

Sexual harassment in Korean Organisations

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2002**

Abstract

My aim in this thesis is to explore how and why Korean female clerical workers have experienced sexual harassment within the organisational structure of their workplaces. My data derives from qualitative interviews with 28 female clerical workers who work in Seoul, South Korea. However, my own position and experiences as a Korean feminist scholar are also embedded within the research process and explicitly incorporated into my analysis. Despite having focused upon the experiences of Korean female workers, this thesis will contribute to an understanding of how experiences of women as sexual victims are embedded within the oppressive features of heterosexuality and male-dominated organisational culture regardless of the socio-cultural differences of each society. In order to do so, this thesis first highlights the specificities of Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture whilst also examining features of organisational culture in relation to both gender and sexuality. This approach reflects my belief that incidents of sexual harassment are deeply embedded within the socio-cultural features of each society and, in particular, based upon the changing and ongoing features of gender and sexual culture. The representative elements of Korean heterosexuality are identified as the enforcement of female sexual chastity and subservience and the permitting of solely marital sexual relations for women, while men expect varied sexual experiences. The super-heterosexual forces are interrelated with the promotion and maintenance of male-dominated and sex-discriminatory organisational culture. Thus, I understand the specific features of Korean heterosexuality and organisational culture to be the predominant contributors in the perpetuation of sexual harassment within Korean workplaces. In relation to experiences of sexual harassment, I suggest that the definition of sexual harassment is both flexible and contextual and its varieties diversely constituted within the socio-cultural features of each society. Moreover, I discover the fact that the victims' reluctance assertively to respond to sexual harassment is greatly affected by heterosexual and male-dominated organisational culture. Therefore, my suggestion is that possible strategies to combat sexual harassment would be also based upon these socio-cultural features.

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Acknowledgements

Since I began my research in 1998 I have faced two main difficulties. The first is that as a non-native speaker, I have found it difficult to concisely and eloquently express and develop in English the intentions of my research. Secondly, I have emotionally felt very lonely as this research process has required me to be distanced from my family, in particular, my husband and my little girl, Yoon-Seo. Nevertheless, I have successfully completed my work due to thanks to the support of many people. Here, I hope to express great thanks to these friends.

Firstly, I would like to extend many thanks to my supervisor, Stevi Jackson. Although I expect that it has been particularly difficult for her to supervise me as I am a non-native speaker from a foreign country I remember that she took on the role of proofreader as well as supervisor. I would also like to thank the staff of the Centre for Women's studies, University of York, especially Dr. Carol-Ann Hooper, Dr Linda Perritton, Professor Mary Maynard and Ms Jean Wall for providing me with the academic support and environment in which to work.

Undoubtedly, I should thank my twenty-eight interviewees for providing me with their lively and rich experiences. If they had not agreed to be interviewed by me, I could not have finished this research. Many, many thanks for their belief that my research would contribute to the resolution of sexual harassment within Korean organisations.

I would also like to thank my proofreaders, throughout my many years of study: Dr. Heloise Brown, Dr. Malcolm Wren and Ms Ali Neilson.

On a more personal note, I would like to say an enormous thank you to all the people who have personally and emotionally supported me throughout the past four years.

Firstly, I would like to thank my mother, Lee Jeong-Ja and my father, Lee Seoung-Eean and sister-in-law, Kim Kae-Sook, as they have taken care of my daughter for the last two years instead of me. I could not have finished writing my thesis without their passionate support. Ultimately, I really would like to thank my husband, Kim Ki-Soo for both financially and emotionally supporting me with great patience. Also, I really want to thank my daughter, Yoon-Seo, for continuing to grow very beautiful and healthy regardless of my absence.

Another enormous thank you must go all my friends who have been wonderful and put up with so much over the last few years. In particular, I would like to thank Kim Jin-Ki, Bae Jun-Sik, Lee Hyung-Hoon from the Korean Association at York. Moreover, I should also like to thank their wives, Soo-Young, Yoo-Mi, Che-Young, who provided me with various kinds of delicious Korean foods, such as Kim-Chi and Kim-Bab etc. I would also really thank my best friend, Kwon Eun-Kyung, in Korea. She often sent me Korean cigarettes and Korean music CDs etc during many years I have been in Britain. Finally, I would also like to thank Kwon Sook-Joong and Park Sang-Hyun as this couple help me to settle down in England in 1998.

Once again, before I conclude this acknowledgement, my utmost thanks go to my supervisor, Stevi Jackson, as my academic advisor, and my husband, Kim Ki-Su, as my emotional and financial supporter. Without their support, I could not have finished my

work. With regards to this acknowledgement, I hope that this thesis will contribute to reforming Korean women's lives, including my daughter, Kim Yoon-Seo.

Chapter 1. Introduction – The relationship between heterosexual culture and sexual harassment in Korean organisations

I. Introduction

Sexual harassment has been a crucial issue for western feminists since the 1970s and its increased visibility is associated with the introduction of second wave feminism (Cockburn 1991:138, Thomas & Kitzinger 1997:8). This association results from the second wave feminist claim that the personal is political: a stance that fuels the fight against sexual violence (Humm 1995:251-252). This also means that the research on sexual harassment – with its relatively short history in comparison to research on other feminist issues – has the potential to contribute to the development of a theoretical approach towards the changed position of women within the public sector as an increasing awareness of sexual harassment is deeply related to the female worker's resistance to such behaviour (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997:5). During the last two decades many western feminist scholars have concentrated upon defining sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination (Farely 1978, Mackinnon 1979), questioning why the phenomenon of sexual harassment still exists despite the legislation and social policy established in order to eradicate it. However, in South Korea (hereafter Korea), research on sexual harassment remains at a preliminary stage even though, since the introduction of female workers in the public sphere, incidents of sexual harassment have become very common within Korean organisations.

In order briefly to review Korean history in relation to sexual harassment, it is crucial that we familiarise ourselves with the legal action surrounding the case of Woo, Hee-Jeong. This case contributed to viewing sexual harassment as a serious social issue in both the feminist movement and the academic arena. As a result of Woo's legal action the issue of sexual harassment was first introduced to Korea in 1993. When Woo, Hee-Jeong worked for the National University of Seoul as a chemistry research assistant her employer, Professor Shin, repeatedly harassed her sexually, touching her and demanding dates. Consequently, she was fired for resisting these advances and turned to the legal system to gain her rights. However, at that time, a significant portion of Korean people identified an incident of sexual harassment as relatively usual behaviour within the Korean workplace and certainly not as a criminal act. One could regard Woo's legal action as the vehicle by which both practical and theoretical knowledge of sexual harassment was brought to public attention in Korea. For instance, ideas surrounding women's bodies have begun to concentrate upon the issue of sexual harassment¹ and some feminist scholars have attempted to analyse the subject since the case of Woo².

In my MA dissertation in 1995 I wrote about female workers' experiences of sexual harassment. This research was the first approach to incidents of sexual harassment from a feminist perspective in Korea. In the dissertation I focused upon the ways in which sexual harassment is constituted within the Korean context and why female workers cannot assertively resist advances by colleagues. My proposals reflected the argument of the Korean women's groups who fought for legislation on sexual harassment in order to

¹ Women Link, a women's body for female office workers, supported Woo in taking her legal action from 1993 to 1999.

² Some feminist scholars presented papers on sexual harassment to support Woo's legal action in the daily conference in 1994.

eradicate it (Lee, S. E. 1995). Most Korean feminist researchers and activists agreed that legislation would be helpful in preventing sexual harassment, and, as a result of their campaign, in 1999 the Korean government established its legislation. In that same year the ministry of gender equality was also newly established and given the duty to uphold this legislation.

At present in Korea, a few male scholars and feminist activists publish books in relation to sexual harassment but most research focuses on the review of sexual harassment policy in other countries (Cheon 1999) or suggests simple strategies based upon the experiences of feminist activists (Women Link 2000). There is only a small amount of feminist research focused upon sexual harassment in Korea and this seems to be related to developments in discussions surrounding women's identity within Korean feminism. I will attempt to briefly introduce these ongoing changes³ in relation to women's identity because a review of the discussion is helpful in understanding not only the specific relationship between sexual harassment and women's identity but also the basic beliefs and developmental process of Korean feminism. Moreover, through this review I can begin to position myself as a Korean feminist researcher within my work.

Since the 1980s, Korean feminists have concentrated theoretically upon how Korean women are subordinated within society and have examined their social position. Some borrowed the term 'gender identity' from western feminist theory whilst at the same time others considered how women's identity was defined. Differing perspectives on women's

³ I examine the discussion based on Cho, Joo-Hyun's article, 'Gender identity politics: The case of women's liberation movement in Korea in 80s and 90s', *Journal of Korean Women's Studies*, Vol.12 No.1

identity (Jeong-che-seong)⁴ prevail in Korean feminism because some feminist viewpoints are based on Marxist feminism whilst others are influenced by radical feminism⁵. Many activists agree with the former view as they deal with the oppression of female workers and their beliefs are especially related to those of the labour movement. As a result, they are called 'progressive'⁶ feminists. Their viewpoints are similar to those of male Marxists in that they consider women to be subordinated by the contradictions of capitalism. Against this, other feminist theorists⁷ emphasize the differences between women and men. They have argued for an autonomous feminist movement based upon radical feminism and have established the feminist body known as 'Alternative Culture', which develops strategies for the independent women's movement.

Below, I will briefly review the argument and movement of progressive feminism. In the 1980s, the main feature of the Korean feminist movement was the campaign for social reform. Some feminists regarded the establishment of 'The Association for Women's Equality (Yösöng Pyungwoohoe)'⁸ in 1983 as the starting point of the progressive feminist movement (Lee, S. H. 1994:342).⁹ The aim of the progressive group is, firstly, to join the democratic movement for general social change while still allowing for the specificity of

⁴ Identity is translated as Jung-Che-Sung in Korean

⁵ In the Korean context radical feminism is not understood in the same way as it is in the west. However, it is partly influenced by a western radical feminist perspective for it maintains the notion 'the personal is political'.

⁶ In the 1980s in Korea, many people named the democratic movement the 'progressive' movement. The feminist movement was named the 'progressive' feminist movement.

⁷ 'Feminist theorists' means that they belong to academic arenas such as Korean universities or higher education institutions, and that they concentrate on the feminist theorization of Korea. Most of them have experienced studying abroad in the U. S. the U. K. or other European countries. Sometimes, their arguments are more westernised.

⁸ The English name of this body is my translation. The parenthesised passage is the Korean name of the body.

⁹ Lee is a representative theorist sharing the perspective of the 'progressive' feminist movement.

women's problems. They hope to construct a democratic society which reflects the different needs of women. Therefore, they think that the feminist movement is a subordinate movement to the democratic movement, and women who belong to the working class become the main subjects of the feminist movement.

The argument of the 'progressive' feminists is influenced by Marxist feminism. They believe that the specific oppression of women does not exist in Korea and suggest that women's problems are related to the problem of class, suggesting a uniting of the feminist movement with the democratic movement (Lee, S.H. 1994:24). They particularly criticize socialist feminism, which regards the nature of women's oppression as both capitalist and patriarchal. They argue against the idea that feminists suggest differences between women and men when they discuss the subordination of women. Moreover, they condemn all analyses of women's problems which are not connected to the critique of capitalism.

However, I doubt whether Marxist feminism can analyse the oppression of Korean women completely, due to its similarity to western communist thinking between the 1920s and 1930s. Some western feminists criticise Marxist feminists' identification with classism as the main factor of women's oppression rather than sexism (Tong 1989:94). Marxist feminists argue that women's oppression is perpetuated within capitalist social relations (Jackson 1998:13) and thus they neglect to consider that working class men could be oppressors in their homes or that bourgeois women could be oppressed (Delphy and Leonard 1992 in Jackson 1998:16). Therefore, as a result of this Marxist influence progressive feminists define women's identity as 'labourers' regardless of their differing positions in relation to class and married status. According to their idea, a married and middle class woman is also defined as a 'labourer'. Progressive feminists suggest that 'the

problems of married women are connected with the problems of women workers, for example the needs of a married woman such as the socialization of domestic labour are related to the needs of women workers. Therefore, the married women's movement is an important unit to support the content of the women's labour movement' (Korea Women's Associations United 1988:28).¹⁰ By strictly determining women's identity as labourers, progressive feminists fail to consider middle class women, housewives, girls or retired older women. Indeed, female workers also do not totally agree with Progressive feminist belief because they recognize their identity not only as labourers but also as women. For instance, female workers suffer from lower income, difficulties of promotion and unequal opportunities in employment in opposition to male workers. This is because they are women. Nevertheless progressive feminists in opposition regarded female workers as labourers rather than women, hence progressive feminism neglects to address specific experiences of female workers.

However, I do not want absolutely and totally to criticize the perspectives of the progressive feminists because reforms of general political issues are partly related to reforms of oppressed women's lives. Arguably, the viewpoints of the progressive feminist movement are related to those of the movement for general democratisation. In the 1980s in Korea most people suffered under the dictatorial government and so the main problem of Korean society was the political autocracy. Korean people aimed to eradicate this dictatorial government and to achieve political democratisation. The issues of movements against social problems are connected to political issues.

¹⁰ Since 1987, twenty-one women's bodies have been built on a national scale. They are connected through 'Korea Women's Associations United'. The United decided that their aim was the enhancement of a democratic movement and the eradication of the dictatorship by the military authorities.

I would now like to investigate the arguments of the 'Alternative Culture' group. The feminist body, 'Alternative Culture', was established in 1984 and aims to recognize the uniqueness of women's problems and to eradicate the oppression of women through the transformation of the current society into one that authorizes diversity. One member of the alternative group and a famous poetess, Ko, said: 'Alternative Culture' implies 'to resist patriarchy and inequality between women and men' (Ko et al. 1984:14). The actions of alternative feminists are concentrated not on the reform of the social system but on feminist writing (publishing a literary magazine) and lecturing on feminist consciousness in order to change women's ways of life. While the alternative feminists conflict, negotiate with, and become excluded by the progressive feminists, it seems that they have not really considered agricultural and factory workers. Even though the ultimate purpose of 'Alternative Culture' is to reconstruct women as a whole group, they state that 'the middle class and intelligent women' are the subjects of the feminist movement (Ko et al.1984: 24-25). However, through publishing a literary magazine, named 'Alternative Culture', they attempted to propose 'how to overcome patriarchal authoritarianism, standardization, and the stereotype of gender difference, so they examined commercialism, the inequalities of class and feminist literature' (Cho, J. H. 1996:150-151).

The focus of the alternative feminist movement is concentrated upon the specific realities of women's lives, proposing concrete solutions for women's problems. For example, they criticize the education system for young people and suggest processes and methods to educate 'autonomous children' who have overcome authoritarianism and sex discrimination. They define women as a whole group whilst also respecting the differences of women's lives. Arguably, alternative feminism appears to be influenced by Western, bourgeois

feminism because most members of the 'Alternative Culture' have studied abroad. Many women feel excluded from the movement due to the predominance within its membership of intelligent and professional women, such as university lecturers, medical doctors, novelists, and so on. In spite of agreeing with the fundamental beliefs of this branch of Korean feminism, uneducated and unprofessional women might not dare to join the group for fear of exclusion. Like the Progressive feminist movement, the alternative feminist movement is only for specific women. In the 1980's both progressive and alternative feminists attempted to explain women's position in Korea, but their attempts could not completely and entirely represent the voices of Korean women. Nevertheless, both feminisms have contributed to the development of Korean feminism, theory and practice.

In the 1990s discourses surrounding gender and sexuality appeared to be changeable and dynamic. This is because between the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s the destruction of socialism in Eastern European countries caused confusion for the progressive feminists as their aim of unifying the movement for democratisation had been in order to promote socialism. The social movement of the 1990s was divided into two perspectives. On the one hand it was argued that the democratic movement of the 1980s should be maintained and, on the other hand, a new social movement needed to be developed (Park 1994). It is therefore important for me to comment upon the changing progress of progressive and alternative feminism in the 1990s.

Although different in their basic themes, both progressive and alternative feminism intended to seek a form of solidarity in relation to specific campaigns, such as the legislation against sexual violence in the 1990s. However, there still remain conflicts between them. Whereas alternative feminists have recently attempted to examine the

private aspects of women's experience – such as female sexuality, language and the body – progressive feminists claim that the arguments of alternative feminists – such as diverse subjectivity, coalition movements, permission for diversity and politics of difference – are a return to anti-historical femininity and the abolition of feminism (Kim et al.1992:35-79). That is, the perspective of the progressive feminist is still based on Marxist feminism whereas the argument of the alternative feminist is shared with various aspects of Western feminism, such as French, radical and post-modern feminist understandings.

The issue of political democratisation has subsided since the 1990s in Korea because the Korean military government has been changed into the so-called 'government for citizens', created by 'the revolution of election'. Korean people have achieved a tentative form of democracy. At the same time, the predominant feminist issues have changed, leading to an increased interest in female sexuality and sexual violence against women. The Korean feminist movement of the 1990s seems to be characterized by two features. Firstly, feminist bodies with different perspectives were strengthened because they agreed that Korean women had commonly experienced sexual violence (regardless of difference in status). For example, the Korea Women's Association United formed the Committee of Korean Women's Bodies¹¹ to discuss 'the case of Kim, Bo-Eun and Kim, Jin-Kwan'¹² in 1992. The 'Alternative Culture' group also produced a play about this case and throughout the play

¹¹ 'The Consultation of Korean Women's Bodies' consists of conservative women's bodies. In my opinion, I cannot consider 'the Consultation' (which includes the YWCA, the consultation of women writers, journalists, and medical doctors) as a feminist body because they have often accepted the structure of male-dominated society and attempt to maintain Korean patriarchy.

¹² This case is related to a form of rape. Since the age of 12, Kim, Bo-Eun had been raped by her stepfather. When she became an adult she tried to resist the rape but failing to do so, asked her boyfriend, Kim, Jin-Kwan to help. Kim, Jin-Kwan murdered Bo-Eun's stepfather.

they examined the relationship between sexual violence and power. Moreover, when Woo's case of sexual harassment was first discussed in 1994, university students and feminist bodies constituted 'the committee against sexual harassment' and feminist scholars held a conference about 'sexual harassment in the workplace'. At that time, most feminists shared a view of women as a homogeneous oppressed group. As a result, the increased interest in sexual issues, such as sexual violence and harassment, seemed to contribute to not only a solidarity between progressive and alternative feminists but also a change in women's identity as a whole group.

The second feature of the 1990's Korean feminist movement is that, regardless of their nation and country, women as a whole began to unite internationally (Chang, M. K. 1996:21). In 1991 'The Conference for Asian Peace and the Goal of Women' was opened in Seoul,¹³ and in Pyongyang¹⁴ in 1992. It is evident that even though the political leaders in North and South Korea found it difficult to meet each other, South and North Korean women could manage to meet because they emphasized women's identity as a whole group, transcending nation, country and differences of political system. The conference therefore demonstrates that this coalition by gender, being more comprehensive and far stronger, can transcend the difference of political system between North and South Korea. In addition, Korean feminist activists established the Korean committee for 'the Comfort Women' in 1990. Between 1910 and 1945 Korea was colonized by Japan and during the Second World War young Korean women aged from fourteen to nineteen were conscripted by the Japanese army as 'Comfort Women'. The comfort women were sexually exploited as

¹³ Seoul is the capital of Korea.

¹⁴ Pyongyang is the capital of North Korea.

prostitutes for the Japanese army. After the war, these women attempted suicide to avoid returning to Korea as they feared the judgements that they would receive due to their loss of sexual chastity. In recent times, the comfort women survivors have spoken out about their experiences and asked for compensation from the Japanese government and the U. N. These women appeal to the international solidarity of women; for instance, in 1992 they promoted issues about 'the comfort women' in the committee for Asian solidarity and the U. N. Consequently, their activism encourages international solidarity among women through the issue of women and sexual violence.

In the feminist movement of the 1990s, the central issue surrounding women's identity as a whole implied that women's experiences were socially and culturally determined. For example, when Woo first tried to sue for sexual harassment the judge dealing with the case did not know what sexual harassment was and, therefore, asked for the opinion of a feminist scholar. Cho¹⁵ advised that women's experiences differ from men's experiences and thus women have different views based upon their own experiences hence women's understanding of sexual harassment is also different from that of men's. Cho argued that when the harassed woman and the male harasser understand incidents differently, the experiences of the harassed woman should be further considered. However, the argument that women's experiences differ from men's experiences is challenged by two views. On the one hand, male scholars critically argue that the politics of women's identity as a whole group addresses 'the fight and confrontation' inherent in the relationships between women and men. The male scholars refuse to see the differences of experience between women and men but, rather, examine the common experiences of humanity. On the other hand, some

¹⁵ Cho, Soon-Kyung is an associate professor of the department of Women's Studies at Ewha Woman's University. She is interested in the subject of women workers.

feminists argue that there are differences of experience among women. Woo's legal action had important implications for both the feminist movement and the academic arena as it showed the Korean people a specific example of how women's private issues can be politicised. Since this action both feminist activists and theorists have concentrated upon gender politics in relation to women's experience.

In consequence, Korean feminists make efforts to consider women's identity within gender politics and also attempt to achieve equal opportunities for women within the public sector. However, they neglect to consider differences among women and the distinction between gender and sexuality. Therefore, I would argue that both similarities and differences among Korean women should be simultaneously considered and the distinction and interrelationship between gender and sexuality be specifically conceptualised.

In Korea, academic disciplines did not pay attention to issues of gender and sexuality until 1989. Most people thought that sexuality was a private issue of negligible public importance. Chang describes the features of Korean sexuality: 'the women's morality is judged on the bases of their sexual behaviour and thus requires at least two necessary conditions; firstly, males as subjects of discourse and secondly, sexuality as a negative value' (Chang, P.H. 1989:78). Chang argues that sexuality is not private but public and is related to power relationships. Hence, female sexuality should be examined from a feminist perspective because women's sexual experiences tend to be ignored within both academic and experiential arenas. In this context, since 1989, Korean feminist theorists have tried to examine the relationship between gender and sexuality through the study of female sexual practices.

Initially, some feminists concentrated on the sexual victimization and oppression of women arguing for the sexual freedom of women as a whole. They intended to politicise the oppression of female sexuality. For instance, Lee, in a study of abortion among unmarried women, critically analyses the ideology of chastity and the sexual powerlessness of unmarried women within sexuality. She concludes that the sexual oppression of women is related to femininity, which is defined as obedience, passivity, virtue and chastity (Lee, S. K. 1993:20). Similarly, Chang writes that the sexual relations between wife and husband within marriage are normalized and legal relations with married women seen as objects of sexual desire rather than as autonomous subjects; they cannot express their own sexual desire anywhere or at anytime. In this respect, Chang argues that female sexuality is located within gender politics and, therefore, feminists should consider women's identity as a whole in relation to sexuality (Chang, P. H. 1997:2). This idea concentrates understanding of sexuality within gender politics and therefore neglects to discuss how sexuality is specifically embedded within the experiences of Korean women.

However, in recent times some feminist works on female sexuality have focused upon 'women's sexual subjectivity', 'body politics' and 'sexual identity-lesbianism'. Their thoughts appear to be based on sexual identity as being distinguished from gender identity, thus borrowing from post-modern feminist ideas such as Judith Butler's¹⁶. Hahn examines how gendered power is reproduced and consolidated in the 'most privatised' area, namely women's desires and bodies. She challenges the discourse that depoliticises the effect of women's training for beauty into the matter of women's instincts for beauty or health care. Hahn concludes that the gendered relations of power that have been consolidated by

¹⁶ Butler's book, *Gender Trouble* was introduced to Korea in 1997. Some Korean feminist scholars attempt to understand the distinction between gender and sexuality based on her idea.

reducing women to physical beings are reproduced in more elaborate ways (Hahn 1998:167). This study is helpful in reconsidering the interconnection between female bodies and gender politics. The proposals by some feminist theorists that Korean female bodies were commercialised and oppressed by patriarchal-capitalism (Chang, P.H. 1992:26; Jung, J. K. and Ko, S. J. 1992: 68) fail to address the relationship between gender identity and female bodies and neither do they suggest the political issues at stake (for female bodies). In contrast, Hahn's analysis of female bodies refers to the relationship between gender and sexuality.

On the other hand, Kim agrees that in Korean society feminism as gender politics has largely been dissociated from sexual politics, which has emerged since the 1990s, with both sides failing to recognize and critically explore their interconnectedness (Kim, J. H. 1998:135). Kim's study focuses on the development of Western lesbian theories and their historical and political implications from an American lesbian/feminist perspective. She tries to show the relationship between gender and sexual politics by examining how sexism and heterosexism are related, intertwined, and contested in the Western history of political debates among feminism, lesbianism and gay politics. Her approach shocks the Korean public because Korean feminist scholars have not as yet treated lesbianism as an academic subject. The research is not suitable for explaining the situation of Korean lesbianism because its arguments are based solely upon a literature review of the Western analysis of lesbianism and hence her discussion seems to be theoretical rather than empirical. Nevertheless, her work might be useful as she addresses a number of western feminists who argue that sexual identity is distinct from gender identity and thereby encourages other feminists to consider how the distinction between gender and sexuality is important within an examination of the sexual experiences of Korean women.

In summary, debates about the relationship between gender and sexuality have been underway since the middle of the 1990s. The processes of conflict and solidarity between progressive and alternative feminists provide us with a Korean conceptualisation of this relationship. However, the discussion so far remains at a preliminary stage, and tending to a peripheral analysis of the differences between gender and sexuality; thus relatively recent discussion disregards the ways in which sexuality is conceptually distinguished from heterosexuality. I would argue that this limitation, rather than being the fault of Korean feminists, results from a currently developing theoretical process within the movement. The few Korean feminist works concerned with sexual harassment restrict the content of the research to gender relationships between men and women.

In order to examine the phenomenon of sexual harassment more precisely and empirically, I need to concentrate upon how the incidents of sexual harassment are embedded within the sexual and gender culture of Korean organisations. I also question the argument that the effectiveness of the establishment of legislation on sexual harassment, and its success as a practical strategy against sexual harassment, is dependent upon whether the victims are willing to make use of it. The main reason why female workers are reluctant to make use of the legislation is because they are dominated by a model of femininity that requires them to obey the orders and requirements of senior men. If a Korean woman is sexually harassed by her male senior, she may hesitate to speak out publicly about her experiences due to anxieties of being labelled a 'bad girl'. Bearing this situation in mind, I suggest that legislation on sexual harassment might not be a perfect method but rather a basic strategy against sexual harassment.

My research focuses upon the ways in which incidents of sexual harassment are embedded within the heterosexual and gender culture of Korean organisations. My examination of heterosexuality and heterosexual culture highlights its role within the maintenance and stimulation of sexual harassment in Korea and, furthermore addresses how the specificities of heterosexual culture are intrinsically related to male-dominated organisational culture. Ultimately, I attempt to demonstrate that both the heterosexual and male dominated features of organisational culture contribute to the phenomenon of sexual harassment within Korea. I will firstly review the literature in relation to my main research question and secondly, I will present the research aims of each chapter.

II. Literature and Context

1. The Specificity of Korean Sexual harassment

The phenomenon of sexual harassment is closely related to the cultural, historical and contextual environment within each society. The specific cases, definition and resistant strategies surrounding sexual harassment tend to be determined by the specificity of each society. With this in mind, I will investigate the peculiar features of Korean sexual harassment and thus examine the particular characteristics of sexual harassment in relation to gender and heterosexuality within Korea. This examination is based upon both Korean and western materials applying to the Korean context.

The relationship between gender and sexual harassment

The main reason why most female workers have been sexually harassed is because women are located in a powerless position within gender politics and therefore discussion surrounding gender become indispensable to an examination of female workers: experiences of sexual harassment within Korean organisations. Moreover, another reason is related to the double standard between 'bad girl' and 'good girl'. Within Korea, as mentioned above, the victims of sexual violence tend to be stigmatised as 'bad girls'. I will examine how gender politics is related to sexual harassment and also explore the connection between femininity as gender identity and the issue of sexual harassment.

I will firstly look at how gender politics is related to incidents of sexual harassment in Korea. According to Hanmer and Maynard, 'the term "gender stratification" underlines the unequal power relationships between men and women in both the public and private spheres, and the analysis of violence, including the threat and fear of violence, demonstrates some of the mechanisms through which that domination and subordination is maintained and reproduced' (Hanmer and Maynard 1987:11). This argument appears to be correct in that it is usually men who sexually attack women within patriarchal societies. Indeed, women within powerless positions find it difficult to resist these incidents of sexual violence. In this respect, gender stratification within sexual violence is interrelated with that within sexual harassment. As an example, even though men and women may work alongside each other as colleagues, within Korean organisations one finds that most harassers are men and most victims are women.

Kelly defines her concept of continuum: 'all women experience sexual violence at some

point in their lives. It enables the linking of the more common, everyday abuses women experience with the less common experiences labelled as crimes. It is through this connection that women are able to locate their own particular experiences as being examples of sexual violence' (Kelly 1987:59). This means that most women can be victims of diverse forms of sexual violence apparently perpetuated by gender politics at any time within their lives and in any location. Hence, Kelly's concept is applicable to examining female workers suffering from sexual harassment within their everyday office lives.

