

Day6: Gender in Northeast Asia

Government and Politics in Northeast Asia
(by Jaemin Shim)




I. Contextualizing Gender Problem in East Asia

▶ Gender Roles: past vs. present

○ Past

- Men did all the work outside the house
- Men attained high positions
- Political leaders were all men
- Women cannot vote
- Women basically cook, clean, and raise kids
- Some women worked in silk factor (labour intensive)
- Women were not able to be educated thoroughly

○ Present:

- Men more involved in child raising
 - Women can vote
 - Women can work outside the house
 - Women can attain high ranks
 - Women can enter the political world
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I. Contextualizing Gender Problem in East Asia

- ▶ Gender Roles: past vs. present
 - Related YouTube
 - Working hours in Japan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Y-YJEtxHeo>
 - Rise of Women in Taiwan: <https://youtu.be/2kBsWPIYFhM>
 - The key take-away point...
 - Women often have the triple responsibility of doing paid work, providing childcare, and caring for parents or parents-in-law.

I. Contextualizing Gender Problem in East Asia

▶ Other Statistics...

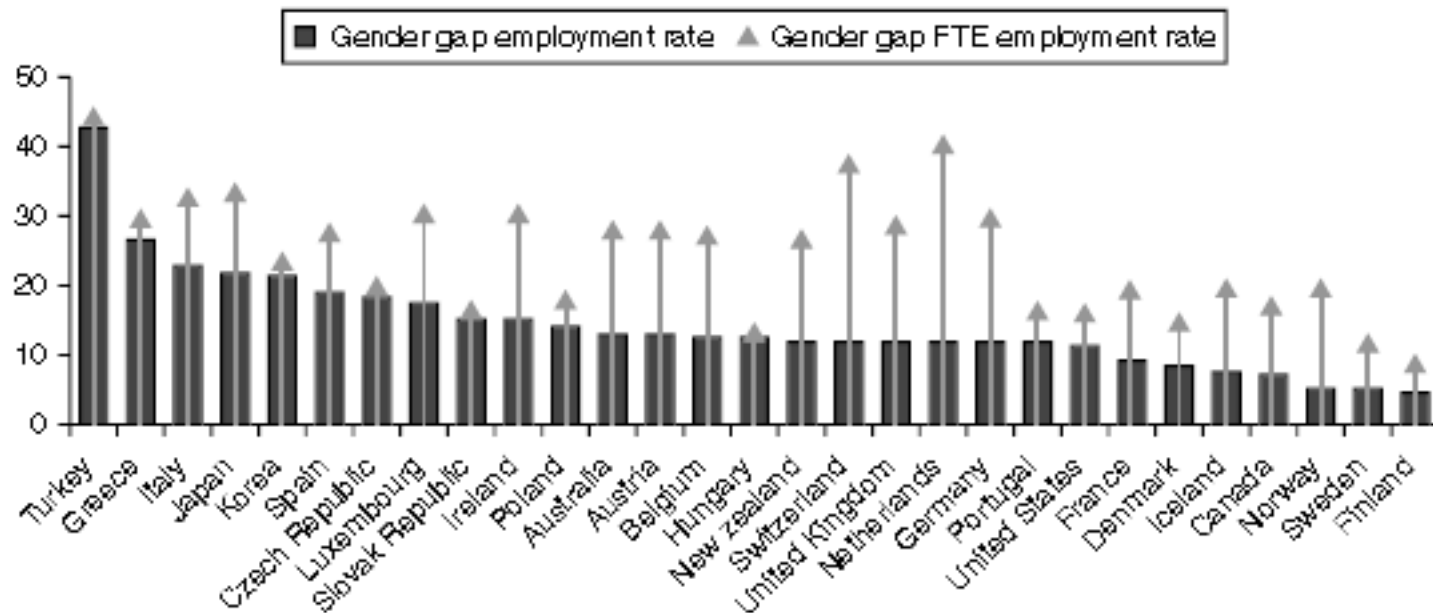


Figure 1.5 Gender gap in employment rates, 2008

Source: Gender Brief (OECD 2010).

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▶ Other Statistics...

