

# **A Comparative Analysis of the Changes in the Values and Attitudes Toward Gender Equality and Gender Roles in Korea**

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This study investigates the changes of values and attitudes about gender equality and gender roles in Korea from a comparative perspective. One of the aims of this study is to look at long-term changes of values on gender equality and gender roles in Korea. For this purpose, the value changes are analyzed for the last ten years. Another aim of this study is to test Inglehart's thesis of the differential influence of materialistic/post-materialistic views on gender and family values. For this purpose, this study adopts Inglehart and Norris's index of materialistic/post-materialistic values.

Data for this study comes from the World Values Survey and the wave data from 1995, 2001, and 2006 are used. For a comparative analysis, the 2000-2001 World Values Survey data is also used.

Through this study, it is clear that those in Korea who have post-materialistic values are more likely to hold an egalitarian value on gender equality than those who have materialistic values. This result supports Inglehart's thesis of the differential influence of materialistic/post-materialistic values. However, in terms of gender roles, the distinction of materialistic/post-materialistic values does not affect the attitude towards gender roles at home.

Keywords: value change, materialistic/post-materialistic value, gender equality, gender roles, value shift, Inglehart

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## **Introduction**

Values concerning gender and family are indisputably changing just like other

values and attitudes.<sup>1</sup> According to Inglehart's thesis on materialistic/post-materialistic values, values of gender equality are predominant in the areas where post-materialism is predominant, and values concerning family also change from "modern family values" that have been established since the emergence of the so-called modern family to "postmodern family values."

The term "modern family values" represents family values based on the gender division of labor in which men work outside and women took exclusive charge of raising children and housework. In fact, when discussing values concerning gender and family, the term "modern family values" has been confused with the term "traditional family values," and the two terms have been used interchangeably. This confusion occurs because the division of labor in which men provide for the family by working outside the home and women take exclusive charge of parenting and housework has been considered a traditional division of labor according to today's standard. Thus, they have been called "traditional family values." However, to be more precise, these family values are more "modern family values" rather than "traditional family values," and any value that deviates from these values should be called "post-modern family values." Therefore, if there should be any changes in contemporary family values, the discussion must revolve around the shift from "modern family values" to "post-modern family values."

However, a slightly different line of discussion is possible within the Korean context. Korea made a full-scale transition into a modern society beginning in the 1960s when it began to experience a so-called full-fledged modernization process. Since then, the Korean modern family, similar to the Western modern family, has begun to take form. The concept that the gender role division between husband and wife dictates men provide for the family by working outside the home and women take care of children and housework at home took root only after the end of the colonial period.

Yet, such a division is relevant to gender role division during traditional times. Traditionally, Korea has been an agricultural society and the family was a unit of production and consumption. Due to this fact, men generally not only worked outside the home but also did some housework. Similarly, women not only worked at home but also had duties in such production areas as fieldwork

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1. In this study, I use the terms value and attitude interchangeably although scholars often distinguish value from attitude.

and making clothing. In the case of the affluent gentry who did not need to work, men, free from the burdens of housework, assumed their role as the head of the family by maintaining or increasing the wealth, without having to directly involve themselves in productive activities. Women took charge of affairs at home by either managing others who did the work or personally taking on the house and parenting.

Therefore, the principle that married men and women had their own distinct spheres of activities, based on the principle of “the separation of man and wife,” was naturally transferred to the family as the principle of gender role division. This was the most fundamental norm of the Confucian doctrine that dominated the everyday life of late Joseon dynasty as a national ideology. It is another matter how well the gender role division was actualized in everyday life of the late Joseon dynasty. The important thing is that such a principle has existed as a social norm that defined gender roles for men and women since the late Joseon dynasty.

This principle of Confucian gender role division is a “traditional family value” and, at the same time, is not much different from “modern family values.” Therefore, we tend to think that the Western notion of “modern family values” is not so different from Korean “traditional family values,” and we tend to consider modern family values as traditional family values.