Moreover, the concept of continuum indicates the linkage between sexual violence and heterosexual relationships. Kelly suggests that 'women's experiences of heterosexual sex are not either consenting or rape, but exist on a continuum moving from choice to pressure to coercion to force' (Kelly 1987:54). In relation to this, Kelly summarises Bart's work: 'conceiving of heterosexual sex as a continuum which moves from consensual sex, to altruistic sex, to compliant sex, to rape' (Bart 1983 in Kelly 1987:55). The relationship between sexual violence and heterosexual relations is perpetuated by male-dominated sexual culture. A Korean scholar, Jung, argues that the distinction between rape and ordinary sexual intercourse within marriage is obscure because both are concerned with the structurally asymmetrical relationship between men and women. In consequence, he argues that female sexuality within marriage is objectified as a result of Korean sexual culture being characterised as male dominated and genital-centred. These features potentially create men as assailants and women as victims even within ordinary sexual relationships. This concept of a continuum is applicable to sexual harassment because it maintains the existence of a relationship between sexual harassment and gender politics and, as I mentioned above, incidents of sexual harassment are deeply linked to heterosexual relationships within male-centred and male oriented sexual culture. As a result, and to

reiterate my earlier point, while analysing sexual harassment within a Korean context discussions around gender politics are crucially important.

As a result of this research focus upon gender, it is necessary to explain how, within my study, I deal with the gender identities of female workers in relation to their experiences of sexual harassment. This necessarily results from the controversial and contested nature of feminist discussions surrounding gender identity. As I mentioned in the previous section, although most Korean feminists define women as a whole group there are some Korean feminists who have recently begun to theoretically challenge the binary gender system. Nevertheless, the majority of Korean feminist research is concentrated upon the similarities rather than the differences among women because the emphasis on similarities is more applicable to examining Korean women's lives. Similarly, some western feminists have challenged the conceptualisation of sexual violence based upon the binary gender system. Feminist researchers who are interested in sexual violence partially agree with their critics. For example, Kelly and her colleagues accept that we should reconsider the methodology of sexual violence. According to them, 'research on violence against women has begun to explore differences in women's experiences and how these connect to different ways of coping with men's violence' (Kelly et al. 1996:5). While women can experience violence regardless of differences of class, ethnicity and race, we should not neglect to consider the differences among women. However, when analysing the sexual harassment experienced by Korean women I will mainly focus upon similarities.

Korean feminist researchers also emphasise the relationship between gender and sexual violence (Lee, M. S. 1989; Lee, S. Y. 1989; Park, S. M. 1989; Shim 1998). Most Korean women who have been raped tend to think that the cause of the rape is not the rapist but

rather themselves. Regardless of their age and class, Korean women have been trained by their families and teachers to believe that if you are virtuous you will not experience sexual violence. If you are raped, therefore, it will be you that is to be blamed (Shim 1998:158-159). Sometimes women who have been raped kill themselves or end up becoming prostitutes because they think that they can no longer survive as ordinary women (Lee, M. S. 1989). Therefore, when we research sexual violence against Korean women we need to concentrate upon their commonalities. For instance, most harassed women, regardless of any differences of class, position or marital status, feel that they are unable to resist their harasser for fear of being stigmatised as harassed women. The fact is that women who are associated with sexual issues, regardless of specific contexts and causes, are still condemned as 'bad girls'.

A discussion of gender identity appears to be related to the stigmatisation of the victims as well as responses to all forms of sexual violence. My research suggests that the majority of female workers find it difficult to resist sexual harassment and attempt to remain uninvolved with the issue. These women opt to passively endure sexual harassment or attempt to regard it as common; this behaviour considers it an ordinary occurrence (see chapter 5). In this sense, the construction of femininity undermines women's ability to fight against the occurrence and maintenance of sexual harassment within Korean organisations. I therefore suggest that an examination of how the femininities of Korean female workers are socially constructed is intimately connected with the examination of how sexual harassment is specifically defined within Korea. I will also review the western feminist discussions surrounding gender identity because, within my thesis, I want to express where I stand in relation to this controversy.

Since the beginning of second wave feminism¹⁷ many feminists have concentrated upon the interrelationship between gender and sexuality and its connection to feminist politics. As a result, the terms, 'sex', 'gender' and 'sexuality' have been examined in different ways from a feminist perspective. Oakley, as a British feminist scholar, is initially interested in distinguishing the term 'gender' from the term 'sex'.¹⁸ She suggests that "'sex" refers to the biological division into female and male; "gender" to the parallel and socially unequal division into femininity and masculinity' (Oakley 1972: 41). In addition, Rubin also examines the relationship between sex and gender suggesting: 'every society has a sex/gender system – a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention' (Rubin 1975: 165). Rubin emphasises the significance of the concept of gender within social relations and states that 'gender is a socially imposed division of the sexes. It is a product of the social relations of sexuality' (Rubin 1975:179). She attempts to examine the concepts of gender and sexuality within social relations. Both Oakley and Rubin suggest a distinction between sex and gender but this conceptualisation – gender seems to be perpetuated by biological sex – might be seen as essentialist.

Some feminists began to critically examine the distinction between sex and gender, firstly concentrating upon how gender is socially constructed. Jackson and Scott have determined that 'gender denotes a hierarchical division between women and men embedded in both social institutions and social practices. Gender is thus a social structural phenomenon but is also produced, negotiated and sustained at the level of everyday interaction' (Jackson and

¹⁷ The term 'second wave feminism' refers to the Women's Liberation Movement, which emerged in most western countries at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s (Jackson & Scott 1996:26).

¹⁸ Jackson indicates that 'Oakley did not invent the distinction between sex and gender, but borrowed it from Robert Stoller, a psychologist' (Jackson 1998:132-133).

Scott 2002:1). Jackson and Scott's main argument is closely related to the materialist feminist perspective, in particular, Delphy's argument. Moreover, their point leads to an understanding of the relationship between gender and sexuality. They suggest that gender is analytically distinguished from sexuality but that both are empirically connected because 'the social distinction and hierarchical relationship between men and women profoundly affects our sexual lives' (Jackson & Scott 1996:3). Jackson and Scott's conceptualisation – the distinction between sex, gender and sexuality – is mainly applicable to my research, because of the fact that the hierarchical division between female and male workers contributes to incidents of sexual harassment (see Chapter 4). I also found that the gender identities of female workers are embedded in sex discriminatory and heterosexual institutions and practices within Korean organisations (see chapter 3). I will therefore concisely explore materialist feminist opinions in relation to gender identity because they explain how gender is socially constructed by hierarchical social relationships.

Before I focus on examining a materialist feminist view in relation to this issue, I must briefly refer to the post-modern feminist perspective of gender. Post-modern feminists also argue that gender is socially constructed and reflect the anti-essentialist position of the materialist feminists. However, there are differences in the way these two branches of feminism examine the socially constructed nature of gender. Whereas materialist feminists focus on social structural relations between men and women, post-modern feminists concentrate on cultural explanations (Jackson 1998:135). In explaining why the post-modern feminism is not really suitable for examining my research, I will focus on Butler's idea of gender, as her book, *Gender Trouble*, appears to be the most representative analysis of a post-modern feminist perspective. Butler suggests that 'when the constructed status of gender is theorised as radically independent sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating

artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one' (Butler 1990:6). Moreover, she reflects on the relationship between gender and body within cultural meaning: "the body" is itself a construction, as myriad "bodies" that constitute the domain of gendered subject. Bodies cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of their gender' (Butler 1990:8). Butler's idea of gender is closely focused upon cultural explanations but she neglects to examine gender as a social and hierarchical structure (Jackson and Scott 2002:20). I would argue that her idea of gender might not be applicable to the incidents of sexual harassment because these are not only related to but also perpetuated by hierarchical gender divisions between men and women. If I examine the incidents of sexual harassment through Butler's lens of gender, I will overlook the specific factors and strategies of sexual harassment.

Many feminists disagree with Butler's argument in relation to women's position because her idea tends to overlook the feminist belief that women are defined as an oppressed social group, even though they are socially, culturally and historically located in different positions (Butler 1990:5). Feminists need to seek alternative strategies to release women from their oppressive lives. Maynard and de Groot argue that 'if women and men are treated as disembodied sets of cultural categories, the reality of women's experience vanishes from view and the concept serves to depoliticise feminist insights on male supremacy' (de Groot and Maynard 1993:157). It is for these reasons that Butler's perspective is not applicable to examine my research. From my interview process I can recognise that Korean female workers have experienced similar problems in relation to their sexual lives (see Chapter 3) and sexual harassment within Korean organisations and also that they define themselves as a sex-discriminated and oppressed group (see Chapter 4).

Therefore, in relation to sexual matters, women's experiences are related to gender divisions based on hierarchical culture and social institution. I also disagree with Butler's ideas in relation to sexual politics and I aim to discover practical strategies to eradicate sexual harassment through this research and my study is based on a definition that implies that women are a social and an oppressed group.

The ideas of materialist feminism are particularly applicable within an exploration of my research subject as they consider gender to be socially constructed but also differ from post-modern analysis of gender as a social construction. The materialist feminists Delphy and Leonard suggest that 'we see "men" and "women" as two socially differentiated categories (two "genders"), with one dominating the other' (Delphy and Leonard 1992:258). The main reason why women are socially distinguished from men is because men dominate women. Delphy and Leonard also state: 'these two social groups are no more naturally based than any other power relations in society (they are no more natural than, for example, class or racial divisions) and the sexual and love relationships established between men and women are also seen as socially constructed and a means to the continuation of women's oppression' (Delphy and Leonard 1992:258). Identifying similarities between gender and class, Delphy and Leonard's main argument reflects a determination of gender relations as social and hierarchical. They define women as an exploited group and thus their argument contributes to the developmental discussion within feminism in relation to the social construction of gender. In addition, they suggest that 'within the family system, we see men exploiting women's practical, emotional, sexual and reproductive labour' (Delphy and Leonard 1992:258). It could be argued that the exploitation occurs not only within the family system but in relation to sexual harassment, also within Korean organisations. Female workers are expected to accept incidents of sexual harassment in order to maintain

a harmonious environment within the workplace. They suffer emotionally and psychologically from these incidents of sexual harassment and these after-effects/repercussions could be considered to result from a form of emotional labour. From the basis of a materialist argument I can examine how the gender identities of female workers are constituted and constructed by an organizational hierarchy and the ways in which these constructed identities of female workers are interconnected with specific incidents of sexual harassment.

In relation to this I use the term, 'femininity' not simply in terms of identity but rather in a wider sense in relation to a social self as this concept of social self implies a structure that is always 'in process' rather than being fixed (Jackson 1999:24). In this respect, in Chapter 3 I will consider how the femininities of Korean female workers are defined as social selves since their experiences are not only culturally and historically specific but also continuously changeable. I suggest this concept of a gendered social self enables us to explore the change in female worker's lives in both the conscious and unconscious sphere. Moreover, Jackson argues that 'the social self must also be conceptualised as an embodied self in interaction with others.' This means that individual experiences interact with given social, cultural and historical factors; hence, exploring the experiences of female workers as social selves might demonstrate not only how their experiences are perpetuated by their own society, culture and history, but also how the features of society and culture are changed by the challenges and resistances of individuals. While I apply the concept of social self to my research as an analytical tool, I intend to examine not only how the gendered and sexual selves of female workers are socially, culturally and historically constructed, but also how the changeable and reflexive selves are related to changes within Korean society.

Through examining the relationship between gender and sexual harassment I first argue that incidents of sexual harassment should be dealt with in the arena of gender politics as most incidents of sexual harassment within Korean organisations occur between female and male workers. Secondly, in order to explore the victim's experiences of sexual harassment I need to understand femininity in terms of gender identity. In particular, I use the concept of the social self instead of gender identity because, as I already suggested, the former is largely applicable to examination of the specific experiences of Korean female workers. In conclusion, I would argue that the concept of gender is a fundamental concept through which to examine incidents of sexual harassment and explore the particular experiences of female workers within Korea.

The relationship between heterosexuality and sexual harassment

The specificity of Korean sexual harassment is closely associated with heterosexuality as institution and practice due to incidents of sexual harassment often tending to be defined as ordinary heterosexual relations between men and women. In particular, male harassers frequently claim that sexual harassment reflects a normal heterosexual attitude by which they express their interest in women. The attitude of female workers to sexual harassment is also deeply affected by heterosexuality as an institution. For example, female workers avoid actively resisting unwelcome advances from male colleagues as a result of anxieties over their sexual reputation. The harassed women are often regarded as 'bad girls'; blame is placed firmly at their feet rather than being directed forwards the harassers. It could be argued that men's behaviour as a harasser is normalised whereas women as a victim are stigmatised as 'bad girls' within the Korean heterosexual culture.

Examining the relationship between heterosexuality and sexual harassment is therefore significant in understanding the specificity of Korean sexual harassment. Nevertheless, debates on heterosexuality seem to be nearly absent in both feminist academic and activist arenas in Korea. Korean feminist scholars have, as yet, failed to theoretically distinguish sexuality from heterosexuality and are only just beginning to examine sexuality as an academic subject¹⁹. This situation that Korean feminism is currently in appears to be similar to Western feminism a few decades ago. Jackson points out that 'heterosexuality itself was rarely named and identified as the object of analysis. Indeed, we often talked simply of sexuality when we meant heterosexuality' (Jackson 1999:11). The examination of heterosexuality is therefore relatively new in both Western and Korean feminist arenas, although some western feminists have begun to focus more closely upon this subject²⁰. I would argue that the exploration of heterosexuality is one of the most important frameworks in relation to the examination of sexual harassment. Thus I would like to appraise the relationship between sexual harassment and heterosexuality as an institution and a practice and then look closely at the recent change in the heterosexual culture of Korea.

Before an examination of the relationship between sexual harassment and heterosexuality, it is important that I clearly define 'heterosexuality'. The term heterosexuality appears to have been introduced in Korea by both feminist scholars and gay activists. However, both of these groups tend to think of heterosexuality as a form of sexual preference – that is, as in opposition to homosexuality – and hence do not consider heterosexuality to be an

¹⁹ Since the end of the 1980's, some Korean feminist scholars have paid attention to these issues.

²⁰ According to Jackson, since the end of 1970s 'debates around political lesbianism and heterosexuality caused major political rifts within feminism in the western societies'(Jackson 1999:13).

analytical subject. Moreover, their ideas about heterosexuality are based upon western feminist work [such as the term 'compulsory heterosexuality' coined Rich (1980)] and, only borrow the term 'heterosexuality' and thus they neglect to analytically consider the concept. Through reviewing western feminist works on heterosexuality I aim to theorise the concrete relationship between Korean heterosexuality and sexual harassment within this thesis.

The feminist critical point that heterosexuality is a social and not natural institution was made by Charlotte Bunch and other lesbian writers in the 1970s (Humm, 1995:120). Humm summarises Rich's notion that 'feminist analysis is weakened by a failure to treat heterosexuality as a political institution [...] compulsory heterosexuality is a key mechanism perpetuating male dominance, which inculcates and then enforces a heterosexual preference in women by a variety of mechanisms' (Humm 1995:120). Most feminists agree that heterosexuality is not a natural choice but instead a socially constructed phenomenon. Many scholars within feminism are intent on exploring the relationship between heterosexuality as an institution and as a practice or an experience (Richardson 1996: 163; Robinson 1993: 80; Jackson 1996: 29). I apply this distinction to an examination of my data as all of my interviewees are heterosexual women, thereby reflecting the norm within Korean sexual culture. In doing this, I attempt to examine how heterosexuality as an institution is interrelated with sexual harassment as a practice of heterosexuality.

Sexual harassment was originally considered to be a social issue and western feminists have recently begun to analyse the interrelationship between sexual harassment and heterosexuality. For Epstein, 'harassment is strongly implicated in the production of

heterosexual gendered identities and can be seen as not simply sexist but heterosexist in nature' (Epstein 1997:167). In other words the exploration of sexual harassment is concerned not only with gender relationships but also with heterosexual relationships. In order to explore the connection between Korean heterosexuality and sexual harassment, firstly examining institutions of heterosexuality such as the family and marriage, I then investigate how the social policy in relation to sexual harassment is characterised as heterosexual and gendered.

The phenomenon of sexual harassment might be defined as a common form of heterosexual practice and is also related to the institution of heterosexuality, which includes such systems as those of marriage and family. In reality job segregation in the workplace is closely maintained by the domestic roles of women within the family. Many western feminists, including VanEvery (1996:42-43), have criticized the family as an institutionalised hegemonic form of heterosexuality. In the past the roles of women were defined as those of domestic labour and as the supporters of men. Thus, while the majority of women undertake paid work in both the West and Korea, they confront the inequality of job-segregation. For example, the status of women is generally lower than that of men and their duties, as opposed to male workers in Korea, are concerned with sub-core jobs. This situation stems from the gender segregation of employment and is based on the dichotomy between men's work in the public sphere and women's work in the domestic sphere. Male workers consider the abilities of female workers to be inferior and regard them as supporters rather than colleagues. In this way, female workers are seen to take on the roles of office mother, wife and sexual object.

Discussing a similar situation in the West, Cockburn suggests that 'A woman's domestic

identity constitutes her as a disadvantaged worker, while being a low earner and subject to male authority at work diminishes her standing in the family' (Cockburn 1991:77). Pringle also argues that the roles of nannies, wives and mother in the family are connected to the roles of secretaries in the office (Pringle 1989:50-51). Clearly, sex-segregated jobs in the labour market are deeply affected by the gender segregation within the family and thus this phenomenon may well constitute the predominant background from which sexual harassment has been admitted into Korean organisations. In Chapter 4 and 5 I will examine this specific situation in greater depth based on the experiences of female workers in Korea.

In relation to the argument that the hierarchical relationship between men and women within the family is interconnected with that between male and female workers within organisations, Delphy and Leonard suggest that 'family relationships are essentially hierarchical and comprise an exploitative system – but a system with a structure and a process very different from that of the (also but differently exploitative) market system. Women are oppressed and exploited in both – but differently, and the two forms of inequality interact' (Delphy and Leonard 1992:110). Delphy and Leonard point out how women are located within a hierarchical relationship in both the private and public spheres, as well as indicating that although the two forms are different, they also interact. Even though their discussion is based upon western society it seems to be appropriate in understanding the experiences of Korean women in both their domestic and public lives. It is because Korean women are still not defined as workers, but instead remain solely as wives, mothers and daughters, that working women are often dealt with in relation to their role as an office wife. I would argue that the hierarchical relationship in both the family and the labour market becomes central to an understanding of sexual harassment and also influences the passive response of female workers to sexual harassment.

The hierarchical relationship within the institution of heterosexuality results in the construction of women's identities as wife, girlfriend, daughter or mother (Jackson 1996:31). In a similar way, most Korean women have learned their roles perpetuated by the basic ethics of Confucianism²¹. For example, Confucianism requires of all women three duties regardless of class, ethnicity and age. First, when a woman is young, she should obey her father as his daughter; second, a married woman should obey her husband as his wife; finally, when a woman is old and her husband is dead, she should obey her son as his mother. These rules are called 'Sam-Jong-Ji-Do' in Korean, meaning the three life ethics for women. These statements have influenced the formation of female identity in Korea until recent times. These ideas imply that women are the property of men, ought to get married, and should also give birth to children and take care of them as their mother. The most crucial duty throughout the three duties is that women should obey men. Korean heterosexuality as an institution is both deeply and widely based on Confucianism and therefore women have accepted oppressive and subordinated feminised identities whereby they must be obedient, passive and virtuous.

For Korean women, the features of femininity have been based on Sam-Jong-Ji-Do. Having been taught to obey men's orders, especially older men, female workers who have been sexually harassed, usually by men older than themselves, feel unable to resist their harassers due to this internalisation of oppressive femininity. Korean women have learned that women should provide men with their services at anytime and anywhere. Most women become a 'wife', a man's supporter and as a reflection of this norm, female workers are

²¹ Chinese scholar, Kong, Ja established the Confucian ideas around the third century B.C. Since the establishment of this idea Asian people have thought of Confucianism as a life principle.

required to service male workers regardless of their own duties. These female workers expect to be required to make coffee and clean the office etc for their male colleagues. These requirements result from a situation in which women workers are envisioned as 'office wives' (see Pringle 1989:6-7) and, in my opinion, could be determined as gender harassment.

Within a specifically Korean context, the crucial element of feminised identity is its relation to a woman's sexual chastity. It is implied that women must remain sexually chaste pre-marriage and sexually faithful post-marriage. In recent times, young women have attempted to challenge this idea of sexual chastity intrinsically related to feminine identity. However, having succeeded in creating a form of sub-culture, their challenge has only produced partial change. Young women still attempt to present themselves as virginal to their future spouse despite the fact that they have argued for the right to choose sexual partners and many have experienced sexual intercourse before marriage. It is interesting to note that while the rate of unmarried women who experience sexual intercourse has increased in Korea, pre-marriage loss of sexual chastity remains unacceptable as some women want their hymens to be restored before the marriage ceremony. The operation for restoring the hymen has become the most popular operation within Korean hospitals (*The Daily Newspaper of Donga*, 3rd Feb 1998) and, as a result, we witness this enforcement of sexual chastity as the causal agent for the oppression of female sexuality.

During my interview process I asked female workers, 'why don't you want to speak out about your experience?' And why don't you want to actively resist sexual harassment?' Most of them answered that an acknowledgement of their own sexual experiences, even including those of sexual violence, would result in a public identification of them as 'bad

girls'. With this stigma attached it would then become difficult for them to marry. This careful consideration of their sexual reputations reflects the pervasive nature of the discourse surrounding a Korean feminised identity. Some western feminists also argue that women are put under pressure in relation to sexual reputation (Holland et. al. 1996:145; Skeggs 1997:130). Heterosexual relations lead to the inequalities between men and women prevalent within the whole system and therefore the inclusion of enforced sexual chastity is an obstacle to any resistance of sexual harassment. As a result, the family and marriage as institutions of heterosexuality are integrally connected to diverse incidents of sexual harassment. It is therefore my belief that the systems of family and marriage within heterosexual culture should be considered within an examination of the factors underlying sexual harassment and the strategies put in place in order to facilitate resistance.

I will attempt to show how social policy underlying sexual harassment is affected by heterosexuality as an institution as well as how it is constructed by gendered institutions. I have a critical view that these social policies such as the legislation on sexual harassment and the existence of committees for the victims within organisations are regarded as sufficient strategies for eradicating sexual harassment. However, the significance of the legislation on sexual harassment has been emphasised by feminists and policy makers in both the West and Korea (Farely 1978; Mackinnon 1979; Lee, S. E. 1995; Yosong Minwoohoe [Women's Link] 2000). In recent years, some western feminists have indicated the limitations of social policy as the majority of victims are reluctant to take legal action and criticise it as impractical and inefficient (Houghton-James 1995:49-50. Bacchi, 1999:181. Rowe, 1996:243). Social policies underlying sexual harassment fail to operate as an appropriate method of control of sexual harassment since their establishment is limited without the social and cultural change of the existing male dominated and unequal society

(Houghton-James 1995:50, Bacchi, 1999:197). In this thesis, I attempt to conceptualise the way in which social policy as a heterosexual and gendered feature is constructed and, in doing this, hope to indicate its limitations in relation to Korean sexual environments.

The established legislation relating to sexual violence is representative of Korean social policies within sexual issues and thus a review of how this legislation is constituted as heterosexual and male-dominated would prove meaningful. The first negative nature of the legislation on sexual violence regards it as non-violent and places it under the umbrella of heterosexual relations. Sexual violence being seen as a violation of sexual chastity implies that only Korean women should keep sexual chastity and therefore the legislation needs to exist to protect the women's chastity from men's violation. With regard to this implication, most victims of sexual harassment and violence are reluctant to take legal action because they are anxious to avoid stigmatising themselves as unchaste women.

In this respect the nature of Korean legislation underlying sexual issues is characterised as heterosexual and male-dominated because it leads to the silence of victims and the prioritisation of the male attacker. Furthermore, the peculiarity of this legislation is personal accusations: only the victim of sexual violence can accuse the assailants. According to lawmakers, personal accusations are crucial within the protection of the victims' privacy as the sexual chastity of women is of such importance. If victims do not want to accuse their attackers, then the attackers will go unpunished (Shim, 1998:281). The regulation of personal accusation implies the protection of women's privacy; however, the principle, in relation to the maintenance of sexual chastity, is clearly preserved by the institution of heterosexuality. The implication is that men are actively sexual whereas women's sexuality is defined as passive and oppressive and it consequently becomes difficult for the victims to

make a legal accusation against their attacker (Shim 1998:281).

The inefficiency of the Korean legislation on sexual issues and its role within the oppression of female sexuality results from its basis upon a heterosexual norm. Depriving women of the right to their own body, Korean feminist scholars have argued that this legislation is inappropriate, failing to improve the quality of women's lives because they remain located in an unequal social position. Gender equality of the legislation must be realised before any forms of social equality can be acknowledged. In other words, an equality of conditions between men and women must be premised (Cho, H. 1996:261; Shim 1998:266) as without this, inequality within the legal system prevails. In addition, I would argue that the impractical nature of the legislation on sexual violence is affected by not only the material inequality between men and women but also with the institution of heterosexuality imposing sexual chastity on women. Furthermore, the unrealistic and inefficient features within the legislation on sexual violence parallel those within the legislation on sexual harassment. I will examine these specific incidents and circumstances in Chapter 6.

That the core concept of Korean heterosexuality is the idea of sexual chastity is influential within the construction of both female sexuality and gender identity. Moreover, the ideology of sexual chastity works as a tool of social control upon women in Korea and an examination of Korean heterosexuality reveals it to be deeply related to the specificity of Korean sexual harassment. It is clear that the diverse incidents of sexual harassment should be examined thereby investigating the specific culture and history of each society. As the phenomenon of sexual harassment is located within the characteristics of Korean sexual culture, I examine the recent change in this sexual culture and, in so doing, show the nature

of the culture and the changes it has undergone.

Since the middle of the 1980s, feminist theorists have examined 'sexuality' as an academic subject and it has become an important issue not only in academic areas but also within the cultural sector. Recently, the research on sexuality has become a significant subject in medical science, psychology, philosophy and cultural studies, as well as in theatre, film, commercial advertising and media (Cho, Y. M. 1999:11). However, the dominant morality of Korean society is that sexuality within married couples is normal but other forms of sexuality are abnormal. After all, Korean sexual culture is mainly characterised as heterosexual, adult and focused upon male sexuality, despite resistant discourses recently having emerged. Having briefly pointed out the features of the dominant sexual culture I turn to a discussion of the challenge being made to these features.

The nature of Korean sexual culture is based upon the traditional conservative perspective being related to Confucianism. Within this belief biological differences between men and women are essential, with men being represented as 'Yang' and women as 'Yin'. Confucian ideas emphasize the harmony between Yang and Yin but the main rule is that Yang controls Yin. As a result, male sexuality is superior to female sexuality hence the relationship between men and women is considered to be hierarchically constructed (Shim 1998:211). Moreover, sexuality within Confucianism is also defined as a method by which the family system is maintained (ie. reproduction) rather than a pleasurable experience. With this background, Korean people come to regard heterosexual monogamy as the only normal, natural and moral sexual relationship.

As I mentioned previously, the dominant view assumes that male sexuality is strong and

active whereas female sexuality is weak and passive and therefore both the sexual rights and pleasure of women are ignored and their sexuality restricted to motherhood. Korean sexual culture applies a sexual double standard to men and women. For instance, men should officially follow the regulation of sexuality for reproduction within marriage but, tacitly, they might also have sexual relations with lovers and prostitutes. On the other hand, women should maintain their sexual chastity before marriage and sexual fidelity after. This double standard is connected to the dichotomy between 'good girls' and 'bad girls' in relation to sexual reputation. However, the dominant features of heterosexuality are beginning to be challenged from different perspectives, such as feminism, free-sex radicalism and homosexual activism. As a result, Korean sexual culture is not determined by one perspective but is contested in different ways. Bearing this in mind, I will point out how the main sexual culture has struggled with sub-cultures.

The first main feature of Korean sexual culture is that it is adult-centred: Korean adolescents are prohibited from accessing sexual materials or enacting sexual behaviour such as sexual intercourse, masturbation and the watching of pornographic films. These young people are restricted from learning about sexuality although some are challenging the taboo which claims that only adults can gain access to sexual matters. For example, a number of Korean adolescent boys seek sexual knowledge through cartoons, magazines, pornographic films and the internet (Cho, Y. M. 1999:12). They believe that they should experience sexual intercourse outside marriage and many of them have experienced it. Therefore, some young boys think that they can choose sexual practice as their right. However, these changes seem to be negative as well as positive. The negative aspect is the misunderstanding of female sexuality by young boys. For example, they assume that women want to be raped so they regard sexual violence as a form of sexual behaviour. The

catalyst for this cultural view is a young man's education in sexual knowledge through the commercial media and pornographic magazines and films which depict women as sexual objects and victims. Kwon suggests that the increase in the number of adolescent rapists results from their inappropriate sexual information through commercial materials such as pornographic magazines and films (Kwon 1999: 335).

The dominant ideology of sexual chastity is being challenged by adolescent girls since they confront the notion that women should be asexual and passive in the context of sexuality and attempt to reclaim their sexual rights. A minority of Korean girls think of sexual intercourse as a kind of game, with some girls working as prostitutes to earn their pocket money. These attempts to earn money through the provision of sexual services result from a change within the Korean consumer economy. Teenage girls increasingly want to buy expensive goods such as clothes, shoes and cosmetics and owners of entertainment venues also want to hire young girls because male customers demand the sexual services of young girls (Lee, H. H. 1998:29-30). In this context, the challenge which resists adult sexuality tends also to collude with male-adult sexuality and contribute to its maintenance, reflecting a rather negative change.