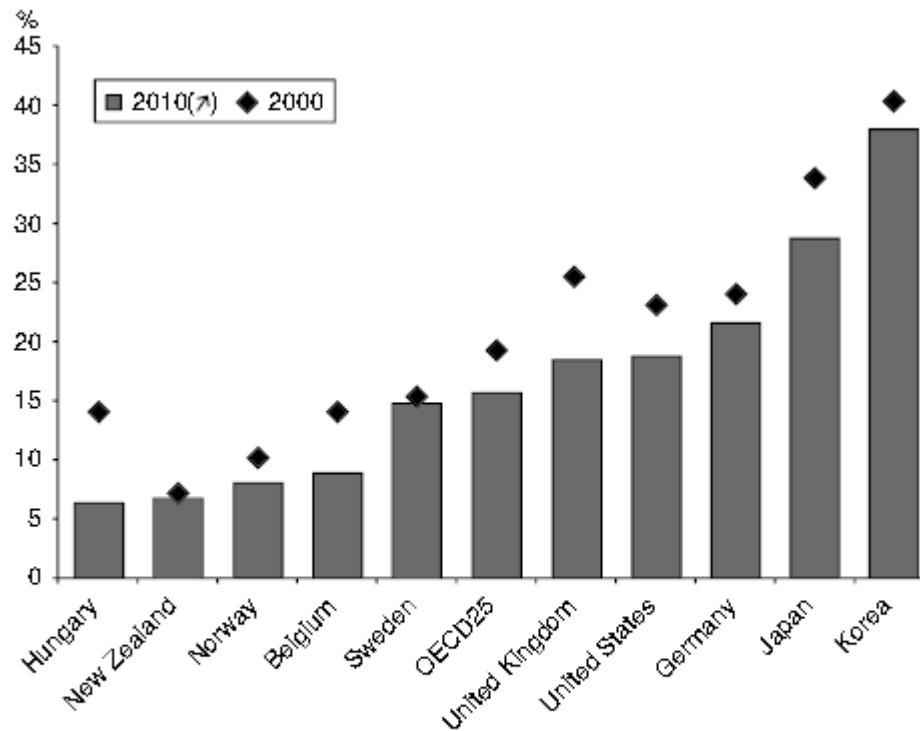


Figure 1.7 Gender gap in median earnings for full-time employees, 2000 and 2010 (or nearest year)

Source: OECD Gender initiative (2012b).

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▶ Other Statistics...

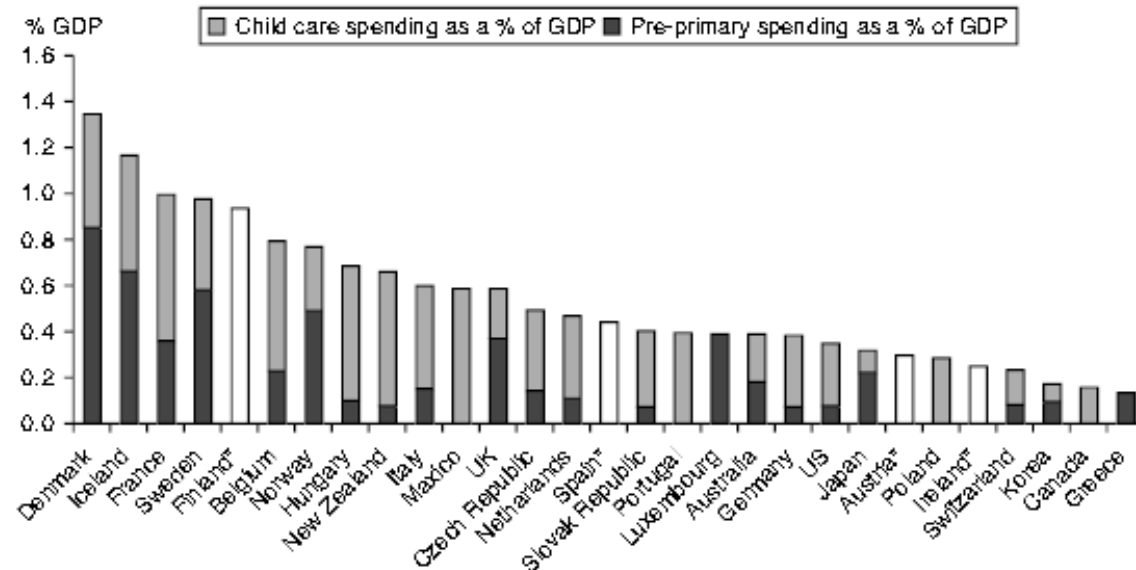


Figure 1.8 Public expenditure on childcare and early education services, as a percentage of GDP, 2005

Notes: * For Austria, Finland, Ireland and Spain only aggregate spending data are presented.