The family values of the modern family are mutually beneficial family values based on the strengths or specialty of men and women on one level. On another level, they have led to inequality between the genders in various areas such as education, work, and career by defining the sphere of activity for women and men inside and outside of the home. However, as the level of women’s education rose and women’s participation in society increased, modern family values based on the strict division of gender roles began to be challenged. Just as Inglehart’s thesis stated, when a society achieves economic development and is free from hunger and poverty, the values that dictate people shift from materialistic values that are centered on the survival issues to post-materialistic values which emphasize individual freedom and quality of life (Inglehart, 1990; Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). When post-materialistic values take place as the predominant direction, the family values within a society cannot help but change, and the direction of the change moves from gender inequality to gender equality. In the transformation of values from materialism to post-materialism, the core of the value changes in gender and family is this change to the values of gender equality. The aim of this

research is to examine whether Korean family values are indeed changing from gender unequal values to gender equal values, focusing on the values of gender equality and gender roles.

Aside from this, the other interest of this study is the issue of whether the “modern family values” formed under the so-called Confucian norm are changing to “post-modern family values.” When the values of a society change from materialistic values to post-materialistic values, the changes in values take place in all aspects of life. Of course, the changes in values do not take place at the same speed and scope in all areas. However, even supposing the changes occur at a different rate, we have to hypothesize that the changes do occur in all areas. Among all these changes, the manner in which the changes in family values occur is the focus of this study.

In this study, I first examine how various values regarding gender equality and gender roles have changed over time in Korea. Second, I examine where Korean values on gender equality and gender roles stand in comparison with other countries using the data from the 2000 World Values Survey. Last, I examine whether values of gender equality and gender roles in Korea show differences among the materialistic/post-materialistic values based on a comparison between a few selected countries.

## **Data and Method**

Data for this study comes from the World Values Survey. For a time-series analysis of gender equality and family values in Korea, I use the wave data from the 1995, 2001, and 2006 World Values Survey. For the purpose of comparing gender equality and family values, I use the 2000-2001 World Value Survey data. In a comparative analysis, data for the six countries of Korea, Japan, China, U.S., Sweden, and Egypt are used.

This study first describes changes of gender equality and gender role values in Korea between 1995 and 2006 by frequency analysis. When I compare the gender equality and gender role values among the six countries, I use regression analysis or logit analysis depending on the scale of the variables.

In regression and logit analysis of gender equality and gender roles, this study tests whether there are differences in the attitudes toward gender equality and gender roles by using materialistic and post-materialistic values. I adopt Inglehart and Norris’ index based on 12 questions.<sup>2</sup>

One of the important objectives of the World Values Survey is to determine how attitudes toward gender equality have changed by examining values related to gender and family. According to Inglehart and Norris (2003), when determining values and attitudes related to gender equality, one must consider the following survey questions:

- 1) On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do;
- 2) When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women;
- 3) A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl;
- 4) A woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled;
- 5) A woman does not want to marry, but does want to have a child as a single parent.

Inglehart and Norris analyzed these five survey questions and combined these factors to create an index of 100 points to rate attitudes toward gender equality (Inglehart and Norris 2003: 32). However, it seems to me that there are significant differences in the factors associated with each of the five questions; so rather than combining the five into one index, it is preferable to analyze each independently and look at the first three questions as questions related to gender equality. In the 2006 World Values Survey in Korea, these five questions from Inglehart and Norris are not included. Therefore, there is a lack of continuity between the surveys in the case of Korea. Accordingly, this study considers the questions on political leadership and college education as related to gender equality and investigate the results as such.

## **Long-Term Changes in Gender Equality and Gender Role in Korea**

In this section, I examine how gender equality and gender role values have changed over time in Korea.

### **1. Attitudes Toward Gender Equality**

Gender equality is steadily increasing worldwide; not only in terms of values,

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2. For specific details about the index, see Inglehart and Norris (2003).

but also at a concrete level. However, the male-female wage gap persists, and in the case of Korea, there is a very low percentage of women in high paying professions. Gender discrimination and inequality continue to exist and the reality is that gender equality remains a very sensitive issue with many ramifications.