However, although the picture I have illustrated above looks bleak, Kim argues that young people use sexuality as a tool of resistance against an oppressive family system and its stifling power (Kim, J. H. 1998:21), as well as treating it as an agency through which they confirm themselves. I maintain that Kim misses a vital point. Young girls' challenge to adult sexuality is linked with another oppression and perpetuates problems such as the increase in victims of the sex-exploitation industry. Nevertheless, young people's challenge to the dominant sexual discourse is partially positive as it could act as a motivating force in

the change of Korean sexual culture. For example, as the prostitution of adolescent girls becomes a social issue some feminist activists have suggested that the unconditional suppression of adolescent sexuality leads to social problems and therefore practical and alternative sex education for adolescents should be provided by the public schools (Lee, W.S. et. al. 1998:181). The young people who work against the domain of adult sexuality fail to represent a complete challenge to mainstream Korean culture but are defined as a delinquent subculture (see Matza 1967); their resistance draws upon both positive and negative aspects of Korean sexual ideology.

This dominant sexual morality is also challenged by the gradual emergence of homosexuality within Korea. In the 1990s homosexuality began to be visible as organizations for homosexual people were established within universities and a 'Queer Film Festival' was held in Seoul in 1997. According to a recent survey, 3.5 percent of Korean adult men have experienced homosexual desires and most gay men belong to the upper-middle and well-educated classes (*The daily newspaper of Donga*, 30 June 1998). However, in general most homosexual people are unable to come out as gay and lesbian due to a fear of condemning themselves as deviants. Their anxieties are fuelled by a belief that most people are not yet ready to accept homosexuality as a choice of sexual preference because the dominant culture is so deeply committed to reproductive heterosexuality. Those in favour of homosexuality argue that it should be understood as a viable choice and basic right. On the other hand, those against homosexuality claim that its acceptance would lead to the confusion of sexual identity for heterosexual people, thereby causing a social problem since homosexuality challenges the notion of reproductive heterosexuality (*Women's Weekly Newspaper*, 9 Feb 1996). In particular, gay activists emphasize that the deconstruction of heterosexuality would result in the authorization of diverse sexual

identities (Suh 1996: 41).

However, Korean feminists have not yet challenged the institution of heterosexuality through which men gain sexual, economic and social priorities. Still understanding the demands of heterosexual women to be the demands of all women it is difficult for Korean feminism to consider the oppression of lesbians (Cho, Y. M. 1999:35). Arguably, the issues of homosexuality in Korea are central to gay men rather than lesbians as women are still unable to argue for their sexual rights, no matter whether they are homosexual or heterosexual. For instance, when homosexuality is discussed in the Korean media most journalists solely search the experience of gay men as a social issue and only introduce organizations for gay men. Even though some lesbians have begun to come out and organizations for lesbians exist in Korea, they are not mentioned as a result of the gay activists who argue these radical homosexual politics being mainly male academics.

It is my opinion that Korean feminists need to aim for a point at which the argument of gay activists, which deconstructs the dichotomies between heterosexuality/homosexuality, men/women and gay/lesbian, combines together with the voices of sexual minority groups. The argument of gay activists tends to give priority to gay and male identities of the upper middle classes thereby maintaining the exclusion of all lesbians and working class gay men. Korean feminists should therefore critically consider the sex-neutral perspective that is argued by gay activists; if people achieve sexual liberation, women's liberation will also be furthered. In sum, the critical examination of heterosexuality becomes a necessary duty of Korean feminists at present.

The challenges made by the adolescent sub-culture and the emerging visibility of

homosexuality within Korea is also accompanied by another method of resistance concerned with male-centred sexuality. According to the dominant discourse, female sexuality is characterized as asexual, passive and reproductive. In general, Korean women expect to obey the norm of sexual chastity and are determined by the dichotomy between 'good girls' and 'bad girls'. The ideal of female sexuality is represented by sexual chastity as a daughter and sexual fidelity as a wife. However, since the beginning of the 1990s women of a new generation²² have begun to challenge these ideas by firstly resisting sexual violence. Raped and harassed women have made legal complaints against their assailants, thereby reflecting a change in women's consciousness. The victims appear to recognise that they need no longer blame themselves for the sexual harassment and violence they have suffered. Until the present day raped women have been stigmatised as criminals although some had tried to resist this male-oriented assumption surrounding sexual violence.

As a radical aspect, women have also begun to speak out about their sexual pleasures and desires. For instance, a newspaper reporter noted that female students wrote their sexual desires, such as pre-marital sexual intercourse and homosexual desire, in the toilets of a women's university (*The Daily Newspaper of Hankook*, 5 April 1999). In Korea the wall of the female toilet is used as a field of communication in relation to sexual experiences because ordinary women are unable to speak out about sexual interest and desire. Through the graffiti we witness the various discourses of pre-marital sexual intercourse experienced by the female students. Some of them have a positive view of premarital sexual relations but others contest whether they may experience premarital sexual relations, still being

²² In this context, 'new generation' means that they resist the old system, the conservative thought of the past. There are many controversies over whether a new generation exists or not in Korea. Regardless of their age, I think that if someone can reject the oppressive regulations of the past then they are defined as one of the new generation.

subject to sexual chastity. The film 'Cheonyeodeul-ui Jeonyeok-Siksa (Dinner for Virgins)' ²³ which was one of the most popular films in 1998, portrayed conflicts surrounding pre-marital sexual relations. Joo, a film critic, describes the film 'Dinner for Virgins' as a text about how women can negotiate or resist in the field of the body (Joo 1999:98-99). Three heroines had different sexual scripts of pre-marital sexual relations such as maintaining or resisting sexual chastity. The film provides its (predominantly female) audience with not only sexual pleasure but also the pleasure of sisterhood. For instance, in a conversation of the three women, one woman (Ho-Jung) suggests to the other two, 'Let's live together without men, if we want to have a baby, we can get a baby without a husband.' The film 'Dinner for Virgins' appears to represent a challenge to monogamy, heterosexuality and male-dominated sexuality. In short, speaking out about the desire and pleasure of female sexuality is the first step to confronting male-dominated sexuality in present day Korea.

Another women's challenge is that married women have begun to resist the oppressive sexuality of their spousal relationships. The understanding that family affairs are very private and a wife remains that the property of her husband has resulted in domestic violence, such as rape in marriage and violent husbands being predominantly overlooked within Korean society. For example, even though a husband may attack his wife physically and sexually, he will not be regarded as a criminal. However, in recent times, wives who are regularly hurt by their husbands have begun to seek legal advice and challenge the norm that envisions a wife as property and a husband as practicing acceptable infidelity. Despite

²³ The film is directed by Lim, Sang-Soo and was one of the most popular films in 1998 because the film tried to show the unspeakable sexual desire of unmarried women. In this context the film is controversial and has been defined by Korean women as both one of the worst films and one of the best films (*Cine21*, November 1998).

the legislation on domestic violence having been established in 1997, it remains solely concerned with the provision of a safe haven for victims and still fails to legally punish domestic assailants. Park, the officer of 'Yeoseongui Jeonhwa (Women's Hot Line)',²⁴ claims that the legislation on sexual harassment and violence needs to be practically and precisely reformed in order to protect victims (*The Weekly Newspaper of Naeil*, 14 April 1999). The resistance of married women is an important challenge to the assumption that sexuality within only marriage is natural and normal and could lead to a situation in which the institution of heterosexuality is destabilised.

In summary, Korean sexual culture cannot be defined from a single perspective because the dominant morality surrounding sexuality is undergoing change, being challenged by minor groups such as adolescents, homosexuals and women. In order to explore sexual harassment the gaps between the dominant features and resistant discourses as well as the differences amongst these discourses should be reconsidered. I will deal with this subject in more depth in Chapter 3 where I focus upon female worker's accounts.

I highlight above the specificity of Korean sexual harassment in relation to gender, heterosexuality and sexual culture. Through this approach, I generate a link between incidents of sexual harassment and their development within gender politics, and the interrelationship formed from an examination of femininity as a social self and experiences of the victims of sexual harassment. Moreover, sexual harassment as a heterosexual practice is perpetuated by heterosexuality as an institution and interrelated with the change within Korean sexual culture. In the next section, I will move on to a discussion of the way

²⁴ 'Women's Hot Line' is an organisation for women who have suffered from domestic violence.

in which Korean organisational culture is constituted in Korean sexual and gender culture and then how specificities of Korean sexual harassment are linked with the organisational climates.

2. The relationship between organisational culture and sexual harassment

In the previous section I considered the way in which sexual harassment is perpetuated by Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture. Assuming that the specificities of the harassment closely relate to Korean organisational culture, my research concentrates on the incidents of sexual harassment within the country's organisations, developing an understanding of the connection between sexual harassment and the social and cultural relationship between female and male workers within organisations. Moving forward from discussions of sexual harassment and the individual relationships between the sexes, this thesis will examine my definition of Korean organisational culture and then continue with a consideration of how the features of organisational culture are interrelated with both gender and sexuality.

Organisational culture can be defined from diverse perspectives. The definition of organisational culture from a management perspective suggests that 'organisational culture refers to the pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organisation's history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and the behaviours of its members' (Brown 1998:9) Although useful, this understanding is not particularly applicable to my research due to its disregard of gender and sexuality as significant factors in organisational culture. However, despite its inapplicability, I will not neglect

to consider their basic concept of a management perspective of organisational culture.

I apply to my research Newman's definition of organisational culture from feminist perspectives. For Newman, 'Organizational culture is defined in terms of shared symbols, language, practices and deeply embedded beliefs and values' (Newman 1996:11). Her basic point of view is similar to the management scholars' perspective although Newman focuses upon gender issues within organisations: 'Each of these domains has to be understood as gendered and together they constitute an important field in which gendered meanings, identities, practices and power relations are sustained' (Newman 1996:11). Newman suggests gender as a fundamental element but she fails to consider distinguishing sexuality from gender within organisational culture.

However, Hearn, Parkin and Burrell initially began to focus upon the interconnection between gender and sexuality within organisations. While Hearn and Burrell criticise the gender-blindness of mainstream organisation theories, they argue that the research on organisations needs to consider gender and sexuality as crucial subjects (Hearn and Burrell 1989:2-3). Adkins criticises most feminists for neglecting to consider sexuality's role within the labour market (Adkins 1995:27-28) and argues that gendered relations result in sexual harassment and the sexualisation of female workers within this arena (Adkins 1995:155). In recent years Hearn and Parkin have suggested that 'organisations are fundamentally constituted interrelations of gender, sexuality, violation and other oppressions, divisions and differences' (Hearn and Parkin 2001:21). They have labelled this interrelationship 'the gender-sexuality-violations complex'. Their attention to these relationships is influential on my research as I would argue that the incidents of sexual harassment are closely related to both gender and sexuality and, in particular, to

heterosexual relations. Featuring as a crucial point of my research, these interrelations prompt an examination of how gender and sexuality are constituted and connected within Korean organisations.

The interrelationship between gendered organisations and sexual harassment

The definition of sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination within organisations from both Korean and Western feminist perspectives (Mackinnon 1979: 143; Hearn and Parkin 2001: 50; Lee, S. E. 1995: 42; Kong 1995:11) results in the interrelationship of these incidents with the gendered organisational climate. In my MA dissertation in relation to the gendered features of Korean organisations, I previously demonstrated that incidents of sexual harassment are embedded within diverse forms of sex discrimination, such as sex-segregated jobs between male and female workers and the unequal treatment in the standards of employment. Male workers are only able to think of female workers as sexual objects or office wives through their connection to these women as inferior employees rather than equal colleagues. (Lee, S. E. 1995: 42-50).

A number of western scholars have highlighted the gendered features and processes within organisational culture (Itzin 1996: 48; Hearn and Parkin 2001: 9). Itzin's description of the characteristics of gender culture is based upon her research project within a local authority: Defining the gender culture as hierarchical and patriarchal, sex-segregated, -stereotyped, and -discriminatory, she sees it as enhancing sexual divisions of labour. Itzin continues her description by foregrounding gender culture's highly sexualised environment, which she believes encourages and maintains sexual harassment, sexist and misogynistic attitudes. For Itzin, gender culture is both resistant

to change and supports the heightening of gendered power (Itzin 1996: 49-51). In recent years Hearn and Parkin have also suggested five elements that characterise how gender is constituted within organisations:

First, the gendered division of labour, both formal and informal; second, gendered division of authority, with men typically exerting more authority over both women and other men; third, gendered processes between the centre and margins of organisations; fourth, the gendered relationship of organisational participants to their domestic and related responsibilities; fifth, gendered process in the operation of sexuality and violence within the organisations, including the occurrence of sexual harassment and the dominance of various forms of sexuality over others (Hearn and Parkin 2001: 9-10).

Both Itzin' and Hearn & Parkin emphasise how gender works as a profound and comprehensive element within organisations and therefore some of their ideas overlapped. However, Hearn and Parkin's argument is distinguished from Itzin's by the way in which they interrelate the gendered features and elements with incidents of sexual harassment within organisations. Whereas Itzin simply suggests sexual harassment as a characteristic of gender culture, Hearn and Parkin point out that sexual processes including sexual harassment are not only interrelated with but also distinguished from gendered violence in organisations. In this respect I agree with Hearn and Parkin's argument because my research attempts to demonstrate how the gendered processes are distinguished from, as well as associated with, sexual processes within Korean organisations. Hearn and Parkin also suggest that 'the gendered elements interact with each other in ways that may reinforce or contradict each other' (Hearn and

Parkin 2001:10). Their five elements do not appear to obey the same rules and form within each organisation and hence the gendered elements could be seen as culturally and socially changeable rather than fixed. I will therefore concentrate on the specificities of gendered processes as a significant factor permitting sexual harassment within Korean organisations, for instance, Korean female workers tend to be peculiarly defined as 'the office flower'. When Korean employers take on female workers, a consideration of their appearances is of far greater importance than a belief in their ability to do the job. Clearly, the idea of the 'office flower' demonstrates how the Korean gendered process is connected with the sexualisation of female workers.

In particular, the gendered culture in organisations closely mirrors Korean society as a whole, hence the culture is mainly affected by Confucianism. According to Lee, the Korean organisational culture is perpetuated by the country's traditional socio-culture based on Confucianism (Lee, H. J. 1997:107). Confucianism emphasises the hierarchical relationship between senior and junior and the distinctive role between husband and wife within the family system (Lee, H. J. 1997:109). Its principle seems to influence hierarchical relations between not only senior and junior workers, but also male and female employees within Korean organisations. In this context, the majority of female workers are positioned in a lower status and mainly undertake sex-segregated jobs as a result of the distinctive roles between the sexes. Most Korean men regard female workers as providing a supporting role to their own, envisioning these women as sexual objects and creating the label of 'office flower'. As I mentioned above, the concept of 'office flower' reflects how female workers are constrained by both gendered and sexual roles within Korean organisations. Ultimately, the specific gendered elements based on Confucianism are central to gender culture in Korean organisations.

Within Korean organisational structures gendered features are characterised as, firstly, the inequality of opportunity - sex-segregated duties, the absence of a supporting system for female workers and inequality in employment; secondly, sex-discrimination in income and promotion and, finally, sex-discriminatory treatment of married female workers (such as the firing of married women). The superficial aspects of these gendered features within Korean organisations are similar to those suggested by Hearn, Parkin and Itzin as both Korean and British organisations are obviously male-dominated and male-oriented. However, the specific aspects and backgrounds of the two are different and based upon the socio-cultural and historical environment of each society. Hence, in order to understand gender culture within Korean organisations one should consider Confucianism as its specific background as well as the concept of labels such as 'office flower' as one of the specific aspects within Korean organisations. Chapter 4 will show the specific and diverse aspects of Korean gender culture within organisations.

The relationship between sexualised organisation and sexual harassment

Sexual culture within Korean organisations is deeply associated with not only the gender culture of these organisations, but also the sexual culture of Korean society as a whole. Nevertheless, the main reason why I will distinctively look at organisational sexual culture is because an examination of sexual harassment is independently related to the specific sexual culture of the Korean organisation. Hearn and Parkin point out that the naming of sexual harassment in the 1970s was initially influential in the study of sexuality within organisations (Hearn and Parkin 2001:11). They firstly indicate the significant link between sexual harassment and sexuality within organisations and then

continue with the suggestion that the explanation of sexual harassment contributes to activation of western academic research interests on sexuality within organisations. However, up to the present, research on sexuality in Korean organisations has been overlooked by feminists and other academics because the research on sexuality has only recently begun to be studied within Korea. A minority of feminist scholars, including myself, had concentrated research upon Korean organisational culture (Chang, P. H. and Cho, H. 1989; Lee, S. E. 1995) but had failed theoretically and empirically to approach the distinction between gender and sexuality within organisations. Within this thesis I attempt to point out the differences and interrelations between gender and sexual culture within Korean organisations.

The central issue of sexual culture in Korean organisations is related to the leisure culture and, in particular, Sul-Munhwa²⁵ (drinking culture). The term drinking culture implies not only the consumption of alcohol but also the learning of men's sexual culture. For instance, most members of Korean organisations are expected to frequently drink alcohol at both office parties and business meetings. In these situations male workers are usually heavily drunk and, along with their seniors, often treat female workers as sexual objects. It is on these occasions that serious forms of sexual harassment occur. While male workers meet business co-workers or customers in the drinking bar, or room salon²⁶, hostesses provide them with diverse forms of sexual entertainments (such as a strip show). If male customers want to have sex with these women they will arrange to meet them in another venue such as a hotel. This situation is

²⁵ Sul-Munhwa means drinking culture in Korean.

²⁶ 'Room salon' is not an English term but the Korean term which indicates particular type of drinking bar. When drinking there, male customers occupy a closed room and expect to receive sexual services from a young woman. Any kind of sexual behaviour is permitted here except sexual intercourse.

closely related to the nature of heterosexual culture that is based upon the dual norm between men and women and the double standard between 'good girl' and 'bad girl'. Korean men, regardless of their married status, are permitted to have sexual relations with any woman whereas female sexual chastity is important regardless of marital status. Women who remain chaste are defined as 'good girls' with women who fail to do this being given the label 'bad girls'.

Men's habitual attitude to hostesses produces a crucial contradiction as male workers and seniors treat female employees as hostesses at the office party. In these situations the men expect their female colleagues to behave as 'bad girls' providing sexual services whilst also expecting these women to adopt the identity of 'good girls' by displaying feminine characteristics such as obedience and maintaining a caring nature in the workplace. Hearn and Parkin suggest that 'most organisations continue to exist with and through dominant heterosexual norms, ideology, ethics and practices' (Hearn and Parkin 2001:16). It could be argued that the sexual culture within organisations is related to the construction of heterosexual relationships within each society. In this circumstance, female workers become sexual objects and potential victims of sexual harassment in Korean organisations.

I would argue that the drinking culture as a peculiarity of Korean sexual culture should be understood as gendered because it entails male-oriented activity that advocates men's pleasure and therefore female workers avoid it. Nevertheless, the maintenance of the drinking culture demonstrates the absolute male domination of Korean organisational culture. Furthermore it is showed that sexuality is not only linked with, but also empirically distinguished from gender within organisations (Adkins 1995:155; Hearn

and Parkin 2001:16).

Consequently, sexuality within Korean organisations is perpetuated by the specificity of Korean heterosexuality and also interrelated with the gendered culture. It could be argued that certain predominant features of Korean organisations stem from those of Korean culture as a whole. An approach to sexual harassment should therefore combine not only a consideration of organisational climates but also an understanding of the socio-cultural and historical peculiarities of Korean society. I will examine the specific contexts of Korean sexual culture in Chapter 3 and then, in Chapter 4, progress to a study of those prevalent within Korean organisational culture.

III. Aims

Within this research I aim to identify how the specificities of Korean sexual harassment are constituted and then develop an understanding of the way in which the incidents of sexual harassment could be effectively combated. In doing this, I will initially examine Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture in the present day as I indicate that my research aims, as mentioned above, are deeply related to a consideration of the cultural features of Korean society. Moreover, I will investigate the gender and sexual cultures of Korean organisations for it is evident that sexual harassment is linked to both. This examination of the two cultural contexts would therefore develop my overall research focus upon a strategy to combat this phenomenon. I will attempt to summarise the aims of each chapter below.

Chapter 2 considers methodological issues with an initial review of feminist methodology and explanation of why my research should be based upon this approach. The chapter then

continues with a discussion of my interview method and reflection upon my choice of in-depth interviews, a qualitative method, and how I enlisted interviewees. I describe both the significant outcomes and difficulties during the interview process. Through this chapter I attempt to illustrate how feminist methodology and qualitative methods are useful in researching female workers' experiences within Korean organisations.

Chapter 3 explores the peculiarities of heterosexuality and heterosexual culture based upon the experiences and opinions of my interviewees. I firstly look at how female workers define their gendered self and sexual selves and which factors appear important within these definitions. In this examination I find the female workers' resistance to femininity and sexual chastity and discover their gendered and sexual selves to be in process and therefore can change. I then investigate the construction of heterosexuality in relation to the Korean norm of sexual chastity and the marriage system. From this study, I identify the features of Korean sexuality to be super-heterosexual, male-centred and adult-oriented. Finally, in this chapter I examine the change in sexual culture within Korea. In order to capture the key points of these changes, I compare Korean sexual culture with western sexual culture in order to identify how the former is connected with the latter. I explore the Korean people's understanding of sexual culture and, in particular, refer to Miss O's case²⁷ in order to identify the peculiarity of Korean sexuality. In Chapter 3, I find that Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture is still male-centred, adult-oriented, heterosexual and fairly conservative. However there is evidence of changing public opinion as the Korean people have resisted the dual system represented as differences between the informal and the

²⁷ Miss O's case is related to an affair about the private sexual videotape of Oh, Hyun-Kyung, a famous actress. Through illegal circulation in 1998 the majority of Korean people watched the videotape and thus the videotape became a controversial issue in relation to Korean sexuality.

formal sexual norm. In particular, Korean women have gradually resisted both formal sexual norms such as sexual chastity and informal norms such as selling sex. The considerations of Chapter 3 form the basis for the exploration of organisational culture conducted in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 considers Korean organisational culture with specific reference to the issues of gender and sexuality. Firstly, I try to establish the dominant cultural construction of these concepts within a corporate setting and discover that these environments are mainly male dominated and hierarchical. However, several companies, including 'S Conglomerate' and some foreign firms, have attempted to make more positive use of the labour of female workers more equitably and productively. The results of their innovations are encouraging and may influence the policies of other businesses. Secondly, I investigate the various forms of sex discrimination with reference to this corporate culture. I would argue that within Korean organisations, the status of a female worker is always inferior to that of her male peers, because women are located in sex-segregated areas of work, are not granted equal opportunities for promotion, and hence cannot reach the higher levels of income enjoyed by their male colleagues. The labour of female employees is devalued and they are defined as office 'wives' and 'flowers'. Thus sex discrimination at work is inherently related to the objectification of female sexuality within an organisation. Finally, I examine organisational leisure culture, which seems to highlight the specific relationship between gender and sexuality in Korean companies. The main form that this leisure activity takes is that of drinking within the institution of the 'office party'. This drinking culture is in turn deeply influenced by the ethos of the military services. Both cultures are male centred and male dominated, so most female workers are forced into sexual and service roles. The entrenched belief that one must always obey one's senior, and the commercialisation of sex

in the bars, are other important factors. The consequent sexual objectification of women employees within a leisure setting fosters a climate in which sexual harassment can flourish and be perceived as normal male behaviour. Therefore, I believe that the various forms of sex discrimination are all closely related to the phenomenon of sexual harassment. They all tend towards the perception that the female worker is a sexual object and that her body, and the nature of her sexuality, are to be defined and controlled by men.

Chapter 5 analyses Korean female workers' specific experiences of sexual harassment in their workplaces. Firstly, I search for a definition of sexual harassment based on the opinions of these workers. They define sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination, and when they consider what sexual harassment constitutes, they take into account the context of incidents of harassment. Thus, the definition of sexual harassment varies according to the historical moment and specific culture. Secondly, I classify the types of sexual harassment. These are also highly subjective. My typology was once more based on the experiences of victims in Korean workplaces. I identified verbal, physical, visual, psychological and gender harassment, and the types coexist, and are interrelated, in practice. Next, I point out the different factors underlying sexual harassment. These factors are determined by the male dominated and patriarchal Korean organisational culture. That is, the phenomenon of sexual harassment is perpetuated by the gendered and institutional power relationship between men and women. Finally, I investigate how female workers respond to harassers. The majority of women have chosen indirect and passive strategies, such as silence, avoidance and ignoring; only a few female workers assertively confront their harassers. I proceed to investigate why these women find it difficult to respond to their harassers actively. I discover that female workers recognised that assertive respondent strategies often provoke negative outcomes including the threat of dismissal and the

stigmatisation of the victims. Hence assertive actions are ineffective in preventing incidents of sexual harassment. In this context, I examine in the next chapter what alternative measures exist to alleviate the problem of sexual harassment.

Chapter 6 attempts to outline some practical strategies against sexual harassment, but I am well aware that this is not an easy task. Even though legislation for the prevention of sexual harassment has been established, it has not been sufficiently accessible or successful. Nevertheless, the legislation has had the positive effect of defining harassment as illegal behaviour and as a social problem. Many feminist scholars admit it is extremely difficult to find any 'perfect' strategy against sexual harassment. However, we cannot relinquish this task because millions of women are still victims. Therefore, I suggest that in order to combat sexual harassment, firstly, people have to be educated to understand that sexual harassment is not a form of fun and therefore educational programs should be implemented on a regular basis in all organisations. Secondly, female workers need to take an active and assertive approach toward their harassers. They also need to realise that the harasser is the guilty party, and not themselves. Finally, trade unions and women's bodies should provide practical support to victims. These suggestions are not intended to be comprehensive, but they lay the foundations for eradicating sexual harassment in Korean organisations.

Chapter 2. Methodology and Method

Introduction

This chapter examines the methodological processes whereby my research is informed by feminist methodology, and, how I mainly utilise the qualitative method of the in-depth interview. My discussion of research methods will focus upon the qualitative method of in-depth interviews that has been used within this research. It will deal with discussions surrounding the interview process. I will firstly investigate the main reason why I chose the in-depth interview as my main method for collecting data within this research and detailed data based upon female workers' specific experiences relating to sexual harassment and sexual lives within organisations. I will then describe the way in which I enlisted interviewees. Through this examination of my methodology and research methods, I hope to highlight the problems and processes of using an in-depth method of interviewing within a Korean context.

I. Feminist Methodology

The definition of feminist research

This research is mainly rooted in feminist methodology as a result of its concentration upon the experiences of Korean women, both within their sexual lives and the sexual harassment they may have suffered. It also aims to identify the strategies that develop resistance to sexual harassment. In other words, this research is deeply associated with

the representative statement of feminist methodology. 'research on, by and for women', and it therefore becomes necessary for me to conceptualise the definitions of both feminist research and methodology.

Stanley and Wise (Stanley and Wise 1993:30-31) were the first to suggest the definition of feminist research as 'research on, by and for women' and many feminist scholars have discussed it since. Firstly, the term 'research on women' emphasises 'filling in the gaps' about women's interests and experiences and is reflected in much of the social science literature about sexism (Tobias 1978: 85-97). In this context, Stanley and Wise assume a 'ghetto effect':

If academic feminism becomes 'women's studies' then this separating-off of feminism from particular disciplines may also separate it off from ideas and debate of crucial importance to it. Thus, feminism should remain open to, adopt, adapt, modify and use, interesting and useful ideas from any and every source. [...] Feminist research must be concerned with all aspects of social reality and all participants in it. It seems obvious to us that any analysis of women's oppression must involve research on the part played by men in this (Stanley and Wise 1993: 31).

This argument is derived not only from the criticism that the mainstream academic arena ignores women's specific lives and experiences but also the critical view about the separatism of women studies from the mainstream academic arenas. My research is therefore intended to contribute to the development of the Korean academic arena by examining female workers specific experiences of sexual harassment and sexual lives, as both Korean male and female scholars have overlooked these research subjects.

Thus, my research might contribute to 'filling in the gap' of Korean academic knowledge. A number of feminists, like Kelly, also suggest that feminist studies are interested in an exploration of male-dominated institutions and men's lives because they are so closely interconnected with women's lives. However, feminist work should be associated with women's experience as well as partly concerned with the contribution that men's lives may make to any analysis (Kelly, Burton and Regan 1994: 33). To support an understanding of women's experiences and lives in the area of feminist research should be paramount. Therefore, in this research I attempt to focus on female workers' experiences, feelings and thoughts through their accounts of the sexual culture and sexual harassment they have been subjected to.

