

Unpaid Work in Korea and Japan:

*A Comparison in Terms of Time and Money
through a Time Use Study of
Seoul and Tokyo, 1995*

by

Etsuko SAITO and Ki Young LEE*

1. Background and purpose of this study

In the market economy, unpaid work, such as household work and volunteer activity is economically and socially under valued as opposed to paid work. However, unpaid work plays a significant role in our lives. Our lives are not fulfilled solely on a monetary basis.

Unpaid work is defined in advanced nations as household work, childcare, nursing care, volunteer activity and self-employment. In developing countries, unpaid work may include various informal types of labor which are necessary for daily living (subsistence labor) (Ito, 1997).

If unpaid work is defined as household work, then the study of the history of unpaid work can refer to the social policy study, which was the area of research on the life of the worker. The social policy study touched on household work, the reproduction of labor power, and the value of labor power. These studies discussed a relationship between household work and capitalism (Aramata, 1968; Ito, 1990; Takenaka, 1996) and why household work was unpaid (Nakagawa, 1993; Osawa, 1993; Shinohara, 1996).

* Department of Consumer Studies, Seoul National University, Professor.

Modern economics analyzes the relation between household work to consumption and utility by a new utility theory of value (Becker, 1981). Moreover, Duden and Warlhof (1986), Beechey (1993) discussed that household work was the origin of women's suppression and the orientation of socialization on household work. Illich (1982) classified unpaid work (mainly household work) as "shadow work" or "vernacular activity" and considered differences between "shadow work" and "vernacular activity"¹.

Therefore, the study on household work as unpaid work has been conducted already in the field of economics. However, quite recently some light was shed on unpaid work itself². The Forth World Conference on Women (1995) was directly related to the unpaid work-study. In the conference, "F, Women and the Economy" 156 in the platform for action was adopted. It states how unpaid work contributes to improving the division of responsibility between women and men. In "H, Generate and disseminate gender desegregated data and information for planning and evaluation", 206 vows to conduct regular time-use studies measuring in quantitative terms, the value of unpaid work (U.N., 1996)³.

In short, the study on unpaid work was initially conducted in order to clarify the various types and extent of unpaid work. Secondly, its purpose was to indicate gender distribution, and lastly to demonstrate unpaid work in a quantitative manner. It was recommended that a time-use study be conducted. Home economics had scientifically illustrated paid work by a time-use study. After the Forth World Conference on Women, home economists began to examine and conceptualize unpaid work in preparation to validate the time-use survey that studies unpaid work, gender statistics and gender gap (Ito, 1997).

In 1995, the Prime Minister's Office and the Office for Gender Equality help promote a trend that put a qualitative grasp on unpaid work. This trend contained development of satellite accounts on nursing care and childcare. In 1996, A report "Monetary evaluation of unpaid work" was published by an economic planning agency (This research has been continued, the same titled report was published In 1998)⁴. This report helped create awareness of unpaid work in Japan and started a trend that put a great deal of effort into visualization of unpaid work by monetary evaluation (Honda, 1996; Kuba, 1999). However, the monetary evaluation by an economic planning agency was conducted from a national economics viewpoint. The purpose of this evaluation was to make up for SNA and to compare other economic indexes (for example GDP) with unpaid work costs.

This study tries to measure unpaid work from two viewpoints, time and money. Based on time-use surveys, which were conducted in Korea and Japan, authors wanted to conduct research that met the demand of the declaration of unpaid work “platform for action” at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The reason for the comparison between Korea and Japan is explained in the next chapter.

The social background on our theme “unpaid work” is as follows; Japan, an aging society with fewer children, has made rapid progress in expanding and developing the market for unpaid work related goods and services (child care and nursing care). In Korea, the socialization of household work is moving ahead steadily because of the increasing number of working women. Based on such social conditions, the purpose of this study is to clarify unpaid work time in Seoul and Tokyo, It will do this by evaluating gender, unpaid work on a household level, and show the significance and the limitations of the study concerning unpaid work’s monetary evaluation.

2. Reason for the comparison between Korea and Japan

Measuring and evaluating unpaid work was needed in the time-use survey. A time-use survey is an effective way to measure human activity by the amount of time spent between various groups around the world or in a single community. EUROSTAT (statistical office of the European communities) plays a key role in European countries. It is a joint research committee that makes common classification items of time-use survey results. However, due to differences in Asian countries, there is a difference in economic development, culture, religion so conducting a time-use survey is a difficult challenge in Asian Countries.