**Table 1** Percentage in agreement with the statement “On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.”

Variable		1995	2001	2006
<b>Total</b>		<b>62.6</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>47.8</b>
Gender	Male	71.0	52.6	53.7
	Female	54.7	34.6	41.9
Age	20s	50.9	23.0	42.5
	30s	61.1	43.0	42.0
	40s	69.9	49.0	50.9
	50+	81.4	62.4	54.3
Education	Less than high school	78.2	54.9	50.5
	Hight school	55.3	45.8	47.3
	University and more	60.4	36.8	47.0
N		1235	1196	1006

Table 1 presents the results to the statement “On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.” In 1995, 62.6% of respondents agreed to this statement. Significantly more than half of those surveyed believed that men make better political leaders. However, this percentage dropped to 43.7% in 2001, with less than half of those surveyed agreeing. In 2006, the percentage rose slightly to 47.8%, but still less than half of the respondents. Demonstrating the trend toward gender equality, the percentage of those expressing gender discriminatory attitudes has decreased to less than half of those surveyed. Nonetheless, we can also say that since nearly half of the respondents retain a preference for male politicians, there remains a deep gender-based discrimination.

There are significant differences by gender, age and education to this question. Let us first examine the breakdown of respondents by gender. In 1995,

71% of male respondents agreed, while only 54.7% of women indicated yes. In 2006, less than half of those surveyed had a stated preference for male politicians. When divided by gender, 53.7% of men and 41.9% of women were in agreement, demonstrating the continued gender gap in perspective. Thus, even in 2006, over half of the surveyed men expressed a belief that men make better politicians than women.

If one classifies this attitude according to age, there are clear differences between the young and the old. In 2001, there was a severe difference in age; namely, 23% of those in their 20s supported this statement while 62.4% of those in their 50s and older supported this gender-biased statement. In 2006, the differences arising from age were much different from 2001. In 2006, 42.5% of those in their 20s supported the statement and those in their 30s showed 42% support. On the other hand, 50.9% of those in their 40s and 54.3% of those in their 50s and older supported the statement. Thus there were significant differences based on age in regards to women as political leaders in 2006.

This sort of age difference is also reflected weakly in educational levels. In order to conduct an international comparison of educational levels, it was tied to three categories unlike the usual Korean categories. Perhaps due to this those with higher levels of education were less supportive of gender biases than those with lower levels of education. One can conclude that those with higher level of educations tend to consist mainly of young people while those with lower level of educations tend to consist mainly of older people which would explain why those with higher levels of education tend to exhibit less gender bias.

In Korean society, men are viewed as better political leaders than women. While in comparison to views in 1995, gender biased attitudes in 2001 decreased greatly, but in 2006 gender biased attitudes increased slightly again.

If these findings are accurate, are there also gender biased attitudes toward higher levels of education just like the political sector? In the World Values Survey, university level education is used to exemplify a high level of education. Table 2 displays the results of the response to the statement “A university education is more important for a boy than a girl.”

Although there is preference for men rather than women as political leaders, in terms of a university education, there is a low belief that a university education is more important for men than women. In the 1995 World Values Survey, 37.3% of all respondents believed that a university education is more important for men than women. In the survey conducted in 2001, only 22.6% supported this view and 22.9% supported this view in 2006. Throughout the 2000s there

**Table 2** Percentage in agreement with the statement “A university education is more important for a boy than a girl.”

Variable		1995	2001	2006
<b>Total</b>		<b>37.3</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>22.9</b>
Gender	Male	42.2	26.7	24.8
	Female	32.6	18.4	21.0
Age	20s	24.5	11.2	13.8
	30s	32.0	20.2	21.7
	40s	48.3	26.8	26.3
	50+	59.6	33.8	26.4
	Education	Less than high school	56.4	38.9
	High school	33.2	22.0	24.6
	University and more	29.1	17.1	19.9
N		1235	1196	1006

has been no great change in the attitude, but in comparison to 1995, the attitude that a university education is more important for men than women decreased.

There are differences in the attitude toward a university education by gender in Korean society while gender biases toward a university education have been steadily decreasing worldwide. When compared to gender differentials in regard to the attitude toward politics, it can be seen as quite weak. In 1995, 42% of men believed that a university education is more important for a man than a woman while 36.2% of women supported this statement. In the 2001 survey, 27% of men and 18% of women supported this statement, which displays a continued similar level of difference between males and females. However, while the level of support of this statement in 2006 is similar to that of 2001, the level of difference between males and females is practically nonexistent; 24.8% of male respondents support the gender discriminatory statement and 21% of female respondents support this statement. Therefore, while it appears that gender biases toward high levels of education seem not to have changed greatly in the 2000s, one can observe the continued disappearance of differing attitudes between males and females.