The second point made by Stanley and Wise is that feminist research should be 'by women'. 'We reject the idea that men can be feminist because we argue that what is essential to "being feminist" is the possession of "feminist consciousness"' (Stanley and Wise 1993:31-32). They define feminist consciousness 'as rooted in the concrete, practical and everyday experiences of being, and being treated as, a woman' (Stanley and Wise 1993:32). In addition to this, Stanley and Wise argue that 'there is not just one feminist consciousness but a multiplicity; these are derived from differing involvement in, and interpretation of, different situated experience' (Liz and Stanley 1991:277). Therefore, the process of feminist consciousness is not simple and easy but complicated and dynamic. In this respect it is difficult for men to have a feminist consciousness because the way in which a woman becomes a feminist is also not easy but complicated and requires a significant effort. I cannot simply give an appropriate answer; whether men can be feminists or not. However, I can say that at present in Korea a man is as yet unable to be considered a feminist. For example, some Korean men at times identify themselves as feminists but it could be argued that their thoughts are dominated by their

own male position with its social and cultural prestige. Having lived on a higher status in comparison to women they cannot experience and understand women's lives. After all, their understanding of the female sexual revolution focuses upon the 'free sex' which would be available to them and some gay activists have argued that male homosexuality is superior to lesbianism (Kim, W. S. 1997:57; Ma 1997: 71; Suh 1996: 9). In relation to Woo's case of sexual harassment, Kim criticises Woo's legal action as an over-reaction. Kim defines sexual harassment as an expression of sexual interest rather than a criminal act. It is clear that male scholars' idea is not only deeply imbued with male-dominated and women-excluded views but also not concerned about the specific experiences and oppression in relation to sexual matters. Within a Korean context, only research by women can be defined as what could be termed feminist research.

Stanley and Wise's third statement is that feminist research should be 'for women', thereby linking it with feminist politics. Feminist research needs to contribute to changing the oppressive aspects of women's lives. This argument suggests the need for a revision of the relationship between feminist theory and feminist activism. Arguably, this feature of feminist research makes it distinct from other forms of research. In relation to this, Kelly and her colleagues suggest that feminist research should contribute to social changes and hence consider notions of women's consciousness raising and the importance of 'useful knowledge'. In other words, feminist research fulfils a role as praxis. Within my own research I will critically examine the shortcomings of Korean social policy in preventing sexual harassment and research practical strategies as methods of resistance in Chapter 6. In consequence, this research might be helpful in combating sexual harassment and in order for it to do so I feel it is necessary to examine the relationship between sexual and organisational culture and the

phenomenon of sexual harassment. I believe that this examination within my research could lead to obtaining 'useful knowledge' for Korean female workers in their fight against sexual harassment. As a result, this research faithfully follows the definition of feminist research that maintains it should be 'research on, by and for women'.

The concept of 'difference' in relation to feminist methodology

Post-modern feminists have recently criticised the category 'woman', focusing instead on the differences between women. However, their argument is also criticised by other feminists. According to Stanley and Wise, 'deconstructionist, like post-structuralist, approaches imply change at the level of language and texts and categories alone; but, as part of a worldwide political movement, academic feminism necessarily retains a praxis firmly concerned with more than a linguistic turn' (Stanley & Wise 1993:205). An emphasis on difference alone seems to lead to ignoring any shared interests, and ultimately the dismissal of the category 'woman' results in the inability to act politically. Berktaf notes that 'if women, as a marginalized group, are to be able to transform existing power relations, they have to communicate, to hear each other's voice, to learn about each other, and to forge alliances' (Berktaf 1993:111). This was reflected by the Korean female workers I interviewed, who recognised that they positioned themselves as a marginalized group and hence needed to communicate their experiences to female colleagues and seniors. These women assumed that despite having had different educational, class and financial backgrounds to their female seniors, procedures like this were helpful in preventing and eradicating problems of sexual harassment. This demonstrates that despite the class and educational background, women are commonly positioned in a lower social status within Korean workplaces and

therefore sharing their oppressive and problematic experiences might result in empowering female workers' position.

A post-modern feminist perspective appears problematic in relation to feminist politics because its view may lead to a denial of women's oppression (Berkday 1993; Hartsock 1987; Maynard 1994; Moi 1985). Theoretically, the inability to define 'women' can be construed as negating not only the idea of feminist methodology but of feminism itself. It seems that we should consider not only the differences but also the similarities between women and thus from a feminist perspective women remain defined as an oppressed group. In consequence, feminist research has been about praxis, the idea that it should do something.

Feminist research has tended to use qualitative methods and has been regarded as potentially empowering for its participants and as directed towards social change (Kelly et al. 1994: 30-32). Nevertheless, an emphasis on differences between women (a prominent aspect of a post-modern repertoire) is seemingly positive when acknowledging the diverse forms of power relationships existing within specific women's experiences. However, the denial of the category of 'woman' might be opposed to feminist politics and feminism and therefore, I attempt not only to analyse the experiences of female workers based on a feminist perspective, but also to find a practical way of empowering female workers within feminist politics. In this way my research concentrates on the similarities rather than the differences between female workers in Korea. The principle force is that experiences of Korean female workers relating to sexual harassment are embedded in not only the specificities of Korean heterosexuality such as it being male-dominated, super-heterosexual and adult-centred

but also the sex discriminatory commonalities of Korean organisations, such as unequal opportunities and sex discrimination in income and promotion.

Objectivity

Feminist methodology in general has treated the goal of objectivity in research as an unobtainable fantasy because the concept of 'objectivity' is a masculine bias within mainstream studies. Harding writes that:

[...] whilst simultaneously skewering the research object's beliefs and practices to the display board a feminist analysis positions the enquirer herself in the same critical plain as the overt subject matter thereby recovering the entire research process for scrutiny in the results of the research. That is, the class, race, culture and gender assumptions, beliefs and behaviours of the researcher her/himself must be placed within the frame of the pictures that she/he attempts to paint (Harding 1987:9).

The researcher's thoughts, beliefs and backgrounds are influential in the results of the research. I agree with Harding's account and whilst analysing my own data have concentrated upon the experiences of the female workers from the standpoint of a Korean woman having lived in South Korea since birth, and also from a Korean feminist perspective having trained and learnt in a department of Women's Studies since 1992. In relation to my class position, whereas it is relatively uncomplicated for me to state that I am from a Korean middle class family and I have studied abroad as a doctoral student, I sometimes feel that my consciousness is derived from the beliefs and culture of both the working class and radical feminists. This problematising of my class

position has developed from the fact that middle class culture is predominantly defined as conservative and moderate whereas my thoughts and opinions are relatively radical and based upon my experiences of taking part in the student movement and supporting a working class group as a student at university as well as having striven to be a feminist scholar since 1992.

In this respect I am particularly interested in Harding's concept of strong objectivity. Harding argues that to bear strong objectivity is to 'start thought from marginalized lives and take everyday life as problematic' (Harding 1993:50). Moreover, she asserts that if we want to comprehensively and deeply understand and analyse women's lives, we need to accept standards for maximizing objectivity. Harding suggests that 'strong objectivity requires that the subject of knowledge be placed on the same critical, causal plane as the objects of knowledge. Thus, strong objectivity requires what we can think of as "strong reflexivity". This is because culture wide beliefs function as evidence at every stage in scientific inquiry. [...] The subject of knowledge must be considered as part of the object of knowledge from the perspective of scientific method' (Harding 1993:69). In order to apply the concept of strong objectivity to my research, I attempt to internalise and understand the marginalized experiences of female workers concerning sexual harassment.

Harding is also critical of empiricism, believing it is weak and merely advances the 'objectivism' that has been critically discussed from the majority of perspectives (Harding 1993:70). The empiricist perspective of objectivity is too narrow to operationalise the notion of maximizing objectivity. With regard to this, the concept of strong objectivity might contain the reflective relationship between the subject and the object of knowledge and thus seems applicable to an understanding of the reflective

interaction between the researcher and the researched. For instance, exaggerating the strong reflexivity within feminist research we understand that the researched can become a subject of the study rather than an object. Furthermore, the process of strengthening the reflexivity within research can lead to a development in the interaction between researchers and the researched thereby producing a possible method of feminist consciousness-raising. It could be argued that the concept of strong objectivity is a powerful tool in realising a feminist methodology and, from a feminist standpoint perspective, is particularly applicable to an examination of my own research data as the in depth analysis of the marginalized and isolated experiences of female workers in relation to sexual harassment and sexual lives contributes to a greater understanding of their oppression and may help to change the lives of these women. Moreover, I will show how the strong reflective process between the female workers as interviewees and myself as a feminist researcher produced strong objective knowledge within this research.

II. Feminist Method

Having discussed feminist methodology in the previous section, I will now highlight the way in which this research is informed by a feminist methodological approach in using a qualitative method. My use of qualitative method through the use of the in-depth and semi-structured interviews results from my research focusing on not only female workers' experiences of sexual harassment within Korean organisations, but also on their specific sexual lives. Having elaborated upon the main reasons why I chose this method as a means of collecting primary data, I will then move on to a description of the specific interview process, which lasted from July in 1999 to February 2000. In the context of this description, I will briefly explain where I position myself in relation to

my research and how I met the female workers that became my interviewees whilst also indicating the difficulties I encountered during the process of interviewing.

Why I chose to use the in-depth and semi-structured method

The choice of particular research methods depends on the specific subject of each study. This research concentrated on how Korean female workers experience sexual harassment and organisational lives within their workplaces and dealt with the embedded nature of their sexual lives within the specificities of Korean heterosexuality. I therefore required data that contained more rounded and detailed experiences of female workers through using a qualitative method rather than information that merely recorded basic facts and trends based on a quantitative method. In achieving this outcome I relied upon the use of an in-depth and semi-structured interview method (one of the recognised qualitative methods).

According to Maynard, 'a qualitative method is focused more on the subjective experiences and meanings of those being researched, and has been regarded as more appropriate to the kinds of knowledge that feminists wish to make available, as well as being more in keeping with the politics of doing research as a feminist' (Maynard 1994:11). This suggestion implies that the qualitative method is particularly appropriate for realising a feminist methodology within a gendered academic arena and, through using the qualitative method, feminist scholars can more easily access the specific and subjective experiences of women. In contrast, Fonow and Cook suggest that 'A well crafted quantitative study may be more useful to policy makers and cause less harm to women than a poorly crafted qualitative one' (Fonow and Cook 1991:8). Their argument represents a positive contribution to recognising recent trends in formulating

social policies; however, the comparison between a good quantitative and a poor qualitative method could be criticised on the grounds that it does not reflect a fair contrast. A more appropriate comparison might be one between a well crafted quantitative and a well crafted qualitative method. I would argue that deciding upon a 'good' method to use needs to be based upon the specific aims of each project and when conducting research on women's experiences of sexual violence the utilisation of in-depth and semi-structured interviews is both efficient and appropriate in aiding an examination of the victims' specific lives. In relation to research on sexual harassment, using in-depth and semi-structured interviews is also necessary to the analysis I hoped to develop through this research. Whereas both western and Korean quantitative studies on sexual harassment display the number of cases of sexual harassment and general typologies (Gruber 1996:162-163; Women Link 2000:185), these studies tend not to show both how the incidents of sexual harassment are integrated into cultural and social contexts and the way in which victims suffer from, make sense of and respond to sexual harassment. With regard to this, I decided to choose in-depth and semi-structured interviews as my main tool for collecting data.

Within my own research the specificities of Korean sexual culture also play a crucial role in my reasons for utilising an in-depth and semi-structured interview process. As I have already noted, Korean people tend to consider their sexual experiences as private and individual and therefore are understandably reluctant to talk publicly about their experiences and opinions. In this respect, the research data from a quantitative questionnaire on sexual issues would probably be superficial and at times unreliable as participants would view the personal questions with embarrassed amusement and fail to take the process seriously. For example, the Korean feminist scholars Cho and Chang wrote an article in 1991 on Korean men's sexual culture. They utilised both quantitative

and qualitative methods within their research but argued that the data obtained through in-depth interviews was more detailed and reliable than that produced by the quantitative questionnaire (Chang, P. H. and Cho, H. 1991:130-131). The majority of Korean feminist researchers now use an in-depth and semi-structured interview method when researching sexual issues such as sexual violence (rape, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment), sexual commercialisation (prostitution, pornography), sexual lives (sexual relationships within married and unmarried couples, the ideology of sexual chastity) and reproductive technologies (abortion, pregnancy)¹. These situations demonstrate that the method of in-depth and semi-structured interviews may be useful in collecting detailed and subjective data on the experiences of Korean women. As a result, I have used this qualitative method of data collection within this research.

How I recruited my interviewees

In this section I wish to describe the processes, lasting from July 1999 to January 2000, by which I sought out the twenty-eight female workers who agreed to be interviewed. I will firstly make clear my own standpoint within this research and then move on to a description of the way in which I accessed the interviewees, concluding with a discussion of the interview process.

Whilst writing my MA dissertation in 1994 I also collected the research data through an in-depth and semi-structured interview pattern. At that time I was interested in a number

¹ There is as yet no published research on feminist methodology in relation to studies of sexuality in Korea and therefore this statement is based upon a classification of the MA dissertations from the women's studies department at the Graduate School of Ewha Woman's University, which dealt with sexual issues. The department of Women's Studies at the Graduate School of Ewha Woman's University is not only the oldest and largest department of Women's Studies in Korea but also the feminist scholars from this department appear actively to research this particular area.

of broad subjects underlying sexual harassment, from a definition of the term to strategies used in resistance. This more fundamental focus was a result of my study on sexual harassment being the first of its kind from a feminist perspective within the Korean academic arena and its representation of what was, for most Korean people, an unknown subject. However, it is worth noting that a number of feminist scholars had begun to pay attention to the issue of sexual harassment as a result of the legal action taken by Woo (as mentioned previously). When I initially met female workers as my interviewees it was necessary for me to explain the notion of sexual harassment and also conceptualise its definition, concentrating upon the basic research already undertaken on the subject, such as the relationship between the sex-discriminatory environment of the workplace and incidents of sexual harassment. Aware that most of my interviewees would be reluctant to speak out about their own experiences of general sex-discriminatory environments and incidents of sexual harassment I found that a few interviewees, those that were my friends and those that progressively recognised sexual harassment as an obvious form of sex-discrimination, spoke assertively about their experiences in relation to such situations.

As one would expect during the interview process, those that already have an intimate relationship with the researcher tend to more easily express their frank opinions concerning sexual harassment and stimulate a sense of rapport with the individual conducting the interview. Moreover, the participants with progressive consciousness identified incidents of sexual harassment as structural problems – such as the sex-discriminatory environment of the workplace – rather than situations resulting from individual fault, and felt comfortable asserting their own experiences and opinions.

However, within my MA dissertation, sexual harassment was studied purely as a gender

issue and thus I failed to consider not only the interconnection between gender and sexuality within sexual harassment but also the relationship between sexuality and sexual harassment within Korean organisations. In order to correct these oversights within this thesis, I needed to explore more detailed and specific aspects of female workers' experiences within both their everyday and sexual lives and creating a rapport with the interviewee is a crucial factor in facilitating a greater understanding of their position. The first condition for encouraging this more relaxed relationship is, as soon as possible, to minimise the gap between interviewees and researchers. In other words, the initial step is to overcome the power hierarchy so often present between researchers and the researched (Maynard 1994:15). I approached this initial stage of the interview by introducing my own experiences resulting from both my general and sexual life and then gave the interviewee the opportunity to suggest a number of research questions they felt were appropriate. This approach is an attempt to realise Maynard's statement: 'feminist research becomes a means of sharing information and rather than being seen as a source of bias, the personal involvement of the interviewer is an important element in establishing trust and thus obtaining good quality information' (Maynard 1994:16).

Before I began to interview the female workers I attempted to make contact with the officers for women's bodies concerned with sexual harassment, such as Yeoseong-Minwoohoe (Women Link)² and Hankook-Seongpogleok-Sangdamso (Korea Sexual Violence Relief Centre)³ since it was necessary for me to know of the changing

² Women Link has led the housewives' movement and the clerical women workers' movement in Korea. It runs two counselling centres for women workers and housewives and provides education in cooperation with labour unions in the clerical and service sector. It also carries out research and monitoring activities (Korea Women's Association United, <http://www.women21.or.kr/eng/about.htm> [Accessed 22 February 2000]).

³ KSVRC provides comprehensive psychological, legal and medical assistance for victims of sexual violence. The counseling services which range from healing physical

strategies these women have employed against sexual harassment since Woo's legal action in 1993 and the establishment of legislation in 1999. I assumed that female workers would now be more assertive in their resistance against sexual harassment and that legislation might have encouraged them to pursue actions to prevent this form of behaviour. However, the officers of the women's bodies that I met reflected a negative view of these changing trends believing them to be superficial rather than structural. According to one officer, Kim,⁴ although the percentage of victims of sexual harassment requiring counselling services had increased the victims still do not want to take any assertive action, such as developing a legal case against their harasser. In other words, in spite of having come to recognise the notion of sexual harassment as an obvious form of sex discrimination and an illegal action, Korean female workers are still reluctant to speak out about their experiences. The main reason for this is because these victims doubt whether their assertive action would result in a resolution to the problems of sexual harassment and are concerned that a public reaction would result in them being stigmatised as 'bad girls'. These consequences result from a number of inherent features of organisational culture: it is a sex-discriminatory, male-dominated and male-oriented arena.

I therefore concluded that during the interview I would not only ask about their direct experiences concerning sexual harassment, but also of their opinions of the gendered and sexual culture within Korean organisations. As a result of this extension it was necessary to interview female workers more carefully and intimately in order to follow

injuries to developing self-esteem, help enable violence survivors to build new and healthy lives. Moreover, through various programs and activities they attempt to eliminate and prevent sexual violence (Korea Women's Association United, <http://www.women21.or.kr/eng/about.htm>) [Accessed 22 February 2000].

⁴ Kim works as an officer providing educational program with the victims of sexual violence and harassment in KSVRC. I interviewed her in July 1999.

their emotional and psychological changes displayed in relation to their own experiences in both their sexual and organisational lives.

Aware of the more intimate nature of my interviews I attempted to seek interviewees with direct and indirect relationships such as my friends or colleagues of my friends. I then collected the remainders of my interview sample through the trade unions and women's bodies within Korea as the female workers involved in both groups are more aware of incidents of sexual harassment as a social problem and this understanding enabled them to speak frankly about their own experiences. I interviewed twenty-eight female office workers from July 1999 to January 2000. Three were from public institutions, two worked for Insurance companies, and three were from small companies. The remaining twenty interviewees worked for conglomerates. They were located in different positions with regard to age, marital status, job/career and educational qualifications. Their individual characteristics are briefly described in Appendix I.

During the initial period of data collection, from the middle of July to the beginning of October 1999, I interviewed six female workers (Eun-Young, Jeong-Hee, Hae-Ja, Sun-Young, Young-Joo, Young-Hee) accessed through my own individual networking. This first method of accessing the interviewees was the most unproblematic and enabled me to be on amicable terms with them almost immediately. The notion that an intimate relationship with interviewees is crucial to a successful interview is based upon my experience of collecting the data for my MA dissertation.

The location of the interviews varied, with some of the workers meeting me in a coffee shop and restaurant near their office during lunchtime, or after daily work, and others arranging for the interview to take place in their office. The location depended upon the

interviewees' needs; although I called to arrange a specific date, time and place for the interview I suggested that we met for lunch or evening meal. The fact that in Korea eating together is a quick and efficient way to become friendly with each other was a significant factor in my decision. However, if this situation was inconvenient and unwanted I did not insist that we meet for a meal as some of interviewees felt uncomfortable having dinner or lunch with a researcher. It was crucial for me to respect the wishes and needs of my interviewees as their comfort was of paramount importance in creating an environment conducive to a successful interview.

After the first stage of interviews I was disappointed with my results due to the fact that I had been unable to meet female workers who had suffered more serious types of sexual harassment such as rape or assumed rape. However, all my interviewees had experienced mild forms of sexual harassment that had been both verbal and physical, such as sexual jokes and touching. After discussing this problem by e-mail with my supervisor, I became less concerned with the level of harassment my interviewees had suffered because the main focus of my thesis incorporates how the phenomenon of sexual harassment is socially and culturally constituted within Korean organisations and does not solely concentrate upon incidents of this behaviour. In other words, what is particularly significant in this thesis is its examination of the relationship between incidents of sexual harassment and the gendered and sexual culture within Korean organisations. I needed to make a more concerted effort to obtain female workers' diverse and specific experiences rather than focus upon collecting a catalogue of serious types of sexual harassment.

Having felt relief at seeing through this initial concern I confronted a second problem. In order to interview female workers with the diverse and rich experiences, I should

enlist my interviewees from a broad range of organisations and it became increasingly difficult for me to make contact with these women purely through the use of my own individual networking. After deep consideration I discussed the problem with my husband, Kim, Ki-Su, as he works as a newspaper reporter in a financial department and has a broad network of contacts from the majority of Korean conglomerates⁵. Through his networking I was able to reach a diversity of female workers from the biggest Korean conglomerates.

During the second period of my interview process, from the middle of October to the beginning of December in 1999, I interviewed fourteen female workers from some of the biggest conglomerates in Korea (Hyun-Jae, Boo-Young, Kyung-Mi, Ji-Hae, Soon-Ju, Jeong-Mi, Min-Hee, Yeon-Joo, Ju-Mi, Min-Ae, Eun-Soon, Kyung-Ae, Ha-Jin, Sun-Woo). At that time, having asked for help from my husband in the collection of my research data, I felt embarrassed as a feminist scholar because I thought of myself as being dependent on him. Yet the situation I found myself facing⁶ also demonstrates the way in which Korean organisations are predominantly governed by men; as a female researcher I was unable to access the female workers from these diverse companies without making use a male networks.

The difficulties I faced in reaching a number of the female workers also created concerns during the interview process. As some of my interviewees had been introduced to me through their male colleagues and seniors I wondered whether this would compromise their feelings of comfort in speaking out about their experiences and opinions. I assumed that they would be anxious as to whether the contents of the

⁵ Conglomerates are called 'chaebol' in Korean. Korean chaebol are vertically integrated and centrally control a variety of functions and activities (Whitley 1990).

interview would be reported to their seniors or not and thus, before interviewing, I emphasised my guarantee of their anonymity in relation to the contents of the interview and also informed them that the data gathered would only be used in writing my thesis in English. Contrary to my assumptions, the majority of interviewees did not seem overly concerned with issues of anonymity and spoke frankly about their experiences. The interviewees' appreciation of my research subject on sexual harassment as both important and urgent stemmed from an acknowledgement that existing remedies for resistance – the establishment of legislation on sexual harassment and the educational programs to aid prevention – were inappropriate and impractical methods. The women I interviewed appeared to expect that my research, based on their own experiences, would provide efficient resolutions to incidents of sexual harassment within Korea. Throughout the interview process I was aware I had an obligation to contribute to reforming the problem of sexual harassment through my research.

The interview process during this second period was far more satisfactory and, due to an increased rapport with my interviewees, achieved better results. Most interviewees seemed confident that my research would aid an understanding of their lives and resolve certain obstacles facing them within the workplace. This belief in the positive outcomes of my project led them to provide me with both rich and lively information. The most important outcome of this period within the interview process was that I was also able to make contact with the interviewees' colleagues using a snowballing technique. Thus, my interviewees' conviction of the significance and efficiency of my work resulted in not only my obtaining useful information but also in the fact that I was able to access a number of other interviewees. It is evident that the process of feminist research is created by both the feminist researcher and those being researched. By conducting

feminist research we may be able to destroy the hierarchical differences so often prevalent between researchers and their interviewees.

Through snowballing, I gathered another eight female workers to interview in the third period of my data collection which took place from the middle of December in 1999 to the end of January in 2000 (Yoon-Hee, Jin-Ju, Soo-Hee, Mi-Ja, Mee-Soon, Yoo-Jin, Hyun-Jeong, Soo-Won). Yoon-Hee and Jin-Ju were introduced by Eun-Young, whom I had interviewed in the initial stage, but the other six women were introduced to me by interviewees from the second period. In particular, Mee-Soon and Yoo-Jin were presented by Sun-Woo, who worked as vice-president within the trade union. During this third round I felt relatively comfortable with these workers, having fully acquainted myself with the interview process after the accumulation of a substantial amount of experience. These final interviewees also displayed a more positive and assertive attitude as, having been introduced by previous participants, they were more aware of the significance of the research and its ultimate goals. It appears that the snowballing technique used to access the final interviewees raised the quality of the interview outcome as these women, who had obtained prior knowledge of my research from their colleagues, were more confident and elaborate in their answers.

A further factor to be acknowledged in the ability to develop an intimate relationship between the researcher and the researched is affected by the peculiarity of Korean networking. Korean people can more easily form intimate relationships with persons from common schools and the same hometowns. For instance, Hyun-Jeong and Soo-Won are among the alumnae at my university and regarding me as their sister and intimate senior, despite having met for the first time in the interview, they attempted to answer the questions I put to them with enthusiasm. I found the final stage of the

interview process, in comparison to the two previous periods, to be relatively conducive to the creation of a rapport between myself and the interviewees and, as I mentioned before, I was also more satisfied with the outcomes of these final interviews

Despite the success of this final stage of interviewing there did exist a number of difficulties within the whole process. For example, although I concentrated on creating a rapport with the interviewees, in particular I failed to develop a more relaxed and amicable relationship with all of the female workers I spoke to, mainly due to limitations in time and space. I usually met the interviewees in their office, or a restaurant or coffee shop, for around two to three hours; this restriction in time and space prevented the development of a more relaxed relationship. It should also be mentioned that the gap in age and academic career between myself and the interviewees also proved to be an obstacles to a more equal relationship. Twenty-three of my interviewees were younger than me and therefore regarded me as their senior rather than a friend. Within Korean culture friendship often occurs among same aged persons and a difference in years can be a barrier to create comfortable amicability. My status as a doctoral scholar studying abroad created a distance between myself and the interviewees as some placed me in the role of a teacher and some turned to me for advice and education about sexual knowledge.

Finding myself placed in the role of teacher/advisor could be regarded as a positive outcome of the interviews. Through raising their questions the interviewees were able to develop a discussion with me in relation to sexuality and, as a result of this reflective process between the researcher and the researched, we created what could be termed a consciousness-raising situation. Indeed I attempted to provide my interviewees with some information about the way in which they define sexuality and sexual harassment

rather than to objectify them as merely exploiting the research sources during the interview period. The gap between the interviewees and myself was affected by relationship between senior and junior as well as by a hierarchical relationship between researcher and researched.

As a result of this data collection process I became aware that strategies for the promotion of more detailed and useful interview results are associated with the socio-cultural features of each society. This notion is principally justified by the fact that the method by which one creates a rapport with interviewees in Korea varies from that in other countries and the way one develops a relationship is dependent upon the specific positions and characteristics of each interviewee. For instance, a Korean researcher would focus upon how to manage the age differences that may occur themselves and those they were researching because in Korean culture in particular this gap functions as a profound factor within personal networking. This specificity in relation to age difference is based upon the Confucian notion that the relationship between senior and junior exists within a hierarchical order, implying that a younger person should obey and respect their elders and thus their relationship is unable to accommodate an equal friendship. This rule, resulting from Confucian thought, does not appear to be current in the West and therefore could be characterised as particular to the nature of eastern societies. As a result, we find that the successful development of a relationship with interviewees is also governed by the socio-cultural features of research contexts.

Despite the difficulties encountered within my interview process, a number of positive outcomes were able to contribute to the development of feminist methodology. For example, I suggest it is significant that the process highlighted the way in which my interviewees became subjects, rather than objects, of the research. In particular, those

workers who approached this project with more confidence were able to provide me with an increased knowledge of their specific, wide and vivid experiences. They came to identify sexual harassment as a social problem and were eager to resolve it, agreeing that feminist strategies were useful in its prevention. It could be argued that the interview process demonstrated the significance of consciousness-raising between the interviewees and myself as well as how a rich data from these female workers contribute to producing a feminist work.

All the women I approached agreed to be interviewed which perhaps indicates the importance of this issue for them. I interviewed twenty-nine female workers but I analysed the data from only twenty-eight of them as I made a technical mistake with taping one interview. All of the taped interview materials were firstly transcribed in Korean and then I thoroughly read those in order to classify the contents into research themes. Later the quotations I used in writing the thesis were translated into English. In order to preserve anonymity all the names of the women used are pseudonyms.

Conclusion

In this chapter, having reviewed feminist methodology and described my experience of the process utilising feminist methods based upon my own research, I have attempted to point out how feminist methodology can be realised within a Korean context. In spite of the difficulties embedded within a feminist methodology, the efficient utilisation of a feminist method is indispensable to research of value to women. One of the most important motivations for my decision to approach my research in this way is that through the in-depth interview process based on feminist methodology I have obtained both rich and lively data from which to draw conclusions and develop understandings.

For instance, I found that when my interviewees portrayed what could be termed as a feminist consciousness they provided me with valuable information in order to contribute to the praxis of feminist research. I would therefore argue that a faithful following of the principles of feminist methodology, that feminist research should be research on, for and of women, is significant in producing meaningful feminist work and that use of the qualitative method of the in-depth interview can be claimed as an efficient tool within the realisation of feminist methodology.

