       | 2-W             | 40s                        | Uni.        | Activist           |                                  | yes  |
|                                       | 3-H             | 40s                        | Uni.        | Activist           | son (30 months)                  | yes  |
|                                       | 3-W             | 30s                        | MA          | civil servant      |                                  | yes  |
|                                       | 4-H             | 40s                        | Uni.        | office worker      | 2children (elementary)           | yes  |
|                                       | 4-W (Young Hee) | 40s                        | Uni.        | Activist           |                                  | yes  |
|                                       | 5-W             | 40s                        | Uni.        | housewife/activist | 3children (elementary, day-care) | yes  |
| <b>Full-time House-husband Couple</b> | H (MinHo)       | 40s                        | Uni.        | Househusband       | daughter (15)                    | yes  |
|                                       | W               | 40s                        | Uni.        | Civil servant      |                                  | none |
| <b>Group Interview</b>                | 1               | <b>Full-time Housewife</b> |             |                    | 5 in 40s                         |      |
|                                       | 2               | <b>Female Worker</b>       |             |                    | 2 in 30s 1 in 40s                |      |
|                                       | 3               | <b>Male Worker</b>         |             |                    | 4 in 40s                         |      |



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## Curriculum vitae

After quitting a Bachelor's program in Physics at Dongguk University (Korea), Eunjung Koo (Seoul, South Korea, 1970) worked for seven years at a manufacturing factory in the Guro Industrial Complex, and then at the Korean Women's Trade Union and the People's Solidarity Participatory Democracy (PSPD) for five years. While working, she obtained her Bachelor's degree in NGO Studies from Kyung Hee Cyber University and Master's degree in NGO Studies from Sungkonghoe University. Her Master's thesis, titled 'An analysis of the microscopic behaviour structure in the differentiation process of social movements after 1987,' aimed to find the dynamics of individuals' transition from participation in labour movements to participation in civil society movements. Based on her Master's thesis, she published an article titled 'Change in the activist identity by biographical narratives of people who participate in social movements.' During her second MA period in the Netherlands, she met migrant domestic workers participating in events for migrants, and this experience became the foundation for her MA thesis. In 2011, she obtained an MA degree in Development Studies at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Erasmus University Rotterdam. Her MA thesis is titled "Servants of Globalization" or "Global Cinderellas": the dynamics of reconstruction of migrant domestic workers' identities.' In 2012, she embarked on her PhD project, "Where is the value of housework?" Re-conceptualizing Housework as Family Care Activity.' Her PhD project focused on changes in the meaning and value generated by doing housework in relation to changes in external socio-political economic conditions in Korean society. Her research interests include identity, woman's labour, family, emotions, embodied knowledge, symbolic interactionism, qualitative methods, narrative analysis, deductive reasoning, and integrating subjectivity with objectivity.