In terms of a university education, there are still differences in gender discriminatory attitudes by age. Among those in their 20s, only 13.8% believe that



a college education is more important for men than women, while 21.7% of those in their 30s support this gender discrimination in university education. But those in their 40s and 50s show a 26% support of this gender discriminatory statement.

Women as political leaders have not obtained equal positions to men. One can witness this fact in the general gender biased attitude among Koreans as well. In contemporary Korean society, a college education is no longer solely for men. Women and men both equally attend college and recently women more aggressively attain high levels of education. The progress in educational attainment for women makes the gender gap meaningless in Korean society. Reflecting this changing situation, the gender gap in the attitude toward higher education has been consistently decreasing. On the other hand, in terms of age, there are still differences in gender discriminatory attitudes toward a college education between the young and the old.

When combining the results presented above, one can observe an overall increase in gender equality related attitudes. However, in comparison to 1995, in the 2000s it is hard to conclude that gender equality related attitudes have increased significantly. While there is strong support for the attitude of equal opportunity for men and women in relation to a college education, there is still a great deal of resistance toward a woman becoming a political leader in Korean society. We can say that Korea still is not a complete gender equal society based on the results from the World Values Survey. But we can say that Korean society has made a transition to gender equal society in some fields such as higher education in both attitude and behavior.

## 2. Attitudes Toward Gender Roles

One important area of gender and family values is the attitude toward women's work. This area can be called a gender role. In the World Values Survey, there are only a few questions in regards to gender division of labor. However, one can determine if the Confucian ideas of a traditional gender division of labor continues or whether or not there has been a transition to a post-materialistic value system through two questions on the gender division of labor.

Table 3 focused on the financial contribution by men and women. We can see that in 1995, 79% of respondents supported the statement that both men and women should contribute to the household income. In 2001, this attitude decreased with 72% of respondents supporting the statement that both men and

**Table 3** Percentage in agreement with the statement “Both the husband and wife should contribute to household income.”

Variable		1995	2001	2006
<b>Total</b>		<b>78.8</b>	<b>72.2</b>	<b>79.8</b>
Gender	Male	76.2	70.0	79.2
	Female	81.3	74.5	80.4
Age	20s	76.6	76.0	75.3
	30s	77.7	67.4	73.8
	40s	83.5	72.3	81.5
	50+	79.6	73.3	87.6
Education	Less than high school	80.3	75.4	91.5
	High school	80.2	73.4	79.7
	University and more	76.2	69.7	73.5
N		1235	1196	1006

women should contribute to household income. However, in 2006, 80% of respondents supported the statement.

There is almost no difference between males and females in terms of this attitude. Both men and women believe that both sexes should contribute to household income. If we investigate this by age, however, it seems that the older generation, not the younger generation, believes that women should make a living. Contrary to general expectations, the results in Table 3 do not show that the younger generation exhibits post-modern or post-materialistic attitudes toward gender roles in terms of making a living. Perhaps because the older generation has experienced firsthand how difficult it is for a man to make a living without a woman's contribution, the older generation seems to support a post-materialistic view of the gender division of labor more than the younger generation. This sort of age effect is also repeated in the same manner in terms of educational levels. Those with lower levels of education tend to reject gender biased views of family support.

What are the causes behind these results? The 1997 economic crisis may have resulted in a change in the attitudes toward the gender division of labor. Korean people seem to begin to accept that both men and women should make a living particularly after experiencing the economic crisis.

**Table 4** Percentage in agreement with the statement “Being a house wife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.”

Variable		1995	2001	2006
<b>Total</b>		<b>88.7</b>	<b>86.4</b>	<b>90.0</b>
Gender	Male	86.5	81.8	89.3
	Female	90.7	91.1	90.6
Age	20s	89.1	88.8	90.2
	30s	91.9	89.3	90.2
	40s	88.6	86.5	89.0
	50+	83.2	80.1	90.6
Education	Less than high school	82.4	78.9	92.5
	High school	90.5	87.8	89.6
	University and more	90.7	87.5	89.0
N		1235	1196	1006

However, this sort of change in attitude proves to be double-sided when we consider the statement “Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.”