Table 1. The List of Interviewees

The name of interviewees	Age	Marital Status	The Working Period	The name of Workplace
Eun-Young	27	Unmarried	5 years	National Assembly ⁶
Yoon-Hee	24	Unmarried	3 years	National Assembly
Jin-Ju	27	Married	5 years	National Assembly
Jeong-Hee	24	Unmarried	5 years	A small office
Hae-Ja	38	Unmarried	5 years	D Service
Sun-Young	27	Married	4 years	D Service
Young-Joo	30	Married	3 years	K Insurance
Young-Hee	31	Married	3 years	K Insurance
Hyun-Jae	24	Unmarried	6 years	Conglomerate H
Boo-Young	30	Unmarried	11 years	Conglomerate H
Kyung-Mi	29	Married	6 years	Conglomerate H.S
Ji-Hae	27	Unmarried	4 years	Conglomerate H.S
Soon-Ju	26	Unmarried	4 years	Conglomerate H.S
Jeong-Mi	24	Unmarried	5 years	Conglomerate L
Min-Hee	24	Unmarried	5 years	Conglomerate L
Yeon-Joo	30	Married	5 years	Conglomerate L
Ju-Mi	26	Unmarried	3 years	Conglomerate L
Min-Ae	27	Married	3 years	Firm C
Eun-Soon	32	Married	12 years	G Securities
Kyung-Ae	31	Unmarried	8 years	Conglomerate S
Hyun-Jeong	27	Married	4 years	Conglomerate S/L
Ha-Jin	27	Unmarried	4 years	Conglomerate K
Soo-Hee	26	Unmarried	3 years	Conglomerate K
Mi-Ja	30	Married	11 years	Conglomerate K
Sun-Woo	29	Unmarried	10 years	H Insurance
Mee-Soon	32	Married	12 years	H Insurance
Yoo-Jin	26	Unmarried	7 years	H Insurance
Soo-Won	28	Unmarried	4 years	T Foreign Company

Note: 1) Age and working period of each interviewee are counted by my interview period between 1999 and 2000.

2) I attached more detailed information of each interviewee in Appendix I.

⁶ I called companies' names as an assumed name but I called the national assembly as a real name. In order to explore the organisational features of the Korean National Assembly, I was unable to avoid using the real name.

Chapter 3. An exploration of (hetero)¹sexuality and (hetero) sexual culture in South Korea

Introduction

The phenomenon of sexual harassment as a heterosexual practice is deeply embedded within heterosexuality as an institution and heterosexual culture as a way of life. I will therefore explore the specificities of both Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture as a premise of my discussion of sexual harassment.

Korean feminist scholars failed to distinguish research on sexuality from that on heterosexuality until 1989, when the Korean Association of Women's studies held a conference on sexuality. Since then a number of Korean feminists and radical scholars have begun to consider sexuality as an academic topic. However, as Weeks says, 'writing about sex can be dangerous' (Weeks 1990:31): many Korean scholars disregard sexuality as a serious academic subject whilst also fearing that writing about sexuality could ruin their academic careers. Despite these obstacles, explorations of sexuality have gradually increased in South Korea although the theoretical examinations are rooted in western analyses. Chang, a Korean feminist scholar, argues that sexuality is not essential, innate and natural but socially constructed as it has developed in relation to the wider cultural and historical changes in South Korea (Chang, P. H.1989: 73).

¹ My analysis of (hetero) sexuality and (hetero) sexual culture results from the domination of heterosexuality within explorations of sexuality and sexual culture in South Korea.

Nevertheless, sexual culture largely remains male-dominated, adult-centred and heterosexual (Chang, P. H. and Cho, H. 1991:59; Cho, Y. M. 1999:12) and therefore work on sexuality by Korean feminists has focused upon how Korean women are subordinated and oppressed by this male-dominated sexual culture. In other words, Korean feminists focus not on sexuality itself, but rather sexuality in relation to gender divisions.

While theoretically Korean feminists accept that sexuality is socially constructed, in practice they merely focus upon sexual issues within gender divisions and neglect to distinguish the concept of social construction from socialisation. Stanley and Wise criticise the socialisation model as deterministic, reificatory² and non-reflexive (Stanley and Wise 1993:101-103). The concepts of socialisation and social construction are not only different but also in juxtaposition with each other. Socialisation is characterised as natural, innate and deterministic whilst social construction is identified as cultural, social and inessential. Hence, the view of sexuality as socially constructed is different as well as opposite to the view that it is socialised and my attention within this thesis is therefore focused on the social construction of sexuality rather than its socialisation.

Another limitation within Korean feminist discussions is that, until recently in Korea, the conceptual distinction between sexuality and heterosexuality has remained obscure since the research has treated sexuality and sexual culture as equivalent to heterosexuality and heterosexual culture. While I accept that within Korea most sexual practices are heterosexual, it is still important that the relationship between sexuality and heterosexuality should be identified both conceptually and theoretically. However,

² The word 'reificatory' does not appear in many dictionaries. Stanley and Wise explain the term 'By this we mean it suggests that "the social system" somehow "demands" that certain things should occur' (Stanley and Wise 1993:102).

within Korean feminist research the concept of heterosexuality is purely defined in opposition to homosexuality and therefore only in terms of sexual preference.

In relation to early feminists working in the west, Jackson points out: 'although we were critical of almost every aspect of sexual relations between women and men, heterosexuality itself was rarely named and identified as the object of analysis. Indeed, we often talked simply of sexuality when we meant heterosexuality' (Jackson 1999:11)

Most feminists did not initially deal with heterosexuality as a separate issue. At the beginning of the 1970s, some began to criticize heterosexual practices such as male-centred penetration within sexual intercourse (Koedt 1972) and others have recently attempted to discover the relationship between sexual violence and coercion and heterosexuality (Epstein and Johnson 1994:198; Epstein 1997:158). The introduction of research on heterosexuality might therefore assist a clarification of the relationship between sexuality and heterosexuality. Skeggs refers to Butler's argument: 'heterosexuality is where subject positions such as mother, wife, girlfriend, are defined and institutionalised through a process of iterability, a regularised and constrained repetition of norms, a ritualised production' (Skeggs 1997:120) and also indicates Hart's (1994) and Adkins's (1995) analyses of the relationship between heterosexuality and the capitalist system, as seen in the sexual division of labour (Skeggs 1997:120). Therefore, some feminists argue that heterosexuality is not only related to sex but that it is also perpetuated by the regulation of everyday life, such as family and marriage (Jackson 1999:26). Similarly, Holland and her colleagues argue that 'heterosexuality is grounded in this bodily sexuality, but it cannot be understood independently of the variable beliefs, values, ideologies, discourses, identities and social relationships through which people become socially heterosexual and practice heterosexuality' (Holland et. al. 1996:144).

In this context, the normative heterosexuality is closely affected by the ordinary lives of

most people, but is figured in various ways based upon the specific cultural and historical changes in each society.

Through exploring female workers' accounts of their experiences and thoughts, and focusing upon their meanings, practices and subjectivity in relation to heterosexuality in Korea, I will attempt to conceptualise the specificities of Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture. I have taken this specific approach because I agree with Jackson's notion that heterosexuality is socially constructed at the level of systemic institutions, meanings, practices and subjectivity, and that this is the meaning of social construction.

In terms of Jackson's work, the ways in which female workers define their gendered and sexual selves is related to an exploration of their subjectivity in relation to heterosexuality. In addition, Holland and her colleagues indicate that "heterosexuality is lived in distinctive lifestyles and in discourses of masculinity/femininity, normality/abnormality" (Holland et. al 1996:144). This suggests that despite having lived in various countries and cultures women face and are affected by, the dichotomy between masculinity and femininity. Therefore I emphasize the way in which Korean women's selves reflect and interact with heterosexuality and heterosexual culture, whilst at the same time I focus upon the contradictions and conflicts surrounding femininity as well as the sexual self. This examination also highlights the interconnection between gendered selves and sexual selves.

My discussion then turns to an exploration of both sexual chastity as a heterosexual ideology and the marriage system as a hegemonic form of heterosexual institution. The norm of sexual chastity regulates solely women in Korean sexual culture (Chang, P. H. and Cho, H. 1991:55, Lee, S. K. 1993:4, Lee, K. M. 1995:6). Similarly, Lees points out

that in the British culture the meaning of sexual reputation in boys is different from that in girls. 'For boys, sexual reputation is enhanced by varied experience: bragging to other boys about how many girls they have "made". [...] For a girl, reputation is something to be guarded. It is under threat not merely if she is known to have sex with anyone other than her steady boyfriend, but for a whole range of behaviour that has little to do with actual sexual behaviour' (Lees 1986:30). Skeggs also argues that young British women are categorised as being of lesser value if they have a sexual reputation (Skeggs 1997:133) and thus, the norms of sexual chastity and sexual reputation are related to a double standard and a sexual dualism. In a Korean context, sexual chastity is defined as women's property for a good marriage (Chang, P. H.1997: 282). Consequently, most Korean women have understood sexual chastity to be their obligation from both school and the family. In analysing my data, I will focus upon the ways in which Korean female workers accept and resist the norm of sexual chastity and how they see and experience sexuality within the marriage system as well.

Finally, within this chapter I will investigate the process of cultural change in heterosexual culture in Korea. Having attempted to look at western influences such as sexual liberation, commercialism and heterosexuality, I examine the sexual consciousness of Korean people according to the opinions around both general sexual matters and the affair concerning a private sexual film of Oh, Hyun-Kyung, a famous actress in 1998. This exploration around Miss O's videotape can be seen to express the peculiarity of Korean sexual culture.

I. The Gendered and Sexual Self³

An examination of the way in which female workers' gendered and sexual selves are embedded in both heterosexuality and heterosexual culture is necessary in order to enable this research to understand the Korean specificities of heterosexual identity in relation to incidents of sexual harassment. Based upon female worker's accounts my discussion in this section will focus on Korean women's gendered and sexual selves. Before I begin the analysis of my data in relation to this subject, I briefly define the term 'social self' that I commonly apply to this research.

The terms 'social self', 'subjectivity' and 'identity' tend to be conceptually confused and overlapping. The idea of subjectivity is widely used in comparison to that of identity, and is rooted in psychoanalysis and post-structuralism. Weedon points out that 'in post-modernity, subjectivity is often theorised as an effect of culture which produces not unified identity, but a subjectivity which is fragmented, contradictory and which comprises multiple identities' (Weedon 1999:3). The notion of subjectivity contains both the conscious and the unconscious whereas the notion of identity⁴ only refers to the conscious, thereby making the latter a more narrow term than the former. Furthermore, the concept of 'social self' is wider than that of subjectivity, because the term 'social self', implies both the conscious and the unconscious as well as the self-feeling of humans. Jackson explores the idea of this social self based upon the work of George Herbert Mead (1934). She points out that the social self is not a fixed structure

³ The concept of 'self' is rooted in Jackson's concept of the 'social self' (Jackson 1999: 21-26).

⁴ Feminist theories of identity have moved on from neo-Freudian psychoanalysis and current post-structuralist theory. Feminists argue that identity is not the goal but rather the point of departure of any process of self-consciousness. They suggest that women's understanding of identity is multiple and even self-contradictory (Humm 1995:127).

but is always 'in process' by virtue of its constant reflexivity. Jackson argues: 'such a perspective allows us to think of subjectivity as a product of individual, socially located biographies – but not in the same sense as the old idea of socialization' (Jackson 1999:24). The expression, 'in process' implies that the social self is closely derived from the concept of time and, because it is also rooted in sociological analysis, it is thus relevant to my own work, which is based upon sociological theory. While using the concept of the 'social self', I can explore how female workers interact with heterosexual culture and heterosexuality at an individual level and how its interconnection is related to the definition of both the gendered and sexual self.

Having discussed femininity in terms of a gendered self, I will turn to an investigation of the sexual self. This exploration will aid an understanding of the diversity present within constructions of Korean heterosexuality, and also explain the connection between the change in female workers' selves and their responses to sexual harassment in the workplace.

1. Femininity as the gendered self

The majority of both Western and Eastern feminists agree that femininity is socially constructed despite the diverse controversies surrounding the concept of femininity that exist when it is discussed from differing cultures. In relation to this, Humm notes the diverse feminist viewpoints surrounding the notion: French and American scholars suggest that 'femininity' is part of an ideology which positions 'women as other' against 'masculinity', which is regarded by society as the norm of human behaviour. However, third world feminists interpret 'femininity' more positively. For example, Buchi Emencheta describes how the self-creation of femininity enables her women's

characteristics to become strong and independent (Humm, 1995:95-96).

The materialist feminists Delphy and Leonard argue that 'for us "men" and "women" are not two natural given groups who at some time fell into a hierarchical relationship. Rather the reason the two groups are distinguished socially is because one dominates the other' (Delphy and Leonard 1992:258). The majority of feminists argue that gender differences are not innate, or natural, but social and cultural. The materialist feminists in particular emphasise the existence of gender differences constructed by a hierarchy and power relationship between men and women. The materialist idea that femininity is not fixed and is hierarchically and socially constructed (Delphy1992) is applicable to an analysis of the gendered selves of female workers in Korean organisations because they are located within the institutional power relations and a hierarchical system. Delphy also argues that gender division is related to hierarchy: 'Patriarchal domination is not based upon pre-existing sex differences, but rather, gender exists as a social division because of patriarchal domination'. She also suggests that 'the reason why the groups are distinguished socially is because one dominates the other' (Delphy and Leonard 1992:258). Bearing Delphy and Leonard in mind, I will identify the hierarchical construction of gender differences within Korean society as a whole and move on to an exploration of how Korean female workers are taught their femininity through the hierarchical educational systems within the family and school.

In general, Korean people understand the notion of feminine women to be synonymous with that of 'good' women. Femininity is defined in terms of women's virtue as the norm and, in the Korean language, is called 'YeoSung(women)-Dawoom(hood)'. In the Korean context, therefore, femininity is defined as a natural term rather than a cultural meaning, regarding women's femininity as innate. In response, Korean feminists argue

that the concept of femininity strengthens women's oppression in both the private and public sectors and should therefore be regarded as cultural, social and changeable rather than natural innate and natural (Lee 1995:210). Being a woman should not be directly related to displaying feminine traits. I will thus investigate how female workers accept and resist femininity in a Korean context and in what ways they define their femininity.

I will firstly examine the way in which Korean female workers accept femininity as their duty and a necessary virtue. While at present around 47.4 percent⁵ of Korean women have worked within the public sphere, traditional views of femininity still remain as a result of the perceived distance between the nature of femininity and the features of career women. Femininity tends to be defined by traditional characteristics, such as being passive, obedient, emotional and irrational; hence a feminine woman is deemed an unsuitable person for the workplace. Nevertheless, fourteen out of twenty-eight of my interviewees accepted femininity as their duty. However, the specific nature of femininity is changing, as are exemplified by the following statement from Sun-Young.

My personality is cheerful, and I am also passive. For instance, when we have a meeting in the office, I cannot voice my opinion even though I need to say something. Also, I am obedient. If my senior tells me that I have to come to the office on Sunday, I follow his order without any complaint.

Sun-Young believed that she was passive and obedient but also cheerful. She did not recognize being cheerful as one of the features of femininity, but nevertheless defined

⁵ The statistical data was surveyed by the Korean Bureau of Statistics in 1999 (The Ministry of Gender Equality, http://www.moge.go.kr/main/sa_11.html [Accessed 12 December 2001])

herself as a feminine woman. In other words, femininity is defined not only in its form of passivity and obedience, but also through wider displays of behaviour such as cheerfulness and talkativeness.

Sometimes, women like Hyun-Jae do not want to see themselves as feminine because of various negative views surrounding the concept: 'I am not a feminine woman. Rather, I am informal and easy. I am not obedient' (Hyun-Jae). Hyun-Jae wanted to avoid being labelled as a feminine woman and regards being informal and easy-going as non-feminine. Yet these attributes could also be construed as feminine because 'being easy' suggests being 'uncomplicated' and 'powerless'. Korean people generally think that 'easy' people are located in the lower status occupations and, in this sense, being informal and easy could change the meaning of femininity. Nevertheless, Hyun-Jae denies her femininity because she is concerned that feminine women are unable to succeed in the public sphere, in places such as companies and school. In order to be a successful career woman, women have to be less feminine in the traditional sets. However, women who are seen as 'too masculine' in nature may have difficulty succeeding in their married lives and, as a result, Korean women are confused about which kind of gendered self is the most appropriate to adopt.

Jeong-Mi emphasised the origin of her own acceptance of femininity: 'I have learned from my parents that a woman needs to be feminine' (Jeong-Mi). In general, Korean parents like Jeong-Mi's expect their daughters to be feminine, obedient, modest and sexually chaste before marriage and therefore they encourage this behaviour in their daughters.

The three interviewees discussed above seemed to communicate negative views

concerning their femininity. Although some accepted traditional femininity, they did so unwillingly. However, unlike other interviewees, Min-Hee had a positive view of femininity. 'I do not recognize that I am feminine, but people say to me, "you are very feminine". Because I think that cooking a meal is natural to me, also I think that femininity is not bad but beautiful'. Min-hee's positive view of femininity is derived from the upbringing she received from her parents. Most Korean parents teach their daughters how to cook, wash up, and clean the house in training for the domestic work involved in marriage. In addition, from the statement of Min-Hee, we can see how women perform femininity for others. 'People said "the female workers of this team are like a newlywed wife". A senior said to us at the office party, "I feel comfortable with you". It means, I think, because we are not outspoken and we are usually obedient'. Min-Hee is described by her male colleagues and seniors as a newlywed wife, meaning that she is modest and subordinate. Within Korean culture a newlywed wife is required to be silent and obedient to her husband and parents-in-law. Min-Hee thinks of herself as a feminine woman because she was named in this way by her colleagues and boss.

I would argue that this process shows an example of how a female worker's characteristics are reflected on to her by others. Min-Hee has accepted femininity as her nature due to the encouragement of her colleagues and boss displayed in the parallel they draw between herself and the ultimate feminine figure, the newlywed wife. As for Min-Hee, femininity is a positive attribute and the acceptance of femininity is shown to be perpetuated by the interaction between women's positions and women's social and cultural environment, such as the family and education system and her working conditions. The label of a 'newlywed wife' portrays a similar concept to that of 'office wife' in the western organisations, as well as being a peculiar term affected by Korean culture.

Consequently, within Korean workplaces the femininities which are defined as being modest, passive, silent and obedient, are associated with a feature of organisational culture that is male dominated, hierarchical and bureaucratic. A definition of femininity that includes women's informal and easy behaviour is related to the gendered power relationship between men and women and being connected to the notion of sexual chastity that is affected by a heterosexual relationship based upon a double standard. Finally, being expert in domestic work as a feminine trait leads to sex segregated jobs perpetuated by the gender division prevalent within organisations. The definition of femininity is interrelated with developments within the contents of the educational system adopted by the family, schools, and also Korean culture.

As I have previously mentioned, a number of Korean women have begun to recognise femininity as a negative characteristic and become resistant to its label and therefore the notion of femininity is subject to change. Three of my interviewees had negative views concerning the imposition of femininity as they identified its enforcement as an obstacle to their recognition as autonomous employees in their workplaces. Rejection of the definition of femininity was therefore not uncommon with my interviewees. Soon-Ju assertively challenged patriarchal ideas. 'I am not obedient. I have lived without any difficulties, so I want to talk rationally and honestly. I do not like patriarchal and authoritarian environments'. Soon-Ju's resistance to femininity seemed to be rooted in her family atmosphere. Saying that she has lived without any difficulties signals that she is from an upper class family and has been supported, both financially and emotionally, by her parents. In addition, her statement implies that there is what could be termed an environment of sexual discrimination within the conservative Korean family. For example, Korean parents typically give their sons various opportunities, such as higher

education and good quality food and clothes, whilst requesting that their daughters do house work and earn money for her brothers, even when she is too young. However, women who have equal opportunities in the family system, like Soon-Ju, can be assertive and resist femininity. Both Soo-Hee and Soo-Won are in a similar situation to Soon-Ju:

People say to me, “You are unisex⁶. You are not feminine”. I agree with this opinion. I am masculine in my dealings at work, because my parents do not emphasize to me the femininity and do not control me, for example, “you have to come home early because you are a woman”. Therefore, I have done everything by my will, so my personality is more masculine (Soo-Hee).

I have to be feminine, but I do not want to be feminine. Because I have an elder and younger brother, I feel comfortable with men. Also I do not like chatting with women (Soo-Won).

Soo-Hee’s personality is affected by the educational methods employed by her parents. They did not enforce feminine characteristics upon her and thus she has the ability to be flexible in her gendered self. Resistance to femininity is identified by her as it is by others and she also views the process of acceptance of femininity in the common way for she estimated herself to be masculine rather than feminine and reflected this approach in her colleagues’ comments. Defining a woman’s personality in terms of whether she is feminine or not is closely related to the social and cultural environment.

⁶ Korean people use the English word ‘unisex’. A unisex person means someone who is neutral in relation to gender and so the meaning is related to non-feminine and non-masculine.

Soo-Won also has a negative view of femininity based upon her family atmosphere. However, in her statement, feeling comfortable with men is not directly related to resisting femininity, and liking to chat is not considered to be connected with the nature of femininity. Feminine women do not always like chatting. In this sense, Soo-Won tends to devalue femininity, seeing it as a set of negative characteristics, whilst viewing masculinity as positive. Some feminists criticise the dualism between masculinity as positive and femininity as negative, because they argue that both contain negative and positive characteristics. The notion that all features of femininity are negative and those of masculinity are positive might be understood as male-centred and male-oriented.

Resistance to femininity is seemingly related to the radical personality constructed by the family upbringing and environment of each woman. In other words, the construction of the gendered self is connected to the family system that is a representative form of heterosexual institution. In truth, if parents raise their daughters as feminine women, the daughter tends to embrace femininity. The parents' ideas of femininity are influenced by heterosexuality and heterosexual culture but, recently most women, including mothers, have begun to perceive femininity negatively as a set of behaviour requiring obedience, passivity and emotion. Nevertheless, only a few women are struggling with femininity whereas the majority of Korean women accept femininity as their gendered self because they are located in a different position: for instance, few women have the power with which to reject the enforcement of femininity and most are located in subservient positions. Femininity, as a gendered self, is socially constructed and hence its features cannot be understood as fixed characteristics.

Femininity as a part of gendered self is therefore subject to change. For example, a feminine woman can become a less feminine woman, or vice versa. Jeong-Mi highlights

how her experiences and situation have affected a change in her femininity:

When I went to school, I was not like this. I could speak my mind and thoughts. However, while I am working in the office, I am getting obedient and feminine in order to adapt to office life. In the office, I am younger so I think that I need to follow the senior's opinion, for example, when we have lunch with my seniors and male colleagues, I cannot insist on my favourite food (Jeong-Mi).

Jeong-Mi said that she was very active and positive before working for her company. However, since she has been employed in this workplace, she has become more feminine. She notes that she feels pressure to be feminine. For example, she feels unable to choose her favourite food at lunchtime because she thinks that insisting and arguing are not feminine characteristics and that her actions could also be considered as rude behaviour towards her seniors. In the case of Jeong-Mi, the change in their position to one as a female worker led to an increased femininity. This experience suggests that Korean organisational culture expects its female workers to be feminine. Jeong-Mi's gendered self changes reflexively within the male-dominated organisational structure and culture of the workplace.

Ju-Mi pointed out that she resists femininity without any trouble from her seniors. 'I do not confront my senior directly, but I am not obedient. When my senior asks me something, I listen to his suggestion, but if I think that it is not the right thing, I do not undertake the requirement' (Ju-Mi). She pretends to be feminine but resists being obedient. In order to refuse her senior's irrational order, Ju-Mi displays her will as an action rather than a word. She regards her behaviour as an alternative method of

resistance. In general, Korean female workers are expected to be feminine, in the sense of being unconditionally obedient and carrying out routine work without any complaints, as both the hierarchical structure and the organisational culture enforce feminine behaviour in their women workers. Ju-Mi must therefore pretend to be feminine and as she is unable to speak her own mind, needs to find an alternative method by which to resist disagreeable orders from her seniors.

In reality, Korean female workers have formulated their gendered selves in diverse ways. The decisions made by female workers regarding whether to accept or resist femininity are required by the gendered elements of heterosexual organisational culture, such as female workers' status and heterosexual institutions, for example the family and marriage system and education. For instance, the attributes of femininity in Korea encompass not only passivity, obedience, emotion and irrationality but also informality, flexibility and willingness to do domestic work. In this respect, the notion of femininity is becoming wider and more varied. Consequently, the features of femininity are constituted by cultural and historical changes and at the same time the gendered selves of individuals are continually in process.

2. The Sexual Self

The sexual self, like the gendered self, is socially constructed and in a state of process. As well as being related to homosexual or heterosexual identity, the sexual self embodies both conscious and unconscious subjectivity alongside human feelings. Defined as the conscious and unconscious human being, and incorporating personal emotions relating to sexuality, the sexual self is predominantly reflected in heterosexuality as an institution and in heterosexual culture as a way of life that is

constantly developing as a result of cultural and historical changes. Holland and her colleagues have identified the relationship between social pressure and the social construction of sexual selves and argue that women think of their sexuality in terms of social pressure. This argument appears to be particularly useful to an understanding of the construction of female sexuality in Korea as the majority of Korean women have experienced the personal and social pressures to which Holland and her colleagues refer in their work.

Personal pressures are incorporated into the individual's conception of self and way of organising and understanding her own sexuality. Social pressures emanate from the variety of cultural and institutional contexts in which the person is located; family, peer group, school, workplace, religion, mass media, culture, sub-culture. It is the different messages from these different sources that oblige young women to live with, and make sense of, contradictions in the social construction of feminine sexuality. (Holland et al. 1996:249).

In order to explore how the sexual selves of Korean female workers are related to heterosexuality, I will firstly examine the content of Korean sex-education as a first step to the recognition of a sexual self. My discussion will then turn to an investigation of the way in which Korean women's ignorance of sexual knowledge is related to this formative sex-education and the dominant sexual discourse. Finally, I hope to show how these women develop a self-recognition of their sexuality despite their sexual ignorance and the absence of informative sex-education.

Sex Education⁷

This section considers women's acquisition of sexual knowledge through formal education in the family, at schools and through the mass media. Even though Korean sex education fails to provide people with practical and specific information on sexuality I feel it is still important to analyse the female workers' accounts of their sex education because it remains the only formal way for these women to gain sexual knowledge. In my own experience, I remember that I did not learn sexual knowledge from my parents or school teachers. Only after I listened to a lecture on sex education from a feminist perspective at university, did I actually realise how men and women make love. In this dominant circumstance, a number of Korean feminists have critically examined the sex education system within Korean schools and have found the content to be superficial and impractical, predominantly consisting of teaching on the biological differences between men and women and maintaining a distance from the reality of sexual relationships (Lee, W. S. et.al.1998: 104).

In British schools, according to Lees, 'sexual education focuses on different methods of contraception and descriptions of the biological make-up and mechanics of the sex act' (Lees 1986:149). Some feminists have recently concentrated on the education of safe sex and criticised its focus upon the penetrative sexual relationship (Holland et al. 1998:32). Holland and her colleagues suggest that 'negotiating condom use is not just a question of individuals making rational choices about personal safety. It is the outcome of a social encounter between potentially unequal partners in which this inequality is hidden in linguistic and social conventions that take masculinity and femininity to be

⁷ In this context, 'sex education' refers to the process of acquiring sexual knowledge and information.

natural opposites' (Holland et. al. 1998 31-32). In this context, British sex-education is still gender-biased and located within gender power relationships. Women are concerned about having sexual relationships without contraception but find it difficult to suggest taking contraceptive precautions with their partners. In other words, British women are aware of how to have safe sexual relationships but in practice feel unable to do so. This situation results from the fact that women who use contraceptives such as condoms risk being defined as 'slags' (Lees 1986:149). Holland and her colleagues argue that 'In learning about sex while also learning how to be feminine or masculine they help reproduce the gendered power relationships of heterosexuality' (Holland et. al. 1998:56-57). Although British sex education is more practical and useful, it also enforces gender differences as well as heterosexual norms on women. Therefore, it could be argued that British sex education is not yet perfect and remains male-centred as well as gender-biased.

On the other hand, Korean sex education is relatively absent. Whereas Korean men can gain sexual knowledge through unofficial methods, such as illegal pornographic films and magazines and drawing upon the experiences of friends, women are noticeably lacking in sexual knowledge (Chang, P. H. and Cho, H. 1991:85). I will therefore examine the absences and problems in recent times within sex education and also develop an understanding of how Korean women obtain sexual knowledge in relation to this limited and gendered sex education.

Initially I attempted to discover what sex education had been carried out by family members but most of my interviewees have not learned about sex from their families. Having not been educated on the subject by their family members or teachers in schools, parents do not know how to advise their own children about sex. Soo-Hee had a

conservative view regarding sexuality because of her experience of sexual education. 'I am conservative because of my education. Although my parents did not provide me with an education of sexual knowledge, I learned about it by teachers and friends' (Soo-Hee). Soo-Hee implied that the absence of sex education provided by her parents is connected with the norm of sexual chastity. For instance, Korean people equate sexual chastity with an ignorance of sexual matters and therefore, many parents believe that lack of reference to sexual knowledge provides a good example for family education, particularly for their daughters. During the interview process, I questioned the majority of my interviewees on the sex education they received from family members but it was only Soo-Hee who referred to this teaching. It could be argued that this result demonstrates the lack of expectations most women have regarding their own sex education in relation to the family.

Sex education is not a compulsory subject within the Korean school system, hence most adults have not received much sexual knowledge through their education. Indeed, the content of curricula is based upon the teachers' own general knowledge. The teaching tends to be very limited and frequently deficient as the teachers have not learnt from experts in the sex education field. Both Ji-Hae and Young-Joo commented on their experience of sex education within Korean schools.

When I was six years old in primary school, I watched a video about sex education. Also, I remember that when I was a student at high school in a biology lesson a male teacher taught us about sexual knowledge, but I cannot remember the specific content. After that, I was able to learn about sex from books or the Q & A section of magazines (Ji-Hae).

When I went to the middle school I received sex education. Well, at that time the content of sex education was related not to sexual relationships between men and women, but the genital differences between men and women and the process of reproduction (Young-Joo).