Many members of Asia’s 14 countries belong to ARAHE (Asian Region Association for Home Economics). We have a challenge to difficulty of common time-use survey jointly in Asia. The clue had to be looked for a possible country. We took notice of a neighboring country, Korea and Japan. In Korea, systems of statistics were affected by Japan historically. Japan and Korea is head of the NIES should be compared first before any other Asian country. In Japan, there are two large-scale time-use surveys. One is the “National Time Use Survey” by NHK (Japan broadcasting corporation), and the other is “Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities” by the Statistics bureau. The “National time use

survey” by NHK dates back to 1941 and aims at planning a program schedule. In Korea, the KBS (Korea Broadcasting System) has conducted time-use surveys by similar methods to NHK since 1981. Therefore, time-use surveys for these two countries could be partially compared since the 1980’s (NHK, 1993, 1995). Similar surveys by the national broadcasting station gave capabilities of joint research in Korea and Japan.

Measuring and evaluating unpaid work is this study’s theme and it relates closely to gender issues. Though one’s opinion on the roles and attitudes of gender differences differ between generations, Korea and Japan have many common points. Therefore analyzing by gender is very important. It is possible to investigate the origin of gender issues by promoting mutual understanding.

A home economics perspective for considering lifestyles, livelihood, culture, and economic development in both countries needs a comparison of time-use surveys. A comparison is also needed for the examination and preparation for time-use categories. Actually time-use surveys by NHK and KBC are not able to explain some activities. For example, the time spent on household work of Korean women was less than that of Japanese women. The reason cannot be clarified without discussing it in detail. Fortunately, we are the members of the “time-use study group in Korea and Japan”. This group has some Korean and Japanese researchers, and has attempted to exchange mutual ideas over the past several years.

We had researched joint meetings and discussions since 1993 in Seoul and Tokyo, and conducted time-use surveys in both cities in October 1995: Using the same tables of classification on activities, our research results were presented at 9th and 10th congress of ARAHE. Some papers were reported in the journal of ARAHE (Lee, Lee, Kim, Cho, etc., 1997*b*; Amano, Matsubaguchi, Amano, Ito, etc., 1998). In this comparative study of Korea and Japan, there were three significant points that were documented. The first significant point was that it was a joint research project in Asia, secondly, it is conducted using time-use survey tables of same the classification and activities in both countries, and lastly, it was able to discuss major differences between Korea and Japan.

3. Method

In this study, we regard only 'household work (it contains food preparation, meal cleanup/dish washing, house maintenance, clothing care, sewing and knitting, nursing care, expanded family service, child care, discipline, shopping and services)' as unpaid work⁵. We use monetary evaluation methods in two ways, the 'Opportunity Cost Method (OC)' and the 'Replacement Cost Method—Generalist approach (RC-G).'⁶ OC method calculates replacing unpaid work costs with paid cost in labor market. It is calculated by multiplying unpaid work time by the average wage in total industry by gender. An example of how the RC-G method calculates the paid wage is if a housekeeper was to do all unpaid work they would multiply unpaid work time by the average housekeeper's wage.

Time data from our research used 'a time use study of working couples living in Seoul and Tokyo' conducted in 1995 (Amano, Horiuchi, Ito, etc., 1996). The respondents were living in Korea and represented 209 couples (by classification of wife's employment type full time 82, part time 26, unemployed 101). And 136 couples living in Japan (full time 79, part time 29, and unemployed 28).

With the OC monetary evaluation method, we used "Basic Surveys on Wage Structure 1995" by The Ministry of Labour for Japanese data. For Korean data, the "Survey Report on Wage Structure 1995" by The Ministry of Labor was used. As for the RC-G Method, we used housekeeper's wages from "housekeeper's wages data in Japan (1996)" by Nihon Rinsyou Kango Kasei Kyoukai and "standard wage of housekeeper (1995)" by the Korean YWCA⁷.

Both methods calculate hourly pay for the total monthly household work time for both the wife-employed full-time couples and wife-unemployed full-time couples. For further examination on the household level, we used the "National Survey of Family Income and Expenditure, 1994" by the Statistics Bureau of Japan and the "Annual Report on Family Income and Expenditure 1995" by the National Statistical Office of Korea.