At a time when whether or not a housewife should receive the same treatment as a career women has become an issue and with women participating more and more in economic activities and going out of the home to work, the overall attitude toward women has grown more positive while the attitude toward housewives is becoming more negative. Therefore, responses toward the statement “Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay” can be used to address these issues. Table 4 shows that many believe that a career woman and a housewife have equal worth. Table 4 is surprising when we recall the results in Table 3 and that the attitude that only men should make a living has become significantly weakened. In 1995, 89%, in 2001, 86% and in 2006, 90% of respondents believed that being a housewife was just as fulfilling as working for pay in Korea.

Why is this unexpected and contradictory situation occurring? Based on the 2006 World Values Survey data for Korea, this positive assessment of a housewives’ role does not show any gender dependency. Ninety percent of all respondents, male and female, see housewives’ role as valuable as jobs in the work-

place. Regardless of age, there are no differences at all in assessing housewives' role.

Then, what are the differential attitudes by education? While there is a difference of 3-4% between educational levels, these differences cannot be considered significant. The absolute majority of Koreans responded that both men and women should contribute toward the family income through earning money as we see in Table 3.

Then, why did 90% of respondents also say that the housewives' role and jobs in the workplace are equally valuable? It is very difficult to interpret these two contradictory responses.

On the one hand, this may be due to the fact that most married women are housewives. Married women in Korea, quite often, cannot work even when they wish to do so. If housewives cannot find jobs, it may be, on the surface, necessary to express a positive evaluation of their roles rather than blaming them for not working outside of the home. While it may now be perceived as natural that married women, if they want, should work rather than stay at home, disparaging women who are forced to stay home against their wishes might also be considered improper.

On the other hand, some insist that society as a whole has been undervaluing housewives' role, and others even advocate placing a monetary value on housewives' domestic chores. In the past, domestic work had been disparaged and not considered proper labor; but nowadays, public sentiment has shifted to the view that house chores done by housewives should be positively defined as labor.

Since this is quite a recent debate, this particular explanation is not persuasive enough to account for the fact that in 1995, nearly 90% agreed to the statement that housewives' role have same value as jobs.

### **Cross-national Comparison of Gender Equality and Gender Role: Regression or Logit Analysis**

This section examines if gender and family values are related to materialist/post-materialist attitudes through a comparative analysis of leading post-modern societies such as Sweden compared to Confucian or Muslim cultural spheres. Here, Inglehart's index of materialist/post-materialist values is utilized.

Question sets used in this analysis were all based on a two or four point scale. This study applied a two-point scale of for/against and a four point scale

ranging from “strongly against” to “strongly for.” Rather than focusing on obtaining accurate numerical estimates, this analysis focuses on determining the significance of the difference in the attitudes and country-to-country comparison. For this purpose, regression or logit analysis is used. In order to obtain the pure effects of materialistic/post-materialistic values on each dependent variable, gender, age, level of education, marital status and religion are controlled and then analyzed via logit analysis or regression analysis.<sup>3</sup>

## 1. Attitudes Toward Gender Equality

Let us now assess whether or not the distinction between materialist and post-materialist values has an impact on attitudes toward gender equality. Table 5 shows the results of the regression analysis on the attitude toward gender equality.

**Table 5** Effects of materialistic/post-materialistic values on the statement “On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.”

	Korea	Japan	China	U.S.	Sweden	Egypt
material	reference	reference	reference	reference	reference	reference
post-material	-0.58***	-0.23*	-0.09	-0.10	-0.39*	0.06
mixed	-0.34***	-0.08	0.01	-0.05	-0.21	-0.05

Note: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$

Out of the six countries, the nation that shows most clearly the relationship between materialist/post-materialist values and attitudes toward gender equality is Korea. In the Swedish and Japanese cases, compared to respondents with materialist value orientation, those respondents holding a post-materialist value have a more negative evaluation of the statement that men make better political leaders at the significance level of 0.1. However, only in Korea, we can clearly find the effect of post-materialistic and mixed attitude toward political leader. Within the Confucian cultural sphere, Korea exhibits a many more gender biases regarding women political leaders than does Japan. However, in the case of China, there is no difference in the attitude toward women as political leaders between individuals with materialistic and post-materialistic values.