Both remembered receiving sexual education but forgot most of the specific content, only recalling the reproductive and biological themes of the lessons. Ji-Hae and Young-Joo found the practical sexual knowledge they were seeking from books and magazines. In other words, the education they received in school was not practical or useful. Even in Korean high schools the sex education remains superficial.

When I was a student at high school, I had a lecture on the subject of sex education and what women should do in relation to sexual attitudes. I was able to learn a little sexual knowledge from books and mass media (Hae-Ja).

I saw the videotape about sexual knowledge in a class at high school so I have a negative view of sex and see it as a taboo subject (Yeon-Joo).

From these statements by Hae-Ja and Yeon-Joo, we learn that their education reflected the norms in relation to female sexuality, such as sexual chastity, but it failed to teach them any practical information, such as the use of contraception within sexual relations. Yeon-Joo has had a negative view of sex since her education because sexual relationships tended to be defined as dangerous and dirty. Sex education within school does not appear to provide students with useful information but instead gives them a negative, biased view of sexuality. For example, Korean teachers who have been influenced by conservative and patriarchal sexual discourses have educated female

students upon the virtues of sexual chastity and its role within a woman's duty. In this respect, the sex education provided to young women is concentrated around 'protective discourses'. Holland and her colleagues note that 'sex-education in school and in the home articulates different dimensions of a "protective discourse". Men are positioned as the agents of this discourse, while women are positioned as the potential victims of a 'natural' and active male sexuality, involving both physical and moral danger' (Holland et. al. 1998:56). Within the Korean context, the protective discourse is representative of the dual norm of sexual chastity: women should keep their chastity before marriage whereas men do not need to follow the norm. Thus sex education for Korean women is constituted by guidelines about sexual morals rather than beneficial sexual knowledge.

I will now move on to an exploration of the relationship between the identification of sexual knowledge and the role of the mass media. Since sexuality became a public issue in the 1990s, it has become a popular topic within the Korean mass media with people often obtaining sexual information from these sources. Although the programmes in relation to sexual issues are not directly related to sex education, it is important for Korean people to gain what little sexual information they can. The programmes are divided between the popular mass media, in the guise of romantic films, dramas and novels, and the systematic sex education programmes. The former consists of films, books and TV dramas based upon romantic love stories that contain some aspects of sexual relationships. It is worth noting that these programmes are often very westernised, unrealistic and overstated. The latter group includes some lecturing on sex education and, although useful, they can sometimes be boring. Boo-Young reflected upon her acquisition of sexual knowledge: 'I learned about sexuality through films, books or the talk of married friends' (Boo-Young). This discovery of information seems to be both popular and easy for Korean women as many find it difficult directly to

access sexual materials and therefore attempt to gain knowledge through indirect means.

Jeong-Mi mentioned 'Ausung of Ku, Sung-Ae', a sex education programme: 'Recently, through the video, "Ausung of Ku, Sung-Ae" and television programmes, I have learnt much about sexuality' (Jeong-Mi). She suggested the programme was a useful means by which to gain sexual knowledge. 'Ausung' means 'for our beautiful sexuality'. Since 1998, the Ausung movement of Ku, Sung-Ae has been a popular movement. She intended to provide sex education particularly for young people in a simple and humorous way and many Korean people enjoy watching her programme and agree with her ideas on sex education.

Korean feminists, however, have criticized Ku's idea because the content of her lectures is mainly concentrated upon reproductive issues such as contraception and conception: a result of the fact that she formerly worked as a midwife. Although the Ausung movement contributes to supplying Korean people with sexual information and publicizing sex education, an approach based upon reproduction tends to misrepresent sexuality. For example, Ku presents the female body as a pregnant one, emphasising that it needs to be protected from sexual violence. In my opinion, she not only overlooks gender politics between men and women, but also sexual politics between heterosexuals and homosexuals. In other words, her idea is not concerned with women's oppression in relation to sexual chastity and homophobia. By misunderstanding the gender and sexual differences between men and women as natural and innate, and regarding sexuality in terms of reproduction, Ku, Sung-Ae's teaching tends to provide the Korean people with a view of sexuality that results in a negative outcome.

To conclude, sex education in both the Korean family and the school system has been

relatively absent. Many people agree with the need for sex education and a large number of Korean people worry that the absence of sex education might be related to increases in the number of sexual criminals, single mothers, and abortions among young women. Sex education has therefore recently been promoted within the mass media and there is an expectation that its provision will help to reduce these problems related to sexual knowledge. Ku, Sung-Ae's reproductive approach to sex education is partly useful in developing understandings of sexual knowledge but, as I mentioned above, her lectures tend to overlook the power relationships between men and women and homosexuals and heterosexuals. The sex education imposed upon Korean women at present promotes the requirement of sexual chastity and reinforces a double standard based upon gender divisions.

Ignorance about sexuality

A consideration of the sexual selves of Korean women is related to an examination of their ignorance concerning sexual matters. The main driving force behind this relation is the lack of sex education and the imposition of sexual chastity onto women. In the Korean context, 'good' women are, by definition, ignorant of sexuality (Lee, S. K. 1993:33, Lee, K. M. 1994:15), whereas men are allowed to obtain sexual knowledge through both informal and formal ways. For instance, during their adolescence Korean men acquired sexual knowledge from 'the Red book'⁸ and pornographic films and magazines (Chang, P. H. and Cho, H. 1991:85). This double standard and dualism in relation to sexual knowledge has perpetuated the divisions between men and women. Women with extensive sexual knowledge are stigmatised as 'bad girls' and therefore

⁸ *'The Red Book'* provides information on various types of sexual intercourse and is circulated illegally.

despite having this sexual information, they often feign ignorance.

Young-Hee and Yeon-Joo welcomed their sexual ignorance when they were younger and had no desire to gain any sexual knowledge. Their negative views developed from mass media portrayals of sexuality and sexual matters.

I didn't know what sexuality was before I went to University. When I was in the second year at the university, I recognized that men were different from women. I had a negative view of sexuality, because I recognized the negative aspects of sexuality through the mass media, such as child sexual abuse or rape and the comfort women in the past. Therefore, I thought that sexuality was dirty and a bad thing (Young-Hee).

I am really conservative and uneducated in relation to sexuality. I agree that a woman is not born but becomes a woman. I have been educated that a woman should be ignorant about sexuality and does not need to be interested in it (Yeon-Joo).

According to these two women, the sexual topics referred to in the mass media are related to sex crimes such as rape and prostitution and, therefore, most women who are uneducated in sexual matters are exposed only to negative views of sexuality. Yeon-Joo's statement suggests that it is not necessary to acquire any sexual knowledge since one can discover this information after marriage. She pointed out that women have been educated to be ignorant of sexuality and that it is their responsibility to maintain this inexperience. A woman's lack of sexual knowledge is related to both the psychological and physical shock she feels within her specific sexual life. For example, when women

are the victims of sexual violence, they find it more difficult to respond to their assailants.

Soo-Hee, on the other hand, has a slightly different view concerning her lack of focus upon sexuality. She does not want to talk about it as she thinks of these matters as trivial and worthless: 'I think that the issues of sexuality are not important in my life. Sometimes, I talk with my boyfriend about sexuality but we are interested not in the topic of sexuality but the management of money and each other's work'(Soo-Hee). Soo-Hee's ideas appear to derive from the division between the public and private sectors. The notion that 'sexuality is trivial' is associated with the male dominated sexual culture in which men perceive sexuality to be very private and trivial but, nevertheless, they are able to enjoy it. This explanation suggests that Soo-Hee's belief is affected by her boyfriend's own understandings of sexuality.

Women's ignorance of sexuality reflects a double standard, particularly concerning sexual chastity. Since women should be sexually chaste, there is a presumption then that they do not need to know about sex. Alongside this promotion of ignorance, a number of female workers that I interviewed thought that intellectual and upper class women had no need for information on sexuality because sexual knowledge is meaningless compared to a career and the acquisition of money. Ignorance about sexuality appears not only to be related to gender and sexual divisions, but also to the devaluation of sexuality and it leads to a misunderstanding of this subject.

Sexuality is beautiful and romantic

Lacking a comprehensive education in sexuality, a number of Korean women tend to

have a fantasy image of heterosexual relationships and romantic love. The formation of this idea appears to be affected by films, novels and television drama based on romantic love stories. Thus, a large number of my interviewees think of a sexual relationship as the expression of romantic love. In relation to this romantic syndrome, Cho argues that Korean women have an image of westernised romantic love but, when discovering the fantasy is not real, they become disappointed and confused. This syndrome of false expectations of romantic love has a negative effect upon women's lives (Cho, H. J. 1991:40). In a similar way, Jackson points out that 'many feminists criticise romantic love because love was seen as an ideology which legitimated women's oppression and which trapped them into exploitative heterosexual relationships' (Jackson, 1999:98). In relation to this connection between sexuality and romantic love, Sun-Young and Young-Hee discuss why they think that sexuality is beautiful:

When I was a teenager I devoured High Teen Romance [a popular novel with a love story for teenage girls in Korea] in relation to sexuality. At that time I thought that sexuality was very beautiful and romantic but I did not know the specific facts of sexuality (Sun-Young).

When I was a teenager I read a cartoon with a love story, but I concentrated not on the sexual actions such as kissing and hugging but on the romantic words and story, so I thought that love was beautiful (Young-Hee).

To these women, heterosexual relationships are related to love and then defined as beautiful and romantic. In this sense, their thoughts surrounding sexual relations follow an imaginary rather than a realistic sequence. However, these women come to recognise that heterosexual relations are not simply beautiful as exemplified by their use of the

past tense, but nevertheless still expect their own relations to be beautiful. It is only after marriage that a woman can appreciate what a heterosexual relationship actually involves.

Before marriage, I thought that sexuality was related to love, but after marriage, my thinking has changed. Sometimes I think that sexuality is dirty and not important in our lives (Young-Joo).

Young-Joo confessed her realisation that heterosexual relationships are not only related to beauty and love. This disillusionment and her equation of sexuality with what is 'dirty', possibly results from the infidelity of her husband.⁹ Despite these difficulties, Young-Joo has maintained her married life and her disregard for sexual relationships has perhaps influenced the continuation of her marriage. Had she regarded the sexual relationship within marriage as important, she might not have lived with her husband whilst he was having an affair. In contrast, Young-Hee, Young-Joo's colleague, insisted that the heterosexual relationship needed not to be limited to married couples.

I thought that only a married couple could make love: even though I had a lover before marriage, I did not need to make love. However, now, I think that if people fall in love, they can make love emotionally and physically regardless of marriage. After all, through the sexual relationship, the relationship and love between a woman and a man gets stronger and better (Young-Hee).

Young-Hee has changed her mind since getting married. The necessary condition within successful heterosexual relations is love rather than marriage. Sex is seen as helpful

⁹ She did not talk about her husband having an affair but I was informed of it by my friend, Young-Hee.

within the maintenance of a good relationship between a man and a woman and is not considered as an end in itself but as a process that strengthens a relationship and is related to both emotional and physical matters. Consequently, although women believe the heterosexual relationship to be mainly related to love, sometimes this emotion can seem unimportant within married life as many couples have maintained their marriage without love. For example, even if a husband has an affair, a wife cannot request a divorce because the major concerns of Korean married couples include not only love, but also caring for their children and the family's financial needs. Despite the changing nature of Korean women's sexual relationships in relation to love many still expect their sexual and emotional relationships to be beautiful and romantic.

Sexual life as private

The statement, 'sexuality is private' implies that sexuality is not referred to in public discourse and most affairs in relation to sexuality are limited to individual matters. In western culture sexuality is limited by privacy. Holland and her colleagues argue that 'the problem with thinking about empowerment in sexual encounters is that these encounters are defined as private' (Holland et al.1992: 251). For them, the definition of sexuality as private is influential in minimising the empowerment of female sexuality as it is isolated and excluded from mainstream and male-dominated sexual discourse. As a result of defining heterosexual relations as private and individual, women believe that their sexual experiences cannot be shared with others and a number of my interviewees reflected this thinking in their reasons why they were reluctant to speak out about individual sexual experiences.

I do not think that the experiences of sexuality must not be spoken of, but I

do not like to speak about my experiences and I never take the opportunity to do so (Yoon-Hee).

I think that sexual experiences need to be hidden because they can be used to abuse people. I do not want to speak about my experience of sexuality. Sometimes, when I watch a film depicting a sexual relationship, I want to know, if I have a sexual relationship, how it will feel. So, I ask my married friends. How does it feel? Is it like a film? (Boo-Young)

Yoon-Hee's statement indicates that she would be reluctant to take the opportunity to speak out about her sexual experiences. Her feelings reflect the more general belief that talking about sexuality is seen as taboo within the dominant atmosphere of Korean society and therefore the majority of Korean women disregard sexuality as a conversational subject. Boo-Young is concerned with people's responses and attitudes towards her sexual experiences: if they were to listen to the recounting of her sexual experiences, even though they reflect ordinary behaviour, they would blame her for her loss of sexual chastity. Both Yoon-Hee and Boo-Young's statements imply that single women involved in sexual experiences might be stigmatised as 'bad girls'.

Although there is this fear of shameful labels, Boo-Young is eager to know how sexual relations are carried out in practice. This suggests that women face two conflicting forces: that of the dominant sexual discourse and that of their individual desires and needs. In relation to this conflict, Young-Joo notes the change in attitude she underwent once she married: 'I did not tell my friend about my sexual experiences before marriage, but I often talk with my friend about sexuality since my marriage' (Young-Joo). Young-Joo's change in attitude about her own sexuality is a consequence of her new found

married status. Whereas the sexual experiences of married women are regarded as natural within mainstream Korean discourse and wives are allowed to access sexual relations, the sexuality of single women remains problematic and controversial and hence single women are governed by the norm of sexual chastity. These unmarried women therefore feel pressurised not to disclose their sexual experiences. The statement, 'sexuality is private', therefore contains a political and cultural meaning due to its insinuation that sexuality should not be publicised. It encourages the silencing of women's sexual experiences.

Kyung-Mi and Soon-Ju focused upon other reasons as explanations for their wish to avoid discussing sexual experiences. They were simply not interested in the topic:

I am not conservative about sexuality, but I do not like to talk about the topic of sexuality. I do not need to talk about sexuality (Kyung-Mi).

I do not have a negative view of sexuality, but I do not want to concentrate on it and I am not interested in the issue of sexuality. Sometimes I talk with my intimate friend about my sexual experiences (Soon-Ju).

These women believe it is unnecessary to talk about sexual experiences and equate these discussions with the Korean lower class culture. Although they did not refer to the relationship between sexual interests and social class, I felt that they identified as middle class, intellectual people who were not interested in sexual gossip. The construction of sexual selves is certainly related to this self-perception of social class. For example, in Korea, the people who enjoy sharing sexual experiences tend to be defined as uneducated and lower class. There is no clear evidence concerning this

interconnection but most people assume that talking about sexuality reflects a lack of nobility and refinement. Skeggs indicates that 'working class women – both Black and White – were coded as the sexual and deviant other against which femininity was defined [...] The distance that is drawn between the sexual and the feminine was drawn onto the bodies of working class women' (Skeggs 1997:99-100). Both Kyung-Mi and Soon-Ju assume that feminine and intellectual women are distanced from the sexual. This assumption appears to be related to the dichotomy between middle and upper class women as 'good girls', and working class women as 'bad girls'. Moreover, these women seem to be confused about their sexual desires and morality. Soon-Ju argues that she has a positive view about sexuality but is not interested in it. I would argue that this is what could be termed a contradiction. In the interview I felt that she tried to hide her sexual desires, preferring to express her sexual morality.

The notion that 'sexuality is private' is reflected by both social education and the dominant sexual discourse, which suggests that women who like to discuss their sexual experiences are at risk of being defined as 'slags'. Thus, the assertion that 'sexuality is private', is a barrier to female sexual empowerment as it prevents women talking about their own sexuality as well as claiming the experiences of sexual violence and harassment.

Sexual desire¹⁰ is wrong

The female worker's sexual self is often represented as asexual within the dominant sexual discourse. This discourse constructs the realm of female sexual desire and

¹⁰ There are many feminist works in relation to sexual desire, but in this context the meaning of 'sexual desire' is limited to those people that want to have a sexual relationship with someone.

pleasure as one only accessed for reproductive reasons rather than as available for those women solely seeking sexual pleasure. Holland points out in relation to the pleasure of female sexuality that 'there is no language or model of positive female sexuality for young women. Feminine sexualities as socially constituted in western cultures are generally disempowering in that they are constructed in subordination to dominant masculine sexualities' (Holland et al. 1992:251). Holland and her colleagues criticize the way in which female sexuality in relation to pleasure is excluded from mainstream culture.

However, Korean feminists have yet to pay attention to the sexual desires and pleasures of women. This lack of research is not only related to the sexual ignorance among women and the absence of sex-education, but also to the fact that Korean feminists consider matters of sexual danger, such as sexual violence and harassment, as urgent and necessary subjects in developing an understanding of female sexuality in present day Korea. I agree with their opinion in part although suggest that we also need to focus on female sexual pleasure in female sexuality. Having begun to express their own desires, Korean women have not yet found a tool that will allow them to represent the sexual needs. The initial step for expression of their desire is to promote critiques of women's sexual ignorance. The majority of my interviewees were reluctant to tell me about their sexual desires and only two interviewees, Ji-Hae and Soon-Ju, attempted to tell me of their opinions surrounding this subject.

For me, men and women have a different division of labour and we live with each other in harmony. Likewise sexuality is the same. And, sexuality is enjoyable. I watched a porno film. In a porno, a woman is treated like an object. I think that sexuality does not have to be like this. The sexual

relationship is related to pleasure. When I make love, both my partner and I need to be happy and feel pleasure (Ji-Hae).

Maybe I will not get married to someone. If I get engaged to a person, I can make love with him before marriage, but I think without sexual intercourse, we can enjoy sexuality in other ways, and then why would we need to have sexual intercourse? (Soon-Ju)

Ji-Hae talks about a woman's right to sexual desire and pleasure. Her opinion does not reflect the dominant discourse and she appears to be in the vanguard in relation to female sexual relationships. Ji-Hae recognizes that women are able to enjoy their sexual lives. Moreover, Soon-Ju criticizes the penetrative sexual relationship and recognizes that penetrative sex is more concerned with men's pleasure than women's. Soon-Ju's ideas are therefore more radical and similar to feminist beliefs. In terms of Holland's argument her words reflect a form of empowerment of female sexuality. Holland points out that 'feminists have conceived the notion of women's empowerment in different ways. These have enabled us to think of women as resisting the pressures of patriarchal societies; as having collective power which gives them the agency rather than the individual victims of patriarchy' (Holland et al. 1992:251). Moreover, Ji-Hae states: 'I talk with my friend about my sexual experiences such as the methods of kissing, hugging and touching. If I make love with my lover, I can talk with my friend about the experience in great detail' (Ji-Hae). Ji-Hae also spoke out publicly about her sexual experience, thereby reflecting her freedom.¹¹ Her action demonstrates that women are able to begin to alter their sexuality.

¹¹ I will examine the controversies surrounding sexual chastity in the next section.

In conclusion, Korean women's sexual selves are characterized by their specific experiences. Firstly, they are ignorant of sexuality due to the absence of sex education and the double standard, which dictates that good women do not need to know much about sexuality. In fact, these women have identified their own sexualities based upon social pressures from the family, school, and mass media, and upon personal pressures, such as individual relationships. Secondly, Korean women think of sexual relations as representations of romantic love, referring to images of beautiful, cinematic relationships whereas they often see sexual intercourse apart from love as dirty or trivial. However, they ultimately recognize that these idealised sexual relations are fantasies rather than realities. Nevertheless, Korean women maintain that the sexual relationship should be associated with love. Female sexuality based on romantic love also seems to be identified as oppressive rather than enjoyable and pleasurable. Korean women have been indoctrinated to believe that if they are open minded and enjoy sex, they will be defined as 'bad girls'. Their perception of sexuality is mainly related to the double standard between men and women and the dualism between 'good girls' and 'bad girls'.

Korean female workers' gendered selves are closely interrelated with their sexual selves. This lack of distinction results from an absence of public discussion concerning the sexual self and thus people do not recognize the differences between the gendered and the sexual self. In reality, the gendered self is associated with the sexual self within the Korean context. For example, the reliance upon Korean women's sexual chastity in constructions of femininity is a fundamental issue within an understanding of the sexual selves of these women. In addition to this, the development of sexual selves is interrelated with both heterosexual and gendered institutions, such as the family system, school education and the mass media. Consequently, sexual selves are not only maintained by the mainstream and male dominated culture but are also signs of possible

change with the introduction of new discourses reflecting female sexual desire and the challenge to sexual chastity. In the next section I will move on to an exploration of the relationship between the construction of gendered and sexual selves and the specificities of Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture.

II. The construction of Heterosexuality

Through my examination of the gendered and sexual selves of Korean female workers, I identified the fact that the social selves of these women were embedded within heterosexuality, as an institution and practice, and thus an examination of sexual harassment requires an examination of heterosexuality. These discoveries have therefore prompted an exploration into the specificities of both Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture in this section. In particular, I will examine sexual chastity as a dominant ideology and sexual attitudes within the marriage system; both being defined as representative forms of heterosexuality and heterosexual culture.

Skeggs suggests that ‘the construction of heterosexual subjectivity is framed by not only external constraints which can be put into effect through institutionalisation, the policing of space and/or violence, but also through the positioning and negotiation of one’s em-bodied ‘self’ vis-a-vis sexual classifications constructed through respectability’ (Skeggs 1997:130). She suggests that heterosexuality as an institution is internally influential in the formation of people’s subjectivities. Whilst considering Skegg’s arguments as a tool of analysis, I will examine the way in which these heterosexual institutions of sexual chastity and sexuality within marriage are internalised and socially constructed in a Korean context.

1. The Ideology of Sexual Chastity

As a representative form of the gendered norms within heterosexual relationships, the ideology of sexual chastity is perpetuated by Confucianism since it is purely concerned with the sexual attitude of women in Korea. Biological differences between male ('Yang') and female ('Yin') are considered essential within Confucianism. This school of thought places emphasis upon the harmony of these two opposing forces between Yang and Yin, with the clear understanding that Yang controls Yin and therefore male sexuality is superior to female sexuality. In the logic of Confucianism female sexuality is determined as a reproductive tool and the Confucian idea enforces both women's sexual chastity defined as the duty of single girls and their sexual fidelity, the duty of a wife. In this respect, the ideology of sexual chastity is greatly affected by the dual norm of Confucianism (Shim 1996:11).

Within a British context, Holland and her colleagues point out that 'heterosexual sex is a double construction: the young woman is under pressure first to consent to the constitution of adult heterosexuality as the construction of masculinity, and then to fit herself to this construction' (Holland et al. 1996:145). Their argument indicates that the construction of female heterosexuality is predominantly governed by male heterosexuality and based upon the construction of masculinity, thereby implying that the nature of heterosexuality is male-centred and male-oriented. Skeggs describes the meaning of sexual reputation in a British context:

sexuality is still organized through gender, race and class but is far less obviously externally regulated. Self-monitoring and regulation occur through reputation. Proving and maintaining respectability involves taking

responsibility for the control of overt sexual display. Producing oneself as respectable becomes the means by which internal regulation and the specific policing of bodies occurs (Skeggs, 1997:130).

Within British culture, British women internalise sexual reputation as a heterosexual norm, in the same way that Korean women accept the norm of sexual chastity. Although sexual reputation within Britain may not be understood as a western parallel to the Korean ideology of sexual chastity, both operate as dominant forms of social pressure within female sexuality in both Korea and Britain.

Whilst also exposing the peculiarity of Korean female sexuality I will refer to the term 'sexual script' as a flexible and changeable concept within this study of female workers' attitudes towards premarital sexual relationships. In relation to this concept, Gagnon and Simon reflect that 'scripts are involved in learning the meaning of internal states, organizing the sequences of specially sexual acts, decoding novel situations, setting the limits on sexual responses, and linking meanings from nonsexual aspects of life to specially sexual experience' (Gagnon and Simon 1974:19). The term, 'sexual script', appears to accommodate the relationship between ordinary and sexual life and is therefore useful in understanding the diverse and changing attitude towards sexual chastity. Based on the female workers' accounts, I will explore these changed and contested sexual scripts concerning premarital sexual relations.

The dominant script of premarital sexual relationships states that women should remain sexually chaste until marriage. The majority of Korean women consider sexual chastity to be their duty and even those who chose alternative scripts, such as accepting and developing sexual relations with their lover or fiancé, are also governed by this norm of

sexual chastity. According to some interviewees, the initial reason for maintaining sexual chastity was because they regarded it as an obligation to their future husband.

I am too conservative. I think that sexual chastity is very important. If I get married to someone, I want to be fair to my future husband, and I think that I have to keep my sexual chastity (Eun-Young).

A premarital sexual relationship is not so good. However, I think that the self-expression is good. Nevertheless keeping sexual chastity is a kind of etiquette within the marriage system (Hae-Ja).

Both Eun-Young and Hae-Ja believed that it was necessary for their future husbands' sakes that they kept their sexual chastity intact. Such ideas are based upon the inequitable system of monogamy by which women's virginity is regarded as a valuable requirement for successful marriage but men's (lack of) chastity is disregarded. Moreover, it is expected that the married women will give birth to a son in order to maintain the paternal line. These duties of the Korean woman are connected to the dual norm and double standard perpetuated by Confucianism. Within Confucian belief, only the sexual relationship within marriage is defined as normative and ethical, with female sexual pleasure being ignored and female sexuality limited to reproduction and motherhood (Cho, Y. M. 1999:28). Sexual chastity is therefore inflicted upon both unmarried and married women as an obligation and duty. Jeong-Hee believed premarital sex on the wife's part to be problematic during married life.¹²

¹² We often get reports from Korean newspapers concerning the divorce of couples on honeymoon because the brides are discovered to be sexually 'unchaste'.

When I get married to someone, I will feel sorry for my future husband if I do not keep my sexual chastity. Also, a sexual relationship before marriage is a kind of obstacle to a peaceful married life. However, if I make love with my lover I will not regret it. Anyway, sexual freedom can be a problem in married life (Jeong-Hee).

Like Jeong-Hee the majority of Korean women believe that in order to avoid marital problems it is necessary to maintain their sexual chastity. In Korea, premarital sex by the wife is considered grounds for divorce. However, Jeong-Hee confronted conflicts between love and marriage: despite being worried about sexual chastity within married life, she wants to have sexual relations with her lover before marriage. Jeong-Hee's personal conflict is probably a common and frank account that reflects the majority of Korean women's feelings in relation to premarital sexual relations. There are some Korean women who, having experienced sexual intercourse before marriage, resort to surgical procedures that recover their hymens because they hope it will prevent any trouble arising with their husbands (Daily Newspaper of Chosun, 2nd Feb 2001). These women must feign their virginity whilst on their honeymoon and hence there are some magazines for Korean women that provide information on how to carry out this pretence successfully (*Women's magazine Yeo-Seong Joongang*, Feb. 1992).

Jeong-Mi also agreed with the norm of sexual chastity, although her reasoning differed from that of the three female workers discussed above: 'I think that premarital chastity needs to be kept and divorce should not be allowed. (Why?) I regard sexuality as unpleasant. Therefore, I need to make love with only one person' (Jeong-Mi). Displaying a negative view of sexual relations, Jeong-Mi reflected that if she must become intimate with someone then it will be limited solely to her future husband, with

whom she will concede to sexual relations. Her view appears to be influenced by the conservative discourse derived from Confucianism, in which sexual intercourse is merely considered necessary for producing children rather than as a pleasurable act.

Yeon-Joo expressed a religious motivation for the preservation of sexual chastity: 'I need to keep premarital chastity. It is a base. I cannot understand the premarital sexual relationship. Because I am a Christian I need to keep it and I need to give my chastity to only one person. It is necessary to keep my chastity'(Yeon-Joo). Yeon-Joo's statement reflects the connection between sexual chastity and conservative Christian ideals concerning sexuality. Despite being a Western import, Christianity has taken root in Korea, although I would argue that the nature of Korean Christianity is more traditional since it is not only combined with, but also based upon, the conservative features of Confucianism.

The five women discussed above believe it is their duty to remain chaste; however, their reasons for this conviction differ greatly. The first reason is because a number of interviewees regard sexual chastity as a duty for their future husband. This results from the fact that the unchaste women's marriage might be problematic to maintain good marriage. A few women suggest another reason for keeping chastity is religious belief such as Christianity. Ultimately, the maintenance of their sexual chastity is a means by which these women may be guaranteed their own protection from social judgement rather than an ideal that must be followed because it is both morally right and valuable. It seems that the norm of sexual chastity must challenge alternative sexual scripts in order to conserve its dominant position within Korean society and my interviewees' acceptance of this norm is fundamentally due to social pressures rather than their own autonomous decisions.

On the other hand, there are a number of Korean women who are beginning to develop an alternative sexual script that declines to condemn premarital sexual relations.¹³ This situation is heavily influenced by the ideology of romantic love whereby women consider love as legitimating sexual relationships. The Korean feminist scholar Cho claims that the sexual script based upon romantic love does not aid an understanding of the relationship between the sexes within Korea as people tend to accept this view of sexuality only formally and superficially. Cho also argues that this romantic sexual idea is rooted in modernism whereas present day Korean philosophy is still based on feudalism (Cho, H. J.1991: 28-29). I, however, cannot agree with Cho's notion that a sexual script based on romantic love does not exist within Korea. It is clear that the implications of romantic love differ between Korea and the West but, nevertheless, a significant proportion of Korean people choose this sexual attitude based on romantic love. Although the nature of modernity in Korea differs from that in western countries, it is also nevertheless a modern society.