Source: OECD Gender Brief (OECD 2010).

I. Contextualizing Gender Problem in East Asia

- ▶ Culture and gender: the Confucian legacy influences women's position in society by emphasizing the virtue in obeying one's father, husband, and son
 - Some previous/current family Laws reflect this and has long protected male dominance and interests
 - Korea: the *ho-ju* system (a civil law) protects the right of men to be the “head of family” (which appears in any family-related official documents).
 - Taiwan: Taiwan men have decision-making power over the domicile, surnames, parental rights, and property rights
 - Japan: the *koseki* system (a civil law) does not allow women to use a separate family name after marriage

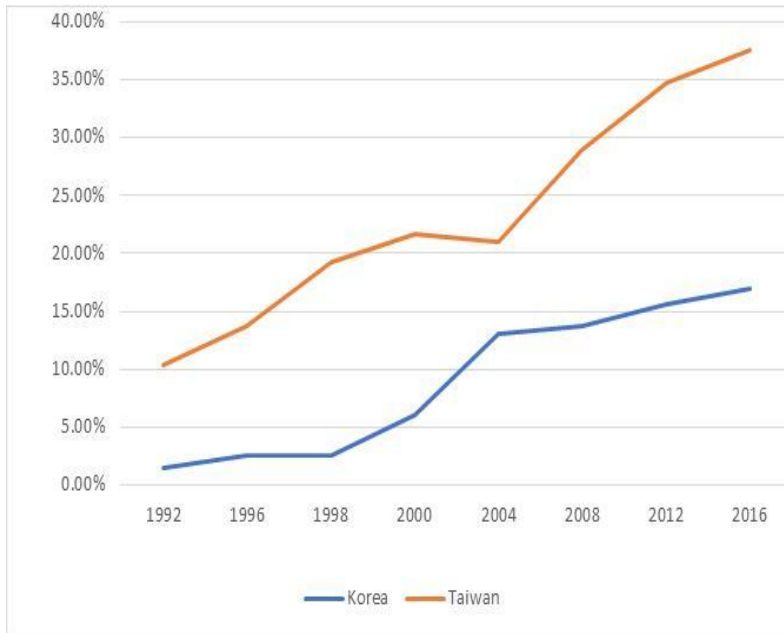
I. Contextualizing Gender Problem in East Asia

▶ Developmental state legacy:

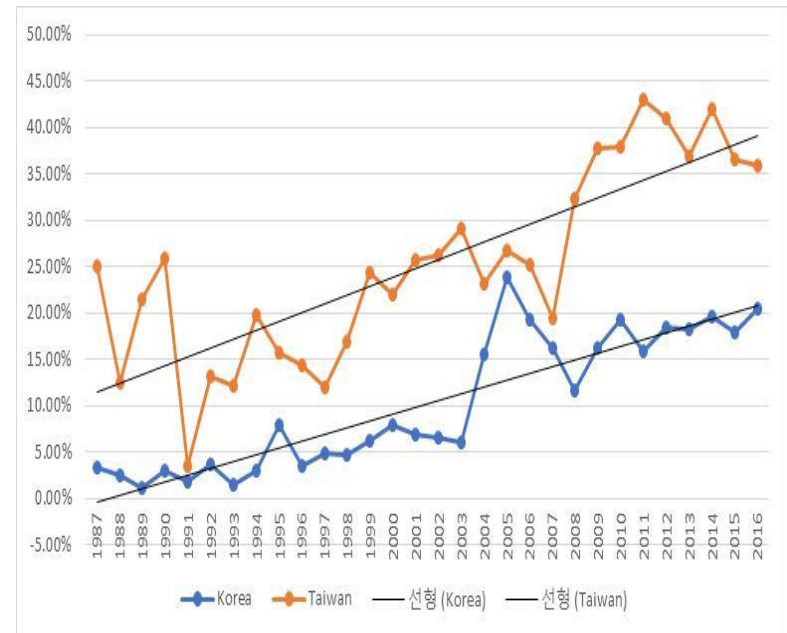
- The working culture in Japan (and Korea) can be characterized by long working hours (often followed by late-night informal drinking), peer pressure to not take parental leave.
- These practices are generally not favorable to female employees—many of whom experience more career interruptions, such as pregnancy and child-raising periods, than their male counterparts
- Evidence: Japanese corporate culture values male employees who can bear “long-working hours”, while at the same time dismissing work-life balance as an idealistic notion (Nemoto, 2013)