3. In this article only the coefficients of the values of materialistic/post-materialistic variables from logit or regression analysis are presented.

In contrast, while America and Sweden exhibit a weak negative attitude towards women as political leaders, post-materialist effect is not statistically significant in the U.S. In these societies, the distinction of materialistic and post-materialistic values has not led to the difference of attitude toward women political leaders. Another example can be seen in a country with a highly materialistic value system like Egypt which exhibits a strong gender bias toward women as political leaders; no differences in attitude toward women as political leaders can be found between those with materialistic/post-materialistic value systems in Egypt.

Then will there be a difference between how those with materialistic/post-materialistic values view the statement that men need a college education more than women? Table 6 measures the effects of materialistic/post-materialistic values on the attitude towards the statement “A university education is more important for a boy than a girl.”

**Table 6** Effects of materialistic/post-materialistic values on the statement “A university education is more important for a boy than a girl.”

	Korea	Japan	China	U.S.	Sweden	Egypt
material	reference	reference	reference	reference	reference	reference
post-material	-0.41***	-0.26**	0.06	-0.22*	-0.12	0.03
mixed	-0.25**	-0.08	0.04	-0.09	-0.06	0.04

Note: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$

As in the attitude toward women political leaders, in Korea, there is an obvious difference in the attitude toward higher education for women by materialistic/post-materialistic values. Those who have post-materialist values clearly show more negative attitudes toward gender-biased education in Korea. Like Korea, Japanese respondents who hold post-materialist views also oppose the attitude of gender discrimination in university education for women. U.S. respondents who hold post-materialist views think less about the gender discrimination about the university education for women only at the 0.1 significance level. However, in China, Sweden, and Egypt, there are no significant differentials in the gender discriminatory attitude by the materialist views and post-materialist views.

Korea society has been understood to have strong tendencies towards gender discrimination. There is almost no discrimination against girls in university edu-

cation now in Korea. The opportunities for girls' university education are almost equivalent to boys. The girls' performances in universities do not lag behind that of the boys'. Reflecting this change, it is verified that people who have the post-materialist views have less gender discriminatory attitudes to the university education of girls compared to people who have materialist views. In China, there is no difference in discrimination in university education for girls or for boys which may reflect on the influence of the one child policy. Furthermore, in Egypt, there is no existence of the attitude toward gender discrimination for the university education upon the views of materialism/post-materialism, because of the strong elements of gender discrimination regardless of materialistic/post-materialistic values in Egypt. Because of the higher level of post-materialist views and the women's active social participation in Sweden, there are no differential attitudes in the gender discrimination toward women's university education.

Korean society's level of post-materialist views is in general weak. However, the results of gender equality in Table 5 and Table 6 show that the relationship between the individual's value toward materialism/post-materialism and the gender equity is very close. The attitudes of people who have the value of materialism are stronger to gender discrimination. The attitudes of people who have the value of post-materialism are stronger to gender equality. Although these findings are not absolute or completely generalizable on the attitude of gender equality, Koreans show consistently differential responses by materialistic/post-materialistic values. While Korean society transitioned from an agricultural society to a modern industrial society to a post-industrial society, Korean society embraces post-materialistic values rather than materialistic values. As Inglehart proposed, there can be an increasing possibility in recognition and attitudes toward gender equality in Korean society. A society that has long been affected by Confucian values and traditional elements shows slow developments toward gender equality.

## 2. Attitudes to Gender Roles

Finally, let us examine the differential attitudes regarding gender roles and the difference of materialist/post-materialist values. Table 7 shows whether there are any significant connections between materialist/post-materialist values and the attitude that both men and women should contribute to the household income.

**Table 7** Effects of materialistic/post-materialistic values on the statement “Both the husband and wife should contribute to household income.”

	Korea	Japan	China	U.S.	Sweden	Egypt
Material	reference	reference	reference	reference	reference	reference
Post-material	0.01	-0.13	-0.09	0.02	-0.18	-0.03
Mixed	-0.02	-0.15	-0.08**	0.08	-0.15	0.04

Note: \*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.1

**Table 8** Effects of materialistic/post-materialistic values on the statement “Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.”