Western feminists have commented upon the distinctive features of romantic love. 'These romances derived from a specifically Western cultural tradition – if they are being consumed world-wide we need to know why and how they are being read. It cannot simply be assumed that all women everywhere make sense of them in exactly the same way' (Jackson 1999:114).¹⁴ Jackson's assertion suggests that the relationship between romantic love and sexual attitudes are formatted in different ways and we are

¹³ In recent times, many women have followed this new script, however, there are some feminists who argue that these changing attitudes are related to an increase in the number of abortions within Korea and therefore this situation fails to purely represent a development or movement forward from more traditional and conservative viewpoints (Kim, J. H. 1991:59).

¹⁴ See also Taylor (1989).

dependent upon each society's own cultural and historical changes. She also argues that 'we need to develop analyses of love as a culturally constructed emotion and to explore its linkages to specific social ordering of intimate relationships' (Jackson 1999:114-115). In this respect, I will attempt to explore the Korean specificities of sexual scripts based upon romantic love.

Both Yoon-Hee and Min-Hee held positive views about premarital sex based upon love:

If I fall in love with someone, I can make love with him. However, I do not agree with the system of prostitution (Yoon-Hee).

I can divorce because my marriage is not everything in my life. However, I need to make love with only my lover because our sexual relationship is beautiful (Min-Hee).

In particular, Yoon-Hee's view of the prostitution system implies that Korean men often have sex with prostitutes in order to maintain the sexual chastity of their lovers. Therefore, she thought that making love with a lover is reasonable. Chang and Cho also describe the fact that 44.7% of Korean men initially lose their virginity with prostitutes regardless of the existence of a girlfriend (Chang, P. H. and Cho, H. 1991:142). The strict norm of sexual chastity results in this unreasonable and irrational outcome. In this situation the enforcement of sexual chastity perpetuates the dichotomy between 'bad girls' and 'good girls'.

Min-Hee believed love to be superior to marriage within her life and also regarded the sexual relationship within a loving partnership as beautiful. The majority of Korean

women hold similar ideas, often influenced by romantic films and novels in a western style. As stated by Young-Joo and Young-Hee, the change in the sexual script concerning premarital sex is altered by marital status.

Once upon a time, we needed to keep sexual chastity, but now that has changed. If I have a lover, I can have a sexual relationship with my lover. Chastity is not important now (Young-Joo).

Before marriage, I thought that sexual chastity was important, but now I don't think so (Young-Hee).

After marriage Young-Joo and Young-Hee adjusted their views on sexual chastity. The principle motivation for this was that they now identified what specifically constituted sexual intercourse. Before marriage, these women were sexually ignorant and had an obscure and fantastic image of the sexual relationship. However, since becoming familiar with sexual practices during married life, both Young-Joo and Young-Hee now recognise that sexual intercourse is not as serious or important as they previously thought. In other words, their fantasy image of sexual relations has been destroyed, they are now able to confront the real practices of sexuality. Young-Joo and Young-Hee have now developed a belief in the existence of love prior to sexual relationships; they now appreciate what is often defined as the language of love.

Mi-Ja agrees with the idea of making love with her boyfriend, but does worry about premarital conception: 'If I have a lover, I can have a sexual relationship regardless of marriage, but I do not agree with premarital conception' (Mi-Ja). The majority of Korean people condemn women who conceive before marriage and the Korean

government has not yet provided single women with information about contraception nor provided support for single mothers as opposed to reproaching them. Unmarried women are therefore worried about conception and abortion. Lee, a researcher on abortions among unmarried women, points out that most women have had sexual intercourse without contraception despite being aware of the methods available. The lack of precautions taken results from unmarried women's anxieties surrounding their perception as promiscuous if they were to suggest the use of contraception to their partners (Lee, S. K. 1999:214). Both Holland and Lees explain a similar situation present within Britain: young British women make love to their partners without contraception because they fear that any suggestions of preventative methods would result in their boyfriend thinking of them as 'slags' (Lees 1986:30-31; Holland et. al. 1996:242). Although the sexual script of intercourse with a lover may appear relatively more radical and positive than that of maintaining sexual chastity, it is nevertheless governed by the traditional norms.

My analysis now moves on to the accounts of female workers who have adopted this view that recommends premarital sexual relations with a fiancé. The women's acceptance of these more intimate relationships within an engagement is deeply connected to the fact that sexual intercourse within the marriage system is normative and admitted. In this respect, the majority of my interviewees agreed with this sexual attitude.

If I have a sexual relationship with my fiance before marriage, it will be ok. However, if the engagement is broken, it will be problematic to get married to another, but now I think that it doesn't matter. I do not think that for a future husband, women need to keep their chastity. If my lover and I want to

make love, we can have a sexual relationship before marriage (Sun-Young).

Before marriage, if I had not made love with my husband maybe I would not have married him. However, I got married to my husband because he was my first sexual partner and we have had a relationship as a couple for nine years. Frankly speaking, I tried to separate from my husband before marriage, but I couldn't because I had already had a sexual relationship with him. Also I feel responsible for our relationship (Kyung-Mi).

Even though Sun-Young agrees with the notion of making love to one's fiancé, she is fearful of a broken engagement. Her statement reflects the changing views concerning premarital sexual relationships that are often reached after marriage. Sun-Young may appear to have been released from sexual chastity, as a married woman she is still governed by the notion of sexual fidelity within the marriage system. The change in attitude towards premarital sexual relations appears to be neither positive nor radical as the norm of sexual chastity is not only interrelated with that of sexual fidelity but could also be conceptualised as the beginning of a continuum of sexual governance that incorporates female sexual fidelity. Kyung-Mi, another married woman, said that although she found several shortcomings in her husband she decided to get married to him since they had already experienced a sexual relationship. These situations demonstrate that the sexual script of making love with a fiancé is therefore only superficially different from that of sexual chastity and both are structurally associated with each other.

Boo-Young wants to make love to her future fiancé in order to establish whether he is sexually normal or not.

After having confirmed the date of marriage I can make love to my fiancé, because I want to know whether my fiancé is sexually normal or not. If he is abnormal, I will cancel the marriage. However, when I was young, I needed to keep my sexual chastity because if I do not keep my chastity, I cannot be a good wife to my future husband (Boo-Young).

Boo-Young's statement reflects concerns raised by some change reported in Korean newspapers or broadcasts about women suffering at the hands of sexually abnormal people. Her choice to make love with a fiancé implies that she needs to carefully consider the condition of her potential husband as she regards marriage to be a significant project within her whole life. Boo-Young's attitude towards having sexual relations with her fiancé could be understood as a defensive tool that could protect her from an unsuccessful marriage. Boo-Young believes that she is sexually mature enough to be free from the norm of sexual chastity and therefore has a less traditional view of sexuality despite still being single. This way of thinking in relation to sexual chastity suggests that a change in attitude, away from a belief in the importance of women remaining chaste, could be connected to a change in age: a developing maturity.

Soon-Ju, who personally prefers celibacy, also agrees with the less conservative sexual script that justifies sexual relations within engagement: 'Maybe I will not get married to anyone. If I get engaged to a person I can make love with him before marriage, but I think without sexual intercourse we can enjoy sexuality in other ways, and then why would we need to have sexual intercourse?' (Soon-Ju) This view that women can satisfy their sexual desire without the need for sexual intercourse is relatively radical and might therefore be defined as a form of alternative agency to the dominant type of female

sexual desire. Nevertheless, Soon-Ju still believes that she would only be able to have a sexual relationship with her fiancé. She exemplifies the fact that despite constructing this radical agency in relation to sexual desire, a Korean woman is still oriented by the norm of sexual chastity.

The more liberal sexual script, which does not condemn sexual relations between future married couples, has now replaced the more traditional dominant view within Korea that promotes the maintenance of female sexual chastity. The preservation of virginity is now regarded as old-fashioned, yet sexual intercourse with a lover is both problematic and dangerous in relation to issues of contraception and abortion. Although not advocated from a feminist perspective, because of its basis in the norm of sexual chastity and its placement on a continuum of resolutions upon female sexuality, the less traditional sexual script is now regarded as acceptable and realistic within a Korean context. It is clear that the women who agree with the notion of premarital sexual relations cannot escape from the ideology of female chastity and the marriage system as a form of institutionalised heterosexuality.

As a result of the both positive and negative views surrounding premarital sexual relations, a number of my interviewees were positioned within a situation of conflict with regard to this subject and felt they were unable to confirm whether sexual intercourse before marriage was morally right or wrong. Some of the women interviewed had contradictory and ambivalent thoughts surrounding the issue.

I am considering a sexual relationship before marriage since I have got a fiancé. However, I have not made love with him. Sometimes, I want to make love with him but I am able to be patient where my sexual needs are

concerned, I have seen people make love and have a pregnancy or abortion before marriage. Nevertheless, their relationships are often broken and then they are unable to get married to another person without any trouble. But I still follow the model admitting sexual relations within the marriage system (Ji-Hae).

Ji-Hae stated, regardless of her sexual desire, that the main reason why she is anxious about premarital sexual relations with her fiancé is because of the possible negative outcomes, such as abortion and broken relations. Her fears are affected by both the absence of practical sex education and the conservative, Korean sexual culture's suppression of female sexual desire. Both Ju-Mi and Kyung-Ae revealed how the double standard between male and female sexuality acts as an obstacle when choosing their own sexual attitudes.

I answer that usually a premarital sexual relationship is possible between lovers; however, when I ask myself I cannot answer precisely. I actually don't know whether the premarital sexual relationship is right or wrong. However, I cannot be responsible for the outcome (conception) after premarital sex. For example, I am worried about what people, friends and family might think about my sexual relations before marriage (Ju-Mi).

I am really conservative about sexuality and I have a double standard. For example, I have a positive view about the sexual relationships of other people before marriage, but I cannot have a sexual relationship before marriage (Kyung-Ae).

Ju-Mi was faced with a fundamental dilemma concerning premarital sexual relationships. Whereas she had an optimistic view of this less conservative sexual attitude, she felt she could not allow herself to forfeit her sexual chastity before marriage due to her concerns about other people's views based upon the double standard. Kyung-Ae also stated that whilst she accepts premarital sexual relationships among other people, she would not be happy to have a sexual relationship with anyone before marriage. Both interviewees were worried about premarital sexual relationships because of the double standard prevalent within Korean society that condemns unmarried women with sexual experiences, such as sexual intercourse or sexual violence, whilst condoning the sexual experiences of unmarried men. These conflicts surrounding premarital sexual relations could provide a means by which women can refuse sexual chastity and also propose a change to the sexual script. Min-Ae and Eun-Soon explained this changing process.

In the past, I thought that I should keep premarital sexual chastity, but through the mass media, such as TV drama and film, I came to recognize that premarital chastity is not important (Min-Ae).

In the past, premarital sexual chastity was very important. If a woman had a sexual relationship with a man before marriage, she tried to hide her experience. When Korean parents knew the fact that their daughter had had sexual relations with a man the parents forced their daughter to marry the man. However, recently it has been changing, if both want to make love they can make love. After all, the sexual experience is not shameful; regardless of marriage, adult persons can have a sexual relationship, it depends on their opinion and decision (Eun-Soon).

Min-Ae's change in attitude is affected by the sexual information supplied through the mass media. The proposals of various sexual attitudes provide Korean women with alternative notions of premarital sexual relations that present it as acceptable behaviour. Eun-Soon identified the fact that in the past family members raised their daughters to keep their sexual chastity, whereas nowadays this approach lacks practical applicability. Eun-Soon considers young people's challenge to sexual chastity as a positive change. Under the influence of western sexual culture, young Korean people have begun to challenge sexual conservatism, which represents both the double standard and the dual norm. Rejecting the norm of sexual chastity, they frequently have sexual relations with their partners. However, this phenomenon has often been criticized on the grounds that the behaviour of these young people is liberal and deviant and their attitudes sometimes entail social problems, such as an increase in single mothers and girl prostitutes. In this sense, the changes to the conservative dominant sexual script contain both negative and positive elements and also have an impact upon reconstructing the individual sexual self.

Both Eun-Soon and Ha-Jin argue that premarital chastity is only limited to women.

I cannot understand why a woman needs to keep premarital chastity and why a man does not need to keep premarital chastity and therefore I think of premarital chastity as meaningless (Eun-Soon).

Premarital chastity is not important because the idea is old-fashioned. I want to reject the idea that solely women need to keep sexual chastity and so I have so many complaints about it. Chastity is not a duty for only women but might be a standard for self-control (Ha-Jin).

The two interviewees above complained of the fact that premarital chastity is regarded as only a woman's duty and is therefore unfair and determined as a form of sex-discrimination. Resistance to the norm of sexual chastity results in not only relieving sexual oppression but also empowering female sexuality. For example, in the past, victims of sexual violence could not officially speak out about their experiences because they were worried about being stigmatised. However, changes to the Korean notion of sexual chastity have been related to a decline in the stigmatisation of the victims of sexual violence and a rise in the numbers of women who feel able officially to announce their experiences and legally report them. Therefore, 'to be free from sexual chastity' is a starting point to revealing the voice of female sexuality and to its further empowerment within a Korean context.

In conclusion, having examined female workers' view surrounding premarital sexual relations I have found that they are located in a position of conflict between the double standard of the dominant conservative discourse and the expression of their feelings in the new and challenging script. Nevertheless, the dominant script of premarital sex is determined as maintaining female sexual chastity as the majority of my interviewees accepted this script and those interviewees who chose different scripts (making love with a lover or fiancé) were also closely governed by this norm. In other words, the sexual scripts that condone premarital sexual relations are deeply associated with the norm of sexual chastity and both the liberal and more traditional scripts are contained within a continuum of sexual chastity, with the former being no more than superficially different from the norm. Some interviewees began to identify sexual chastity as a form of sex-discrimination and as a tool of oppression that served to suppress female sexual desire. As a result, the Korean female workers that I interviewed attempted to seek

approaches to their sexual agencies instead of following the norm of sexual chastity and thus the sexual script concerning premarital sexual relations remains in process.

2. Sexuality Within Marriage

Within research on the specificities of Korean heterosexuality, marriage as a representative form of heterosexual institutions is one of the most important issues. VanEvery argues that 'the hegemonic form of heterosexuality is marriage' (VanEvery 1996:40) and Jackson also notes that 'the ideology of heterosexual romance tells us that falling in love is the prelude to a lasting, secure and stable conjugal union' (Jackson 1993:42). For Lees, 'girls in North London see no alternative to marriage, despite recognizing the inequality and subordination they can expect from it' (Lees 1993:106). The three quotations above imply that the majority of feminists criticize marriage as one of the most hegemonic forms of heterosexuality and one that has subordinated women throughout history. The institution of marriage acts in a similar way within Korea for as I have repeatedly mentioned, these are the only sexual relations that are officially allowed.

Chang, a Korean feminist scholar, points out that sexual relations in marriage are regarded as normal and legal. However, it is only the wife that need follow the norm and therefore, the exclusive sexual relationship within marriage is maintained by the double standard and it is oppressive to women (Chang 1997:2-3). For example, even though married men have affairs with lovers or pay for sex with prostitution, most married women are unable to divorce their husbands because they are subordinated to them financially and emotionally and do not want to face the stigma of being a divorced

woman. In other words, Korean married men are allowed to have extramarital sexual relationships in the informal sector and married women should accept the sexual needs of their husbands regardless of their own sexual pleasure and desire. Korean wives are anxious that if they reject their husband's 'needs', he will have an affair, and, moreover rejecting the husband's needs might be understood as giving permission for him to have an extramarital sexual relationship. The understanding upon which this fear is based is that of the male and genital-centred idea that men cannot rationally control their sexual desires. Korean women's magazines have therefore dealt with sexual problems among married couples since the 1990s. The content of such magazines consists of warnings about husbands' extramarital affairs and advises wives on how to keep their husband (Jung, E. H. 1992:341). Jung defines sexuality within Korean marriage as male-dominated and reproduction-centred and hence the sexual pleasures of married women lack consideration. I will explore the features of sexuality within marriage based upon female workers' accounts and experiences and I aim to show the way in which female sexuality within marriage is socially constructed as a hegemonic form of heterosexuality.

It is a generally held belief that the sexual relationship within married life is important to the maintenance of a successful marriage and therefore I will initially investigate the meaning of sexual pleasure within this institution of heterosexuality. Ordinarily, it is thought that if married couples are satisfied with their sexual relationship, every aspect of married life will be fine. This belief implies that the sexual relationship is one of the most important factors in sustaining a good marriage. However, I am suspicious of whether this is true within the practicality of married life. As I already mentioned in the above section, the majority of Korean women are sexually ignorant before marriage.

Young-Hee reflects:

We did not talk about the problems of our sexual relationship, since our marriage. It was difficult to make love with my husband because I had no knowledge of sexual intercourse. My husband said to me, could I borrow pornography? However, recently, my husband told me, you are getting better (Young-Hee).

Young-Hee has been sexually educated by her husband since they were married, hence her sexual knowledge is most likely entirely male-centred and her behaviour reflects sexual obedience and passivity. This situation has resulted in Young-Hee still lacking an understanding of her own sexual pleasure and orgasm.

I do not feel sexual desire. When my husband wants to make love, I accept his need. I have not felt sexual orgasm yet. But, people say when a woman reaches 40 years old, she can feel sexual desire, so I think that when I am older I will experience sexual orgasm (Young Hee).

Young-Hee expects to experience sexual pleasure as she gets older but, for the present, she will adhere to the sexual needs of her husband and, like most Korean women, will not seriously consider her own sexual desires. Duncombe and Marsden criticize heterosexual intercourse as perpetuating gendered orgasm. They suggest that in their various positions of power, including physical and economic power, men are superior to women who are ineffectually socially located within heterosexual intercourse. Female sexuality is therefore constructed as subordinate to male sexuality and women's sexual pleasure is overlooked (Duncombe and Marsden 1996:222).

Sun-Young also stated that sexual intercourse within marriage was necessary in order to

maintain an intimate relationship and she failed to equate it with her own sexual pleasure.

I think that the sexual relationship within the marriage system is an important thing, because the relationship between wife and husband can be closer through the sexual relationship. It is not related to my sexual pleasure and desire. Up until now I have not felt sexual orgasm, but I think that the married couple need to make love regularly (Sun-Young).

Even though she has not yet experienced a sexual orgasm, Sun-Young feels she needs to regularly make love to her husband, thus implying that within Korea a married woman's sexuality has not been subject to sexual pleasure and desire. Chang argues that female sexuality within marriage is characterized as passive, altruistic and sometimes enforced (Chang, P. H.1999:298). In other words, Korean married women tend to accept and obey all the sexual requirements of their husband regardless of their own pleasures and autonomous opinions. It is difficult for women to reach sexual orgasm within marital sexual intercourse as, according to Duncombe and Marsden, heterosexual intercourse has been equated with the gendered orgasm.

Female sexual desire and pleasure is principally disregarded as a result of the double standard prevalent within Korean culture that dictates that 'good' women should lack sexual knowledge and be ignorant of sexual pleasure. In reality, most women accept the sexual requirement of their husbands regardless of their own needs because they fear that to refuse their husbands' sexual need would result in him seeking extramarital sexual relations. It is therefore understandable that a prominent issue within the sexuality of married couples, is the extramarital sexual relationship.

Most married women are anxious about the extramarital sexual relations of their husbands as the majority of married men have enjoyed casual sex with prostitutes or through illicit affairs. In a survey carried out on the sexual culture of Korean men, 63.6 percent of married men were reported as having experienced an affair (Chang, P. H. and Cho, H. 1991:80). The official discourse, however, suggests that both wives and husbands should maintain their sexual fidelity within marriage, but in reality the norm is limited to apply to the women only. Lim highlights how Korean married men sexually exploit their wives, reporting that the majority of them refuse to use any methods of contraception during sexual intercourse with their wives as they regard them as their sexual property. If a married woman suggests her husband use a condom, this would be considered not only a refusal of the man's sexual requirements, but also as a signal that would allow him to pursue extramarital sexual intercourse. Hence, married women accept sexual intercourse without contraception and in consequence, there is a high percentage of abortions in married women (Lim 1991:164).

Sexual relations within married couples are defined as unequal, hierarchical and male-centred. Young-Joo and Young-Hee insist that they will not forgive their husbands if they were to have extramarital sexual relationships.

Within married life sexual fidelity is important. If my husband has a sexual relationship with another woman I will divorce him. If my husband continued the relationship, I could not forgive my husband (Young-Joo).

I cannot accept the extramarital sexual relationship. If my husband has a relationship with another woman I will divorce him. I think the married men

who have relationship with teenage girl prostitutes are lunatics. Anyway, I could not forgive it (Young-Hee).

These women realized that married men have easy access to prostitutes because of sexual commercialisation, but, nevertheless, will not accept their husbands' infidelity. It is not clear whether Young-Hee and Young-Joo would be able to afford to stick to their principles as the majority of married women are financially subordinate to their husbands and also they are unable to provide for their children without financial aid from the father. Korean women are often anxious about the stigma attached to a divorced woman (Kim, H. R. 1995). Unequal economic and social positions between husbands and wives are closely linked to the fact that married women accept unequal and oppressive sexual relationships within their marriage. In this respect, wives' passive responses to male extramarital sexual relations demonstrate how Korean heterosexuality is unjust, violent and insulting to women.

For a number of Korean women, their intention is to regard the sexual relationship within married life as trivial. After marriage, women recognise that female sexuality does not represent sexual pleasure or beautiful fantasy but is considered a duty that helps maintain a stable and happy married life. There are times when these women have to ignore or endure their husbands' cheating. In other words, the fantasy of romantic and beautiful love and sex does not exist within marriage and, merely acts as a superficial front to the marriage system. Both Min-Ae and Eun-Soon believe that a sexual relationship is a necessary but unimportant part of their married life.

I thought that sexuality was so important before marriage, but now I do not think so. After I experienced a sexual relationship, it just became a part of

life (Min-Ae).

After marriage, I am able to handle my sexual life. Although my lover wants to make love with me, if I do not want to I can reject his requirement. One day, I participated in a lecture about sex education and reproduction at Ewha Woman's University. Through the educational programme I came to make up my mind about sexuality and I am satisfied with the education (Eun-Soon).

Eun-Soon learnt about sexuality and reproduction through public education. She is aware that it is her responsibility to confidently manage her sexual life within marriage and this reflection upon her sexual education implies that she understood the reality of a sexual life as separate from sexual fantasy. It is evident that the statement, 'sexuality is not important within marriage' contains both positive and negative implications. As women acknowledge the practical and specific constitution of the sexual relationship, they no longer mystify or fantasise about sexuality. However, through their attempts to break sexual fantasy based on romantic love and disregard their husbands' infidelities, Korean women draw attention to the fact that the mainspring of marriage within their society is not maintained by romantic love but is created to foster an economic community. Whereas Korean wives need to do domestic work and take care of children, Korean husbands must earn money for routine living costs. In this context, the sexual relationship between married couples becomes meaningless and trivial.

As I mentioned previously, female sexuality within Korean marriage is clearly defined as male-centred, oppressive and asexual. In reality, whilst married women are expected to maintain their sexual fidelity, their husbands' adulterous affairs are allowed to be

socially sanctioned, despite the fact that adultery is in fact illegal within Korea. It is thus evident that the Korean marriage system is representative of a hierarchical and patriarchal form of heterosexuality. Indeed, most wives do not wish to divorce solely on the grounds of their husbands' infidelity due to fears of stigmatisation – as a divorced woman – and as a result of their financial and emotional subordination to their husbands. The oppression and inequality of female sexuality within Korean marriages is closely interrelated with the socially and economically lower position that women hold within present day Korea.

In conclusion, Korean heterosexuality is characterized by historical and cultural changes and fixed within a contested contradiction between Confucianism as a conservative discourse and westernisation as a radical discourse. Korean heterosexuality is both perpetuated by traditional history and belief and modified by cultural change. In reality, whereas the majority of Korean women have contested and challenged sexual chastity as a heterosexual ideology and positioned themselves within alternative scripts, they remain dominated by the norm of sexual chastity. In a similar way, despite considering sex within marriage as oppressive and male-centred and then questioning what sexual pleasure could mean, Korean women still obey an unequal dual norm and double standard exemplified by their required sexual fidelity regardless of their husbands' cheating. The coexistence of, and conflicts between, these continuities and changes, optimistically appears to result in a challenging of old-fashioned heterosexuality and the construction of a new paradigm of heterosexuality. For example, according to The Bureau of Statistics within the Korean government, in 2001 the number of married couples decreased as the divorce rate began to rise. The analysis of these figures suggests that the main reason for these statistics was a change in public values and that they also resulted from economic factors (Daily newspaper of Chosun, 23rd May 2001).

It seems that Korean women have begun to recognize the irrationality and inequality of the marriage system. However, it is important to note that this rise in consciousness is only the first step as the old paradigm of heterosexuality remains widely upheld within Korean society. Nevertheless, this change will constitute a form of agency and a base for the empowerment of female sexuality and therefore my discussion must now turn to the recent changes that have taken place within Korean sexual culture.

III. Changes in Korean sexual culture

Being so closely associated with the construction of heterosexuality, the changes within Korean sexual culture have begun to stimulate changed perceptions of sexuality. Through an examination of these cultural changes, I will be able to identify the characteristics and roots of recent developments within Korean sexual culture. Despite the difficulty of defining 'sexual culture' in one sentence, within this research I will briefly construct a definition that reflects its nature as a way of sexual life. In this respect, I initially focus upon the influence of western sexual culture as a catalyst for change and base my analysis upon my interviewees' accounts. I will turn to a discussion of the general changes taking place within Korean sexual culture and finally point out the peculiar features of this culture through an examination of the case of Miss O's video. I hope to identify how the changes to Korean sexual culture are positively influential in reforming sexual harassment.

1. The relationship between Korean sexual culture and western sexual culture

Korean sexual culture is not only perpetuated by Confucian ideas but also changed by

the new and alternative challenges based on westernised discourses derived from western sexual culture.¹⁵ Since the second world war, the introduction of westernised films and novels with sexual codes based upon romantic love stories have succeeded in making a cultural impact as there had been no public sexual discourse within Korea. Therefore, the initial signs of change within Korean sexual culture were reliant upon developments of western culture. Despite this interrelationship between two cultures, the features of Korean sexual culture do not entirely mimic the western model as they also integrate traditional Korean ideas. Even though both Korean and western sexual cultures are largely defined as heterosexual, adult and male-centred, the specific aspects and content of each culture are constituted in different ways based upon their social and historical differences. Whereas western sexual culture holds Christianity as its religious base, Korean sexual culture, as I suggested above, is rooted in Confucianism. There are, however, similarities and differences between these two religious foundations. For example, both religions identify sexual relationships as reproductive tools and the enjoyment of sexual pleasure is disregarded and prohibited.

The traditions of Christianity have been associated with rationalist philosophy and the capitalist economy within western culture (Hawkes 1996:29). Since the introduction of capitalism, Christianity has exerted a slightly decreasing influence upon western people's lifestyles. For example, Westerners no longer attend church on Sundays, once considered the Sabbath, preferring to set aside the day for a visit to the shopping mall; their lifestyles are affected by consumption and commercial capitalism rather than Christianity. Jackson and Scott suggest that since the nineteenth century, rationality has been the central belief of the West and has been characterised as a dichotomy between

¹⁵ The term, 'western culture' refers mainly to North America and Western Europe.

'nature and culture, mind and body, reason and unreason, thought and emotion, order and chaos – all of which, are implicated in the opposition between male and female' (Jackson and Scott 1997:553). Masculinity is rational but femininity is irrational. In this respect, Jackson and Scott argue that the emotional meanings of sex have become a locus of resistance to rationalisation, a desire to hang on to the 'specialness' of sexuality. The construction of sexuality has developed a relation to capitalism and rationalism and Christianity has gradually become irrelevant within the construction of a sexual discourse (Jackson and Scott 1997:567).

Unlike the West, Confucianism within Korea has not only a religious influence, but also an economic and philosophical influence upon culture. For example, Confucianism is deeply related to the formation of Korean industrialisation and capitalism due to its lasting position as a basic ideal that has been preserved by Koreans from the beginning of the fifteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the process of Korean industrialisation was greatly associated with the spirit of Confucianism and therefore the nature of Korean society is defined as bureaucratic and hierarchical. As a result, Korean sexual culture based on socio-cultural changes might be more conservative and blinkered than western sexual culture. Nevertheless, due to the development of global networks and also the absence of their own public sexual discourse, the Korean people have become familiar with westernised sexual attitudes and culture. Hence, Korean people maintain ambivalent attitudes between the western culture as liberal and the traditional culture as conservative. I will examine this ambivalence through the accounts of my interviewees.

Some of my interviewees held a positive view towards western culture where sexual

liberation¹⁶ was concerned. The majority of Korean people believe sexual liberation and radical sexual behaviour to be imported from the West. Within Korea, western sexual culture is characterized by the autonomous choice of premarital sexual relationships without sexual chastity and also the representation of radical sexual identities such as homosexuality. In reality, however, western women still suffer from a double standard that promotes male-centred sexual intercourse and the stigma of premarital pregnancy; also, homosexuals are defined as an abnormal and minority group within Britain (Wellings et al. 1994:84). Despite these discrepancies between the Korean characterisation and the reality, Korean people think of western sexual culture as radical and liberal in comparison to their own sexual culture. Sun-Young and Ji-Hae understood that changes within Korean sexual culture were not only influenced by western culture per se but also revealed the personal desires of the Korean people.