Thus, we adopted these methods and evaluated unpaid work using time and money viewpoints by classification of the employed wife.

Table 1. Monthly unpaid work time by wife's employment status

Unit: Min.

	Korea		Japan	
	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>
Wife-employed full-time couples	1,406	7,030	3,100	8,192
Wife-unemployed couples	982	12,776	2,196	13,674

4. Results

(1) *Time on unpaid work*

The breakdown of monthly unpaid work time yields remarkable insights (Table 1).

In Korea, full-time employed wives work for 7,030 minutes (117 h. 10 min.) and their husbands work for 1,406 minutes (23 h. 26 min.). In terms of unpaid work, full-time employed wives work five times as much as their husbands. Unemployed wives work for 12,776 minutes (212 h. 56 min.) and their husbands work for 982 minutes (16 h. 22 min.). Unemployed wives work 13 times as much as their husbands. When it's compared with wife's employed or not, unemployed wives work 1.8 times as much as employed wives. On the other hand, husbands of employed wives work 1.4 times as much as husbands of unemployed wives.

In Japan, full-time employed wives work for 8,192 minutes (136 h. 32 min) and their husbands work for 3,100 minutes (51 h. 40 min). In terms of unpaid work, full-time employed wives work 2.6 times as much as their husbands. Unemployed wives work for 13,674 minutes (227 h. 54 min.) and there husbands work for 2,196 minutes (36 h. 36 min.). Unemployed wives work 6.2 times as much as their husbands. When it's compared with wife's employed or not, unemployed wives work 1.6 times as much as employed wives. On the other hand, husbands of employed wives work 1.4 times as much as husbands of unemployed wives.

In comparing Korea and Japan, we pay special attention to households of unemployed wives because the differences between wives and husbands are

Table 2. Monthly monetary evaluation of unpaid work in Korea and Japan

	Korea (Unit: Won)				Japan (Unit: Yen)			
	OC Method		RC-G Method		OC Method		RC-G Method	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Wife-employed full-time couples	166,432	491,547	73,253	366,263	99,142	165,614	45,576	120,425
Wife-unemployed couples	116,242	893,315	51,162	665,630	70,223	276,430	32,281	201,005

Note: 1\$ = 771 Won, 1\$ = 94 Yen (in 1995)

larger than in those households of employed wives. In Japan, full-time employed wives work 2.6 times as much as their husbands and unemployed wives work 6.2 times as much as their husbands. Obviously the gender gap in relation to unpaid work time is bigger in Korea than in Japan. However, Japanese unpaid work time is longer than Korean unpaid work time irrespective of a wife's employment status.

(2) Monetary evaluation on unpaid work

Based on the time that clarified (1), we do the monetary evaluation in terms of amounts (Table 2). It is used OC method and RC-G method.

By the OC method, Korean full-time employed wives' monthly monetary amounts are 491,547 won and their husbands are 166,432 won, 3 times as much as their husbands. Korean unemployed wives' amounts are 893,315 won, and their husbands are 116,232 won, 7.7 times as much as their husbands. In Japan, full-time employed wives' monthly monetary amounts are 165,614 yen, their husbands are 99,142 yen, or 1.7 times as much as their husbands. Japanese unemployed wives' amounts are 276,430 yen and their husbands are 70,223 yen, 3.9 times as much as their husbands.

Table 3 shows the ratio of wives and husbands on times and monetary amounts (by OC method). According to Table 3, Korean couples of full-time employed

Table 3. Ratio of wives and husbands on time and monetary amounts

Wife = 100

	Korea			
	Unpaid work time		Monetary evaluation	
	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>
Wife-employed full-time couples	20	100	34	100
Wife-unemployed couples	8	100	13	100
	Japan			
	Unpaid work time		Monetary evaluation	
	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>
Wife-employed full-time couples	38	100	60	100
Wife-unemployed couples	16	100	25	100

wives to their husbands are 100 to 20 in terms of time. However, on monetary evaluation, the percentage of husbands is 34%. Japanese couples are the ratio wives to husbands, 100 to 38 in terms of time. However, on monetary evaluation percentages of husbands are 60%. We find that monetary evaluation amount reduces the gender gap of time in both countries. It reflects a wage differential by sex. In Korea, women's average wage by the hour is 4,195 won and men's average is 7,212 won. Japanese women's average is 1,212 yen and men's is 1,914 yen⁸. We found monetary evaluation of unpaid work by OC method distorted and conceal the burden on women that was clarified by time.