II. Descriptive and Substantive Representation

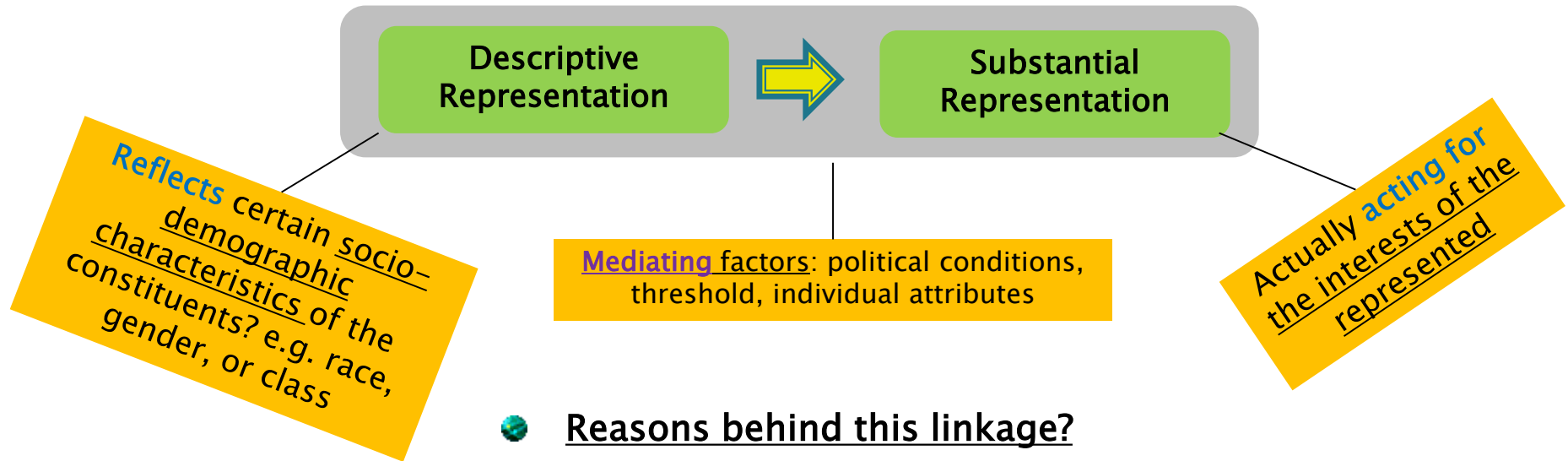
■ *Proportion of Female Legislators in the National Parliament (1992–2016)*



■ *Proportion of Total Bills Sponsored by Female Legislators (1987–2016)*



II. Descriptive and Substantive Representation



Reasons behind this linkage?

- 1) Women are more likely to trust other women to understand their needs; and present their substantive interests
- 2) Even male legislators hold the expectation that female legislators have more expertise in the area of women issues
- 3) More likely to discuss politics with others (Atkeson 2003), express interests (Koch 1997), be aware of substantive policy positions, and make legislators more accountable

II. Descriptive and Substantive Representation

■ Gender and Background...

- ❖ Dalton's (2015) work shows how Japanese female legislators promote a conservative understanding of femininity based on stereotypes of motherhood and housewifery, while Lovenduski (1986) points out that European socialist men once opposed female representation in the legislature based on the reason that female legislators mostly come from white, middle-class, and elite backgrounds
- ❖ Impeached Korean president, Park Geun-hye, whose presidency greatly hindered feminist activists' attempts to pushing for greater female political representation
- ❖ An interesting comparative work conducted since there are many female politicians in Asia are from powerful family, e.g. Philippine's Corazon Aquino and Gloria Arroyo or Bangladesh's Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia.