	Korea	Japan	China	U.S.	Sweden	Egypt
Material	reference	reference	reference	reference	reference	reference
Post-material	0.13	-0.04	-0.13**	0.02	-0.24	0.10*
Mixed	0.11	-0.05	-0.02	0.04	-0.19	-0.02

Note: \*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.1

The division between materialist/post-materialist values has no differential influence on the attitudes toward whether women should contribute to household income. Only in China is there a slightly significant difference toward women’s role in the family economy between mixed-type values and materialist values. However, there are absolutely no differential effects by materialistic/post-materialistic values in the other countries. When controlling for age, gender, marital status, education and religion, it is verified that there is no difference of attitudes regarding women’s participation in the workforce upon the difference of materialist/post-materialist values. Both men and women share the same thought of and share the same attitude toward women contributing to household income upon the realistic reasons not only in Korea but also in the other countries.

Next, I examine whether or not materialistic/post-materialistic value systems affect attitudes that a housewife’s role is as valuable as her role as a paid worker.

The differential impact of materialist/post-materialistic values on gender role is evident in China and Egypt, but not any other countries. In Korea, housewives’ roles are looked upon more positively among those with post-materialistic values than those who have materialistic values. This states that the division between materialist/post-materialist values does not affect the attitude toward



gender roles at home in Korea. Japan shows a similar situation to Korea. We also find that the distinction between materialistic and post-materialistic values does not lead to differential attitudes toward housewives' roles in both Korea and Japan.

In the case of a society characterized by post-materialist values like Sweden, the support of housewives' roles is relatively low.<sup>4</sup> The results in Table 8 show that in Sweden, people who have post-materialistic values are more negative in their attitudes toward women as housewives than those who have materialistic values. However, the coefficient of the variable is not statistically significant, so that we cannot say that there is a differential attitude on gender roles by materialistic/post-materialistic values in Sweden. But Egypt's case shows that people who hold post-materialist values appear to value housewives' roles more positively than those who hold materialist values. It is difficult to understand why this seemingly strange result appears in Egypt where materialistic values are dominant.

## Conclusion

Let us summarize the main points of analysis discussed in earlier sections. First, the changes in Korean values of gender equality and gender roles are sometimes ambivalent. Despite the persistence of beliefs in a gendered division of labor and the strength of these traditional norms, attitudes have shifted toward regarding women's participation in the workforce as not only normal but expected. At the same time, we can see a contradictory trend in the increasingly extreme praise for full-time housewives.

Second, even within the Confucian cultural sphere of Korea, China and Japan, there are differences in values toward gender equality and gender roles. From the perspective of traditional-modern values or even modern-postmodern values, Korea lies in between China and Japan. However, depending on the sphere of interest, this distinction is not always significant. This is due to the specific circumstances of each country; for example, socialist China has a much stronger history of women's labor and the extended application of the one child policy has resulted in higher educational achievements for each child, leading to

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4. This is confirmed in the frequency analysis although I do not present the results of frequency analysis for six countries.

a decrease in gender discrimination. Thus, even within the Confucian cultural sphere, each country's specific situation affects attitudes and values and cannot be systematized.

Third, in an international comparison, in the realm of gender equality and gender roles, Korea remains a society that expresses relatively strong materialist or traditional values. Thus, Korea is comparable to the strongly unequal Muslim societies such as Egypt.<sup>5</sup>

Fourth, while it may appear that there is little impact of the materialist/post-materialist factors on gender equality and gender roles in the six countries, in Korea, those people who hold post-materialist values indicate a stronger belief in gender equality than those who hold materialist values. This tendency was consistent through the two question sets. Also, this consistency was remarkable only in Korean society when compared to other societies in this study.

This finding implies that family values in Korean society may direct toward gender equal values and attitudes in the near future. We are not sure how much Inglehart's thesis can be applied to Korean society. But we can predict that family values will shift toward more post-materialistic and gender equality when Korean society makes a transition to a post-materialistic society from a traditional and materialistic society. This study hopefully provides the first step toward figuring this possibility out.

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5. This result is confirmed in the frequency analysis of the distribution of materialistic and post-materialistic values in the six countries.

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