By the RC-G method, in Korea, the full-time employed wives' monthly monetary amounts are 366,263 won and their husbands are 73,253 won. Korean unemployed wives' amounts are 665,630 won and their husbands are 51,162 won. In Japan, full-time employed wives' monthly monetary amounts are 120,425 yen and their husbands are 45,576 yen. Japanese unemployed wives' amounts are 201,005 yen and their husbands are 32,281 yen. By the RC-G Method, the

gender gap of evaluation amount is equal to that of unpaid work time. Because the housekeeper's wage was used, the RC-G Method was a simple wage (not by sex). Compared to OC Method, the evaluation amount from the RC-G Method is small. It brings that housekeeper's wage lower than ordinary wages which were used in the OC method. The housekeeper's wage by hour is 3,125 won in Korea and is 880 yen in Japan. Concerning men, the evaluation amount from the RC-G Method was half of that of the OC Method.

(3) *Percentage of contribution between wives and husbands on unpaid work and paid work (from times and monetary amounts)*

In addition to unpaid work, we clarify percentage of contribution in households of employed wives on paid work through evaluating times and monetary amounts (Fig. 1).

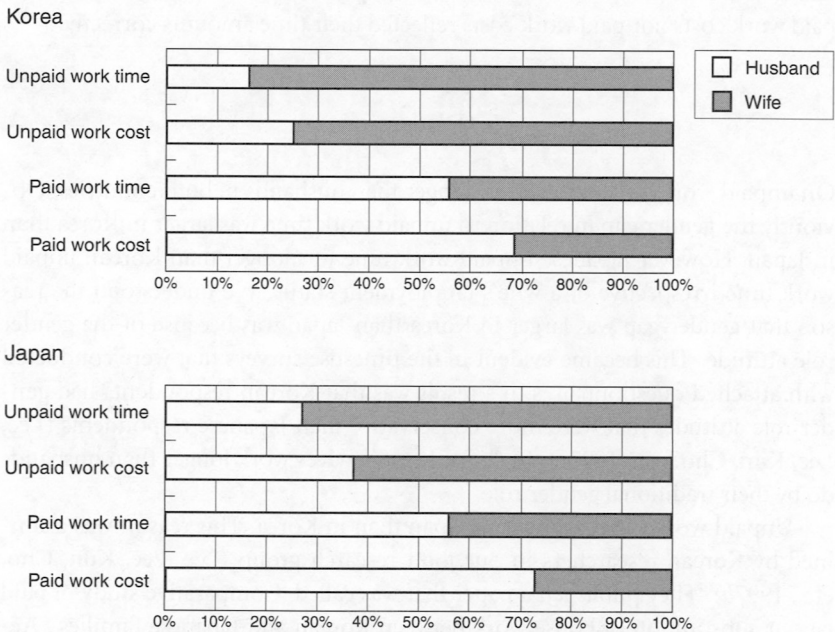


Fig. 1. Percentage of gender on time and monetary evaluation

Data of time on paid work is used for the time-use survey and that is used for catching unpaid work time. In order to evaluate paid work, we used the data of 'wages and salaries' of full-time working couples from statistics of family Income and expenditure.

In Korea, wives and husbands distribution ratio on unpaid work time is 83% to 17% (totalled 100%). Converting time into money, wives and husbands distribution ratio on unpaid work cost is 75% to 25%. While the paid work ratio of wives to husbands is 44% to 56%; the percentage of monetary amounts is wives 31% to husbands 69%. Monetary evaluation arrived at advantageous results for husbands in both works.

In Japan, wives and husbands distribution ratio on unpaid work time is 73% to 27%. Converting time into money, wives and husbands distribution ratio on unpaid work cost is 63% to 37%. Wives' percentage of monetary amounts were reduced by 10%. And the paid work ratio of distribution on time is wives 44% to husbands 56% because the gender gap is slight. Based on time, showing monetary amounts of paid work, the ratio is wives 27% to husbands 73%. Neither unpaid work costs nor paid work costs reflected their time amounts correctly.