II. Descriptive and Substantive Representation

■ Seat Share and women's influence

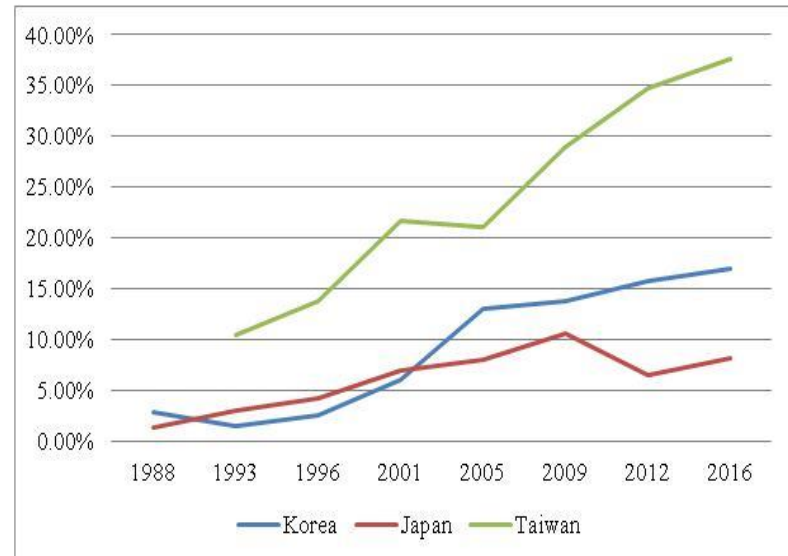
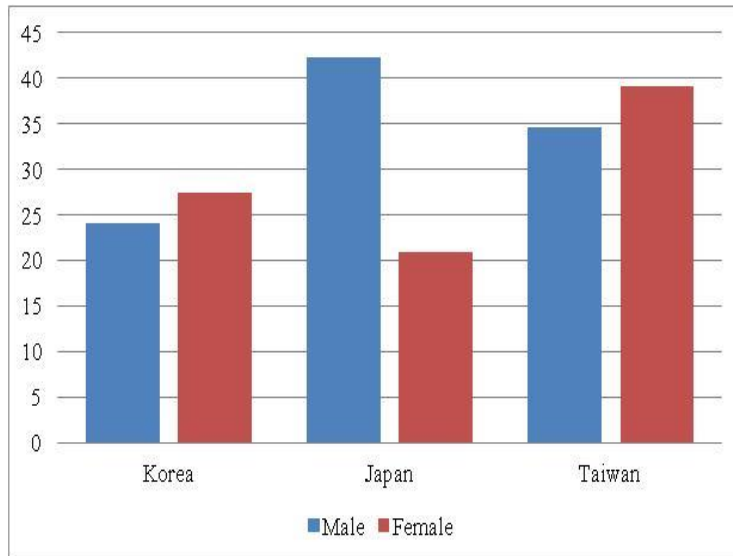
- Female legislators should reach a specific percentage to improve the representation of women's interests (Daherlup, 1988)
- Only when female legislators reach a 30 percent threshold can they be strong enough to alter the institutional culture

■ Male legislator?

- Makes women's issues mainstream, which would influence men's legislative behavior by making them focus more on women's issues which, in turn, would minimize gender difference
- Can cause a backlash—male legislators will not hesitate to use a range of strategies to halt policy initiatives concerning women

IV. Cross-country difference

- ▶ Korea-Taiwan > Japan
- ▶ Proportion of Female Legislators in the Legislature (left) and election success rate (right).... Why?



Lesson?

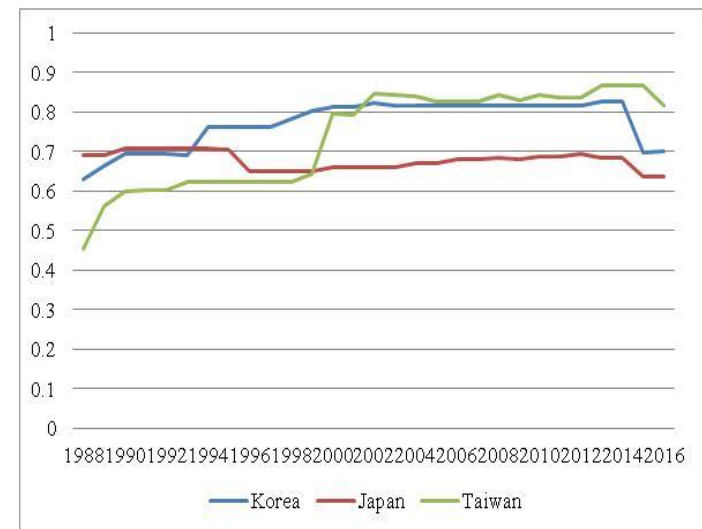
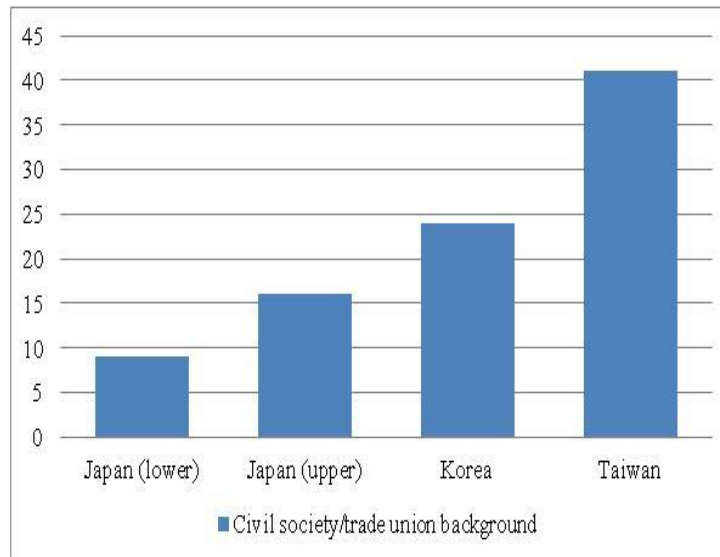
- ▶ Debunks the myth that strong economic development leads to the advancement of women's rights..... (Japan is still the most developed economy)

IV. Cross-country difference

- ▶ **Reason 1: Civil Society Movement:** Riding on the momentum created by the democratization in the late 1980s, women's organizations have been a powerful force behind gender politics in Korea and Taiwan (Clark and Lee 2000).
- ▶ Women's movements in Japan can be characterized as fragmented, decentralized, and single-issue focused. In other words, lacked large-scale nation-wide umbrella organizations with encompassing feminist goals
- ▶ And women's organization was not interested in securing equal rights and opportunities for working women, but with protecting consumer rights or environment for unemployed married women

IV. Cross-country difference

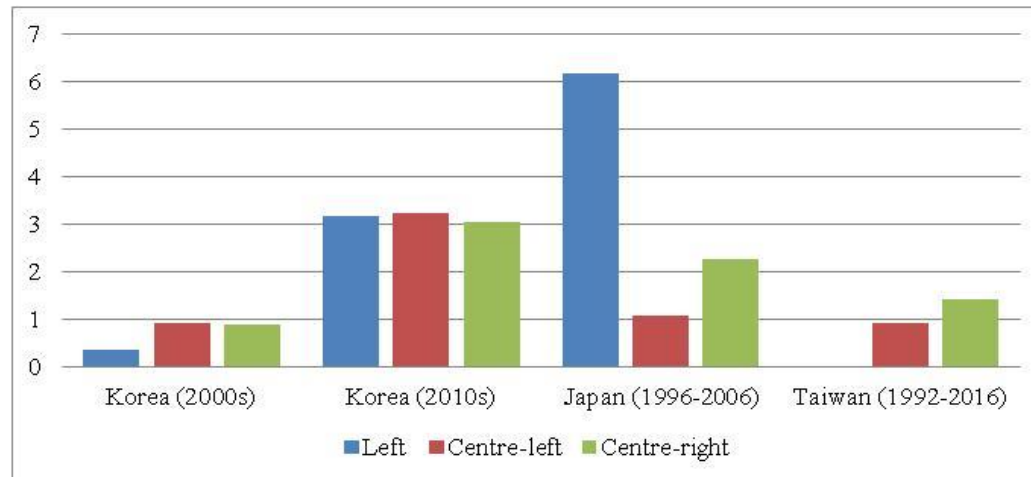
- ▶ Female Legislators with Civil Society/Trade Union Background (Left) and Women's Civil Society Participation Index (Right)



IV. Cross-country difference

- ▶ Reason 2: Clear partisan bias
- ▶ Neither the centre-left DPJ nor the centre-right LDP comes near the proportion of women bills sponsored by left-wing SDP members

Gender Issue Priority by Legislator's Party Affiliation



IV. Cross-country difference

- ▶ **Reason 2: Clear partisan bias**
- ▶ “Gender mainstreaming” efforts have met resistance in Japan (Gelb 2008; Kimura 2005; Kano 2011): “gender backlash” by conservative forces
 - Gender quota on the ground that it can be a form of “reversed discrimination
 - Gender equality” as a communist idea challenge to traditional family values
 - Female academics such as Hasegawa Michiko, who advocated the traditional male-breadwinner model
 - Conservative women’s groups campaigns to defend women’s roles as wife and against feminists