5. Discussion

On unpaid work time, wives work longer than husbands in both countries. Obviously the gender gap in relation to unpaid work time was larger in Korea than in Japan. However Japanese unpaid work time was longer than Korean unpaid work time irrespective of a wife's employment status. We understood the reason that gender-gap was larger in Korea than Japan was because of the gender role attitude. This became evident in the time-use surveys that were conducted with attached questionnaires. It's result was that Korean respondents had gender role attitudes that were more conservative than Japanese respondents (Lee, Lee, Kim, Cho, etc., 1997a). In short, Korean wives work longer than husbands do by their traditional gender role.

Unpaid work time is longer in Japan than in Korea. This reason was examined by Korean researchers in our joint research group (Lee, Lee, Kim, Cho, etc., 1997b). They published a paper that was called 'Comparative study of paid labour substitution of house work between Korean and Japanese families'. According to the publication, paid labour substitution of housework in Korea is

more frequently than Japan. Paid labour substitution of house work, that is to say 'socialization of unpaid work', has an effect on time of unpaid work; it was found that the Japanese worked longer than the Koreans did. For the study of unpaid work, the socialization aspect was an important issue. The degree of progress on socialization and the types of socialized unpaid work have to be considered as their own culture. That includes one's way of thinking about unpaid work. Deliberating on socialization of unpaid work is linked to the examination again in the differences between 'shadow work' and 'vernacular activity' by the concept of socialization. We are going to expand on this issue at a later point.

We will discuss the monetary evaluation on unpaid work in the market economy rather than time evaluation. Showing amounts of time converted into money is effective for visualizing values of unpaid work. However, visualizing values of unpaid work has a problem on methodology that reduces gender gap clarified by time.

OC-method reflects the wage difference between gender in the labor market. On RC-G method, the gender gap of evaluation amount was equal to that of time in order to using housekeepers' wages (not by gender). However, we will compare a housekeeper's wage with the general wage that was used in the OC method. Japanese housekeeper's wage was 72% of general wage of women and 46% of that of men. Korean housekeeper's wage was 75% of general wage of women and 44% of that of men. Housekeepers' wages were low in both countries. The low wage of housekeepers shows that household work was looked at as inferior and did not evaluate correctly at all times. While evaluating monetary wages it is important not only to grasp time precisely but also to consider gender issues (wage differential by gender and the low wages of housekeepers) that are inherent in this method of evaluation.

6. Limitations of this study and further subject

In this study, we have tried to clarify unpaid work time and their monetary amounts on the household level. As a result, it demonstrated that couples' unpaid work time in the household concretely compared to the monetary amounts on monthly household's costs. It achieved our goal to visualize unpaid work. However, we found some limitations through evaluating time and monetary amounts. First

we have to note about the analysis on unpaid work time. In this study, unpaid work is defined as household work, volunteer activity, and self-employed domestic labor. Therefore, clarifying unpaid work more precisely requires a great deal of investigation on social activity. This evaluation has attracted attention in Japan by responding to the declaration at 'the forth world conference on women'. This conference was conducted to evaluate unpaid work and for developing methods for assessing unpaid work that is outside national accounts for possible reflection in satellite or other official accounts. Although developing satellite or other official accounts will be useful to grasp unpaid work at a national level, who needs it. Warring (1994) pointed out that developing an economics index on a national level exists quite a differential dimension from people's well-being. It also admits efficiency in their index, which clarifies the actual economical situation of the country and uses other economical indexes. We found monetary evaluation of unpaid work on the national level was not an effective measure for solution to gender issues, which was enduring the greater part of unpaid work by women. Because unpaid work was done in households, the analysis is significant not at a national level but in the household level.

Returning to the household, which is the basis of unpaid work, we'll have to know the limitations about the monetary evaluation method that was based on the 'new utility theory of value'. Although the theory assumes that households or persons always behave rationally and consistently, is not always true. The household is an aggregate of various individuals, and it does not necessarily behave rationally. Households include the member's social, cultural, historical and economical relationship. Unpaid work is the root of our lives. It plays a significant role and on our standards of living and quality of life depend on it. Can the amounts calculated by converting time to costs in the labor market show our actual standard of living and quality of life? In addition, from this comparative study, we found that monetary evaluation is not to be the comparative standard. Each country has wage differential by gender and gaps between a housekeepers wage and the general wage. Will monetary evaluation have a significant role in developing countries?

As further research is conducted on unpaid work, the following 3 points will need to be answered.

1—It is needs classification of activity on the assumption that measuring unpaid work, have to conduct survey catching unpaid work in detail, for example

by using these questions “what kind of activity did you do” or “whom did you work for”.

2—Socialization of unpaid work should define what kinds of unpaid work can/can not be socialized. It is important to consider the social and cultural viewpoints. Why can't the socialization of unpaid work progress? Why is unpaid work difficult to socialize?

3—Achieve gender equality on the division of the responsibility of unpaid work. Understanding ‘cooperative conflict’ in households which Sen (1998) indicated as a key point.⁹

Essentially unpaid work and paid work can not be opposing each other as traditional economic theory insists on. Both types of work connect with each other and are continuously building our lives. Further study will inquire between the relationship between unpaid work and paid work on a household level and the influence of gender on the balance of both work .

This paper has corrected and improved our poster presentation at 10th congress of ARAHE in Yokohama, (August 17th, 1999).

Finally, this study was completed after the cooperation and discussion of members in time-use survey groups in Korea and Japan over a long period of time. The authors wish to express our sincere gratitude to the members. (Dr. Setsu ITO, Prof. Hiroko AMANO, Dr. Haruko AMANO, Dr. Reiko MATSUBAGUCHI, Mr. Takeshi MIZUNOYA, Dr. Kaoru HORIUCHI, Ms. Jun ITO, Dr. Yon Suk LEE, Dr. Hee Keum CHO, Dr. Oi Sook KIM)

Notes

¹ The former study (Duden and Warlhof) takes a feminism-oriented approach. The latter study (Illich), was criticized by feminists because Illich stated that the origin of sexism is only based on economic development, and denied the socialization of household work.

Illich showed the concept of “shadow work”, which was born in discussion with Duden and Warlhof. The year of the referred books has a mixed up order because the books were a collection of theses.

² However, the history of taking up unpaid work can go back to “The World Conference of the International Women’s Year” in Mexico City, 1975. It pointed out the importance of a correct evaluation of the economic contribution of women. At the world conference, two topics “The United Nations Decade for Women” in Nairobi and “The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women” stated that taking concrete action was needed and necessary for admitting “paid contribution and unpaid contribution on women”. After that, INSTRAW, UNIFEM and WID conducted a survey in order to gather data on unpaid work. In 1993 “The International Conference on Measuring of Unpaid Work” was held in Canada.

³ In the Forth World Conference on Women (1995), unpaid work was written, “unremunerated work”. Ito (1997) argued unremunerated work was a wider concept than unpaid work. However in this study, we unified that term by using unpaid work.

⁴ A monetary evaluation by an economic planning agency used a time-use survey for leisure activities as time-use data by the Statistics bureau. Ito (1997) suggested that if unpaid work was discussed, it was important to catch “what action were classified as unpaid work?” and “For whom was unpaid work conducted”. This evaluation of unpaid work by economic planning clarified this topic at a national level. But the evaluation by the economic planning agency of the Statistics bureau did not work in cooperation, so the authors could not state that the results of the economic planning agency are an accurate evaluation about time and money on unpaid work.

⁵ Unpaid work was defined as volunteer activity and self-employed domestic labor except household work. In this study, unpaid work is limited only to household work for the monetary evaluation to be more concise.

⁶ As for the monetary evaluation, there is the ‘Replacement Cost Method—Specialist approach (RC-S)’ method. This method calculates the paid cost when specialists (for example cooking, clothing care, childcare, nursing care to do household work). We do not use this method in this study for two reasons. The first is due to the difficulty of specialist selection the corresponding two countries. The second is because of existence of a productivity gap between general household work and specialist work.

⁷ We obtained the data from Mr. Heo, Nam-Geo (Director of National Statistical Office in Korea) from YWCA.

⁸ It was calculated on a monthly average wage divided by monthly working times in all industries.

⁹ Nakano (1998) introduced theory of Sen, which states that if women receive cash income, the traditional gender norm will change and women’s choices will expand. This pointed out a bargaining problem in her theory on an information basis as a division of labor by gender and about ways of acquiring cash income.

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