The change in sexual culture is related to westernisation, but I think that humanity is similar so the increase in the representation of sexuality is natural and so is Korean people's desire (Sun-Young).

I don't think the recent change in sexual culture is related only to the western sexual culture. It is a kind of expression and disclosure of the sexual desire of Korean people. Originally we had sexual desires and thoughts about sexuality, but it was hidden (Ji-Hae).

Sun-Young indicates that Korean people want to express their own sexual desire

¹⁶ Many feminists have criticized the concept of 'sexual liberation', because it meant access for men to women's bodies and the removal of their right to say 'No' to sex (Jackson & Scott 1996:4). However, sexual liberation has a positive and radical meaning within South Korea and refers to both physical and psychological sexual freedom.

autonomously, defining it as natural. Similarly, Ji-Hae suggested that people within Korea hesitate to reveal their own desires because of social pressure, whereby the disclosure of sexual desire is both irrational and wrong. However, the occurrence of Korean people's sexual needs leads to a gradual challenge against these social pressures. In this respect, Jeong-Mi held more liberal views concerning sexual desire: 'My specific experience is closed minded to sexuality, but I think that we are becoming open minded about sexuality because of the influences of western culture so the content of sexuality needs to be changed'. Jeong-Mi thought that people came to be sexually open-minded through the introduction of western sexual culture into Korea and hence the oppressive morality surrounding sexuality is in need of change. These positive views of western culture result from its association with resistance to conservative and oppressive sexual morality. The suppressed sexual desire of Korean people results in a yearning for a more westernised sexual attitude, which could be thought of as an essential need that works against the conservative discourse.

There were also a number of my interviewees who held negative views of western sexual culture. Ju-Mi referred to the conflict between daily sexual behaviour and conservative thoughts.

Sexual behaviours have been changed by the western style, but the consciousness is still conservative. I think that there is a gap between the behaviours and consciousness of sexuality. For example, people still avoid speaking about their experiences of sexuality publicly, but people enjoy watching pornography and the experiences of other people privately.

According to Ju-Mi, although Korean people have begun to radically change their

sexual behaviours, they still hold conservative views of sexuality. Wavering between their physical desires and their rational thoughts, the Korean people tend to hide their real considerations of sexual behaviour and therefore Ju-Mi defines the confusion around sexual attitudes as negative.

In relation to this phenomenon of conflict, Min-Ae complained that the authenticity of Korean sexual culture was disappearing: 'Our sexual culture is influenced by western culture. I think that it is negative, because even though we have our original culture, we just follow the western culture in terms of sexuality'. Min-Ae was critical of the fact that the Korean people unconditionally follow a westernised sexual attitude that might result in a neglect of their own culture's values. In a similar way, Boo-Young thinks of western sexual culture as alien: 'Well, our sexual culture has mainly received the negative western culture. We also think of sexuality as immoral and trivial. We are receiving sexual ideas that we cannot understand or absorb such as homosexuality'. In particular, Boo-Young regarded homosexuality as one of the most problematic products of the western culture since within Korea it is characterised as wrong, unnatural and abnormal. Kim, a Korean feminist, notes that even though Korean sexual discourses and culture have changed, people have not yet questioned their homophobia and even Korean feminists have still excluded homosexuality from their research. The interconnection between feminism, sexual politics and identity has not yet been discussed within Korea, and homosexuality is defined as 'western' and 'marginal' (Kim, J. H. 1998:5).

This negative view of western sexual culture is also perpetuated by the notion that the acceptance of western commercial sexual materials results in providing children and adolescents with unsuitable sexual knowledge. Eun-Soon stated:

I think that especially the western and Japanese cultures give children and teenagers negative influences through cartoon and videotapes etc. Korean children are not systemically educated about sexuality, so their view of sexuality is not regulated. Therefore, the unconditional acceptance of western sexual culture is dangerous to children and teenagers (Eun-Soon).

From westernised pornographic films and magazines teenagers gain misleading information about sexual relationships. Yoon identifies pornographic films as the source of oppression for female sexuality and encouraging the continuation of male violence. She argues that teenage boys who gain sexual knowledge from pornographic materials can be potential sexual harassers and assailants (Yoon 1999:117). Such ideas reinforce negative views about western sexual culture. However, the teenage boys not only gain this misogynistic and oppressive sexual knowledge from imported western sexual culture, but also from the absence of any useful sex education within Korea.

Both changes in Korean sexual culture and the construction of Korean sexual attitudes are linked to the import of western sexual culture. As I previously mentioned, there had not existed public discourse upon sexuality within Korea and it has therefore proved difficult to discover the people's own sexual attitudes and beliefs. As a result, Korean people are wavering between an acknowledgement of the radical sexual suggestions based upon western culture, and the maintenance of a conservative morality perpetuated by Confucian ideals. In reality, Korean sexual attitudes are comprehensively dependent upon a westernised sexual culture, nevertheless, some feminist scholars and radical sociologists have recently approached sexuality as an academic subject and are attempting to identify the specificities of Korean sexual culture. It is clear that the

imported western sexual culture stimulates change within Korea, providing both positive and negative outcomes.

2. Opinions on changing sexual culture

The majority of Korean people are aware of their changing sexual culture and I therefore questioned my interviewees on their opinions of both this general change and 'Miss O's video'. I will firstly examine the general cultural changes that have taken place, such as sexual commercialisation, sexual liberation and the definition of sexuality (based upon my interviewees' accounts). Secondly, I will explore the controversies surrounding 'the affair of Miss O's video', highlighting the peculiarities of Korean sexual culture. Miss O, a famous actress within Korea, made a private film before she became famous in which she had sexual intercourse with her boyfriend. Many Korean people enjoyed watching this amateur film and labelled Miss O as a 'bad girl' and subsequently, Miss O has removed herself from society. Through an examination of Miss O's case, I aim to identify the peculiar features of the present Korean sexual culture.

General changes in sexual culture

The general characteristics of Korean sexual culture are attributed to sexual commercialisation, sexual liberalism and the confused definition of sexuality. When my interviewees discussed sexual culture, most mentioned these subjects as important issues. These women referred to the issue of sexual commercialisation as bringing about the greatest changes within sexual culture and due to its frequent discussion within the media, it has come to be recognized as a social problem. Some western feminists have

discussed this commercialisation of sexuality. Jackson and Scott point out that sexual commercialisation is related to the hierarchical relationship between men and women and the exploitation of capitalism, in this way women are subordinated and exploited by the system (Jackson and Scott 1996:20-24).

Korean feminist researchers have also examined sexual commercialisation as an academic subject. Won links 'selling sex' to the satisfaction of biological sexual needs between individuals as well as to the mechanism of the sex industry in Korea today (Won 1999:199). It could be argued that Won's idea is contradictory as she constructs sexual desire as both biological and social. In other words, she tends to misunderstand sexuality as not only a process of socialization but also as biological. Won fails to recognize that sexuality is socially constructed. Since Korean prostitutes must sell their whole bodies and not purely their genitals, regardless of their own choice, Won suggests that these women cannot be defined as workers because their labour must, by definition, be defined as 'slave labour'. Korean prostitutes therefore lose control of their bodies. In this context, 'selling sex' is defined as not merely deviant behaviour but also as social behaviour that marginalizes women both socially and economically and perpetuates patriarchal beliefs and values. The practice of selling sex is thus related to the definition of all women as sexual objects (Won 1999:200).

In addition, Lee points out that the number of teenage sex workers has increased recently, causing a sort of culture shock. In Korean sexual culture, teenage girls and boys are permitted to display sexual curiosity but should not engage in sexual behaviour until they become adults (Lee, H. H. 1998:2-4). The notion of teenage girls selling sex therefore becomes a social issue as well as a cultural shock. Indeed, Lee argues that the growth in teenage prostitution is related to the financial requirements of sexual

commercialisation (customers prefer to pay for sexual relations with young girls) and not only to the imported western culture (Lee, H. H.1998:20). Within a Korean context, the system of prostitution is regarded as a representative form of sexual commercialisation. According to Young-Joo, the age of prostitutes is getting younger: "I think it is a serious situation, for example, when I go to the Room Salon and Karaoke bar, I can meet serving girls. Most of them are teenage girls. They also sell sex. I hate the situation". For Lee, the main reason why teenage girls become prostitutes is their roles as avid consumers. For example, teenage girls want to buy designer clothes and shoes and in order to do so they make money by selling sexual services. However, a more crucial explanation for this rise in teenage position is that the owners of entertainment places want to hire young girls because male customers demand their sexual services (Lee, H. H. 1998:29-30). Korean men consider the buying of sex as both the satisfaction of their sexual desires and as an ostentatious display of their power. In other words, buying a young woman reinforces their economic and social power (Won 1999:190). In relation to sexual commercialisation among young girls, McRobbie argues that British girls also tend to sell sex to earn pocket money (McRobbie 1978:37).

As stated by Young-Hee, practical education for Korean teenagers is urgently needed.

I heard Koo Sung-Ae¹⁷ on the TV. After she finished her lecture, she asked a male student "What do you think about this lecture?" He said, "I thought that a woman was a kind of sexual tool or object before I listened to this lecture, but I was wrong. Now, I recognize that sexual intercourse is an act between lovers". When I heard Koo's talk, I was so shocked. How can a teenage boy think like this?' (Young-Hee)

¹⁷ She is a counsellor on sex education for teenagers.

The young man's definition of a woman as a sexual tool is seemingly related to the fact that a large proportion of teenage boys watch pornographic films. Korean feminists, Kwon and Yoon, have analysed the relationship between sexual violence and pornography. The absence of sex education for adolescents results in young adults seeking sexual knowledge from pornographic films and magazines. Therefore, these pornographic materials that present women's bodies as sexual objects and reinforce a view of sexual relationships as involving sexual coercion and violence are influential in the constitution of the sexual attitudes of Korean teenage boys (Kwon 1999: 329; Yoon 1999:139). Young-Hee, an experienced teacher in a middle school, also proposed a need for practical methods of sex education for young adults.

The change is so negative, but we try to prevent the negative aspects. I think that we cannot prevent the change, so we need to talk about sexuality officially, such as knowledge of contraception and sexual intercourse, because we cannot prevent teenagers from having sexual relationships (Young-Hee).

Young-Hee emphasised that sex education was necessary in order for teenagers to be guided into better and safer sexual relations, involving methods of contraception and mutual consent and respect between both parties.

Similarly, Yeon-Joo indicated that young people were accessing inadequate sexual information within adult magazines: 'Especially in magazines, speaking about sexuality is not so good. It is not helpful to sex education'. The sexual knowledge that is provided within 'adult' magazines, such as Playboy and Penthouse, is too commercially oriented

and male-centred. Young people cannot be protected from these commercial materials because they are defined as representative forms of male sexuality. Although it is only male adults that are officially allowed to access pornographic materials, most young Koreans can easily access these materials from their peers and on the internet. Butterworth points out that 'the widespread availability of pornography within modern societies results from the development of mass media and communications technologies. It is no longer the property of the privileged, literate few' (Butterworth 1993: 22). It is therefore difficult at present to protect young people from pornographic materials.

The majority of my interviewees defined sexual commercialisation as the worst impact within Korean culture. In particular, these female workers were concerned that young people were addictively watching commercial sexual materials. Without any suggestions of practical alternatives for the sex education of young adults we cannot prevent them from seeking their own sexual information from these commercial materials. In this respect, sex education which provides young people with methods to negotiate safer and better sex is urgently needed.

Sexual liberation, as a change within sexual culture, remains a controversial issue within both Korea and western countries. The majority of feminists argue that sexual liberation is a male privilege only and characterise it as male centred and heterosexual. Jackson and Scott have studied sexual liberation in the 1960's among the Left: 'These ideas potentially put men and women on an equal footing, challenging the old double standard and presenting sex as something to be enjoyed for its own sake. In practice, however, they had different consequences for women and men' (Jackson and Scott 1996: 4). They criticize sexual liberation as being a male dominated and female subordinated idea in practice, regardless of its basic concept of freedom. Similarly, in

Korea, since the 1990s 'sexual liberation' has been proposed as a resistant discourse. Some male scholars have argued that sexual liberation promotes human liberation and also women's liberation. Ma argues that sexual rights are forms of human rights and therefore the enjoyment of sexual pleasure is necessarily related to the right to freedom (Ma 1997:20). Kim, another male writer, suggests that in order to resist sexual chastity and to express their own sexual desire, Korean women must take on the role of prostitute. He also asserts that if most women become prostitutes, patriarchy would be destroyed and women will be liberated from every aspect of oppression (Kim, W. S. 1996:11). I would argue that the ideas of male scholars continue to be male-oriented and heterosexually biased since they concentrate upon sexual liberation within heterosexual relationships and overlook the different power relationships between men and women surrounding sexual liberation. In particular, Kim's claim that women need to be prostitutes in order to achieve their own sexual liberation is not only unreasonable and unrealistic, but also male-centred as he disregards how these women are presently located within powerless and oppressive positions.

A Korean feminist scholar, Cho, suggests that discourses of sexual liberation do not deal with sexuality's relationship to gender politics and thus are unhelpful in resolving the double standard. For example, after the introduction of sexual liberation, Korean women attempted to provide men with active sexual services. Magazines for married women gave advice on how a wife could enhance their husband's sexual pleasure and Korean women were required to be feminine ladies in the daytime but sexy girls in bed. In this context, sexual pleasure did not feature within female lives but was the sole prerogative of men (Cho, Y. M 1999:31-32). Jackson and Scott highlighted the way in which sexual liberation results in a different form of sexual oppression in Britain: 'Many women felt that "sexual liberation" meant greater access for men to women's

bodies and the removal of their right to say “no” to sex’ (Jackson and Scott 1996:4). In both Korea and Britain, sexual liberation led to the removal of women’s sexual rights and enforced differing forms of sexual duties upon them, such as being ‘sexy girls’ in the bedroom.

The idea of sexual liberation has nevertheless had a positive impact within Korea, encouraging an open-minded approach to sexuality. Women have welcomed this atmosphere of sexual liberation as it results in their relative freedom from sexual chastity and the pressure to hide their own sexual desires. However, they cannot accept the conceptualisation of sexual liberation in practice. Ji-Hae exemplifies this dissension in her proposal of sexual liberation as an individual choice: ‘I think the change in sexual culture results from the freedom of choice. If someone wants to have casual sex, they can do so. However, I do not want to. Therefore, the choices of people are controversial’. In spite of Ji-Hae’s perception of sexual freedom, sexual rights surrounding freedom of choice also appear to be affected by dominant discourses, such as that of sexual chastity. When Korean women choose their actions in relation to sexual liberation, they remain concerned with the dominant and conservative discourse. Hence, the Korean sexual liberation coexists and conflicts with sexual chastity. Whereas women following the norm of sexual chastity are named ‘good girls’, women seeking sexual liberation are labelled ‘bad girls’. In a Korean context, the idea of sexual liberation provides ordinary women with a superficial change rather than real choices.

Taking into account my previous discussion, I feel it is important to attempt an examination of how Korean female workers define the notion of sexuality. Having defined sexuality as purely genital-centred sexual intercourse, most Korean people tend to perceive it as natural, biological and innate. The absence of public sexual discourses

has led to a general disregard of sexuality as a social and cultural issue within Korea. Since the 1990s, a number of feminists and radical scholars have been interested in both sexuality and sexual culture as academic subjects worthy of research. However, it appears that any developing discussions from these topics are peripheral to, and often marginalized from, mainstream academic arenas. From Soo-Hee's statement, we are able to witness her confusion over the notion of sexuality and sexual culture.

In relation to sexual culture, we are in a transition period. We do not discuss the sexual culture publicly and cannot define what sexuality is. Therefore, our thoughts about sexuality and sexual culture are confused and we do not have the right view about sexual culture (Soo-Hee).

Soo-Hee's primary motivation for this assertion resulted from the difficulty with which she attempted to define sexual culture and sexuality. She felt that she was unable to construct a rounded view of these features of Korean society due to their lack of serious consideration within the public sphere.

Soo-Won referred to both the traditional and radical views surrounding sexuality: 'Most Korean people seem to be externally conservative about sexuality, but they are internally immoral about sexuality, such as enjoying pornography and teenage prostitutes'. It appears that Korean men pretend to be sexually conservative and morally righteous people but in practice enjoy pornography and prostitutes. For example, whilst men educate their daughters in the benefits of sexual chastity, they are also enjoying casual sex with teenage prostitutes of the same age as their children. This situation is contradictory as well as socially problematic. Chang points out that there exist two kinds of dual systems relating to sexual norms within Korea. The first of these is the

division between the formal and informal system. Within the formal system, sexual relationships within married and monogamous couples are permitted whereas within the informal system the opposite rules apply: temporary relationships and the commodification of sexuality are condoned. The second of these dual systems relating to Korean sexual norms is the division of the sexes. Whereas males are allowed or even encouraged to combine sexual relationships within both the formal and informal systems, female sexuality is restricted to the formal system (Chang, P. H. 1989:79). There exist extreme differences between male and female sexuality within present day Korea. For example, both men and women commonly defined sexuality as private and concealed within the public sphere. Whilst in practice women have suffered as sexual objects in relation to sexual commercialisation and have struggled with the norm of sexual chastity in opposition to sexual liberation, men have enjoyed and appreciated commercial sexual materials and other by-products of sexual liberation.

As a result, the sexual attitudes of Korean people prove to be contradictory and dualistic. Whereas their thoughts on sexuality are still conservative, male sexual behaviour is liberal and even immoral. Despite being free from sexual oppression and the publicly acknowledged double standard of sexuality, the majority of Korean women still suffer from a concealed and privately internally experienced double standard. These women have become confused and ambivalent towards radical changes surrounding both sexual liberation and sexual commercialisation.

Miss O's Video

Through an examination of the affair of Miss O's video, I aim to show Korean people's conflicts between sexual desires of stealing a glimpse of at others' sexual lives and the

traditional sexual norm regarding unchaste women as bad girls. This provides an example of the Korean dual system of sexual norms. Roughly ten years ago, when Miss O was younger and unknown, the video material in question was recorded by her ex-boyfriend and reveals the two of them making love. In the video, Miss O appears passive and obedient towards her ex-boyfriend, who trained and coached her in sexual relations as Miss O can be seen being manipulated like a doll within the videotape. Watching it, I felt embarrassed. The female is constructed as the ignorant student whilst the male is portrayed as the teacher with an expert sexual technique. This videotape is clearly private and individual material rather than commercial property but, nevertheless, the videotape was circulated illegally and many Korean men were eager to watch it. At present, it is still unknown how the videotape was circulated and who was responsible.

This case of Miss O's videotape clearly shows us how strong the desire is to steal a glance at others' private sexual lives, whilst at the same time it demonstrates the way in which Korean people condemn female sexual victims. In this sense, Miss O's videotape was a cultural shock to Korean women, but a source of gossip and entertainment to Korean men. The gendered differences of opinion about the videotape relate to the various and different positions both men and women hold with regard to sexuality in Korea. My interviewees' diverse accounts of this scandal represent Korean people's contradictory feelings concerning sexuality and warrant an exploration as they reflect on the peculiarity of Korean sexual culture.

The first point I must make is that the majority of interviewees had sympathy with, and a kind of empathy for, Miss O. They thought that her condemnation was unfair as she was not to blame for the circulation of the video and it had also greatly injured her, both personally and publicly. In other words, female workers complained about the double

standard that is evoked in order to condemn women in relation to sexual issues despite their position as victim. Yeon-Joo said: 'Firstly, I am distressed and angry at Miss O, why she took the videotape and why she could not keep the videotape' (Yeon-Joo). She questioned whether Miss O was responsible for the making of the videotape recording sexual intercourse, and that she has failed to keep it secure. Yeon-Joo's sentiments appear to be affected by a male attitude of blame that has labelled Miss O as 'a bad girl' in that she failed to preserve her sexual chastity. However, both Hyun-Jae and Min-Ae empathized with Miss O and were critical of the provider of the videotape and those people who blamed Miss O.

I watched 'Miss O's video'. I think, because she is an entertainer, she is hurt very much. I cannot understand why people blame her (Hyun-Jae).

It is a kind of shock and I feel upset. If the video did not circulate, the video would be a kind of recollection to Miss O. But, now she becomes a victim and criminal (Min-Ae).

Hyun-Jae proposed that the attention and public controversy resulting from the circulation of the tape were by-products of Miss O's status as a well-known actress. According to Min-Ae, had the videotape not been circulated it would not have been a problem and would have remained private material. These female workers are therefore implying that the provider of the tape should be condemned instead of Miss O. However, ultimately the situation resulted in the blaming of Miss O as a result of the dual norm between 'bad girls' and 'good girls'.

Jeong-Mi reflects her confusion: 'I cannot understand Miss O. why she does not insist

that the woman in the video is not herself. Also, she is very pitiful'. Jeong-Mi suggested that Miss O should have denied that the woman in the videotape was her, as, despite her position as victim, an admission is likely to result in disapproval and reproach. Nevertheless, Jeong-Mi also has sympathy for Miss O. This wave of female sympathy for Miss O results from Korean women's recognition that where sexual issues are concerned, it is often their sex that are criminalized and condemned regardless of who is to blame. In other words, Korean women identified the situation as one they could similarly experience or be subject to, appreciating that they too could be a victim of sexual violence or harassment. Despite being the injured party they would also be condemned, as in the case of Miss O and therefore understand her position as a powerless woman.

Korean women are likely to be located in the weakest and lowest positions within sexual issues regardless of the differences among them in relation to marital status, class and intellectual career. This common position of women might make it possible to develop some strategies with the potential to combat sexual oppression. With respect to this, a number of my interviewees condemned Miss O's ex-boyfriend in various ways. Firstly, in the video his behaviour was very professional and according to Boo-Young's statement, he appeared to be violating her:

I think, she is so pitiful maybe she loved him and how dare he? I watched the video with my married friend, she said, 'the man is such a bad person, because O really loves him so she followed his orders, but the man's act and technique are nearly professional'. Maybe, he used her body (Boo-Young).

Boo-Young believed that Miss O's body was used and harmed by her ex-boyfriend since

he treated her as a sexual object. The objectification of the female body is a common problem within heterosexual relations between Korean men and women. This is because they hold different ideas and envision disparate images in relation to sexual relationships. Whereas men have been educated by pornographic materials and the prostitution industry to treat women as sexual objects, women have learnt to follow and be obedient to their lovers, from romantic love stories and films. Men are constructed as the sexual masters and women as the sexual slaves within heterosexual relationships.

Min-Hee complained about the circulation of the videotape: 'I think that her partner who circulated the video, is a bad person' (Min-Hee). Kyun-Mi also said:

I watched the video. Firstly, how does this videotape get circulated? Now, she stays in America. If I were she, I would do that, so I can understand her position. However, I hope that Miss O can be dignified, because the video tape is so private, it is not her fault, but her response to the affair is like that of a criminal. I cannot understand why she needs to escape from this country and hide herself (Kyung-Mi).

Who was responsible for the public circulation of this videotape remains undetermined, but most people believed that it was Miss O's ex-boyfriend as he had the only copy of the tape and could also get a lot of money from selling it. He possibly made use of the videotape in this negative way in order to threaten her. His intentions would then be deeply related to Korean sexual culture, in which sexual victims are blamed by the double standard. Miss O's ex-boyfriend had already estimated that if he circulated the videotape his ex-girlfriend's life as an actress would be severely damaged. Since this case, rumours that other actresses have made videotapes with their managers have often

been recounted in Korea. The case of Miss O reflects a typical example of the way in which a videotape containing an actress's sexual private life could be utilised as a tool for blackmail and control. In this respect, the situation has demonstrated that this matter is not only individually harmful to Miss O, but is also damaging for other actresses as potential victims and, further, Korean women as a whole.

Hyun-Jeong defined Miss O's case as a violation of privacy: 'I think that the public criticism of Miss O is not right, because the case is related to her private life'. Hyun-Jeong's statement implies that the affair of Miss O appears to show the dual minds of Korean people. They are afraid to show others their sexual life and do not want to speak about their own sexual experiences but nevertheless are eager to watch and learn about others' sexual lives and experiences. Soon-Ju, unlike other interviewees, enjoyed watching the videotape.

It is funny. I just enjoy the videotape. I think that watching a video is not bad. But after watching the video, people's response to the video is problematic. I hope that people do not feel very sensitive with regard to the video. The media products in relation to sexuality should become positive not negative (Soon-Ju).

Influenced by the male dominated sexual culture, Soon-Ju categorised Miss O's videotape as a commercial pornographic film and was unable to understand people's sensitive responses to the videotape. However, it is clear that Soon-Ju overlooked the fact that the videotape was not intentionally made as commercial material and that Miss O did not agree to its circulation, which has subsequently destroyed her life as an actress. On the other hand, Eun-Soon argues that the videotape displayed ordinary

sexual intercourse, so it was not controversial.

I cannot understand why most people are interested in the videotape and why it is controversial. The content of the video is very ordinary, but I am worried about the fact that many children and teenagers watched the videotape (Eun-Soon).

She suggested that the video's audience were interested in how a famous actress made love, rather than the specific sexual content of the recording. Eun-Soon was also worried about the tape's effects on teenagers due to its internet circulation and easy accessibility. As stated by Eun-Soon, had the videotape portrayed ordinary sexual relations between men and women it would not have been so problematic. In my opinion, the sexual scenes within the video are male-dominated and male-oriented, with Miss O portrayed as a sexual slave and hence, through watching the videotape teenagers might misunderstand the scenes as ordinary and normal. In consequence, through the process of Miss O's video affair we witness this duality within the sexual attitude of the Korean people. On one hand, they intend to hide their own sexual life in the name of privacy, and on the other hand, they attempt to steal a look at others' sexual lives.

In a parallel situation to that of Miss O's videotape, the private sexual film of a Korean female singer, Baek, Ji-Young, was circulated on the internet in July of 2000 and many Korean men also watched the material. Unlike Miss O, who escaped to America and went into hiding, Baek assertively resisted the case and took legal action, thereby gaining support from women's organisations. Baek's case was defined as a violation of human rights and a type of sexual violence. She made it clear that despite making the videotape she had not agreed to its public circulation and should therefore be exempt

from blame. Baek did not want to relinquish her career and performed at a concert in December 2000. As a result of her direct action, the criminals circulating the film were found to be her former manager and her sexual partner, who was featured in tape. The latter was ultimately arrested.¹⁸ However, there are several controversies in relation to the case of Baek. Since the case, her performances have not been shown on television and her songs have not been aired on the radio. Regardless of her assertive will, her performance as a singer was prohibited in the mass media. In this sense, she is doubly victimized because she is stigmatised as a 'bad girl', in regard to her lack of sexual chastity, and her performances are censored by the Korean public broadcasting system as they are considered to be a bad influence upon their audiences. In spite of her attempt to overcome and resist sexual violation, Baek was unable to avoid wider hostility towards her.

The examination of Miss O's case highlights the relationship between the feature of sexual culture and the imported westernised sexual attitudes of the Korean public. This Korean sexual culture is also affected by the changes in the traditional sexual culture, based upon the developments within its sexual history. The lack of public discussion on sexuality fails to prevent discourses of resistance concerning sexual issues being formulated through informal means, such as the gossip that was so prevalent within the Miss O affair. Regardless of the absence of public sexual discourses, the original and peculiar nature of Korean sexual culture is undergoing change and it is evident that the responses to Miss O's videotape are examples reflecting the particularities of this culture. From the range of public discourses involving Miss O's video, we can identify the dualism present within Korean sexual norms. On one hand, within formal systems the woman is victimized, blamed and stigmatised and, on the other, within the informal

¹⁸ Details of the case are based on articles from Korean newspapers.

system Korean people are eager to watch the sexual video of the condemned woman and to enjoy and resolve their own suppressed sexual desires. The Korean people's view of sexuality is thus determined as dual and conflicting.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the way in which heterosexuality and heterosexual culture are socially constructed as a background to the phenomenon of sexual harassment. My examination involved an initial attempt to identify the female workers' own definitions of their gendered and sexual selves and understand which factors they featured as the most important within this consideration. I found that both the gendered and sexual selves of my interviewees were continuously in process and slightly changed as these women began to challenge femininity and sexual chastity perpetuated by the heterosexual norm. Changes to the gendered and sexual self are therefore deeply embedded within variations to both heterosexuality and heterosexual culture.

Having established this relationship of effect, I moved on to an exploration of the specificities of Korean heterosexuality, particularly in relation to the norm of sexual chastity and the marriage system. Despite having suffered from the norm of sexual chastity in varying ways, the majority of the female workers I interviewed remained faithful to this cultural ideal of female sexuality. Some interviewees attempted to identify alternative sexual scripts that worked against this dominant discourse, proposing the possibility of accepting premarital sexual relations; however, those female workers who attempted resistance were still predominantly governed by the norm of sexual chastity. I would argue that the less conservative sexual scripts in relation to premarital sexual relations are located in a continuum of the norm of sexual chastity.

In order to develop my understanding of Korean heterosexuality, I turned to an exploration of sexuality within marriage. The Korean marriage is defined as a representative and hegemonic form of Korean heterosexuality and marital sexual relations are the only legally and formally sanctioned sexual acts in Korea. My examination established that female sexuality within the Korean marriage is not only exploited by male sexuality but is also regarded as asexual and purely for reproductive means. As a result, the sexual pleasure of women is overlooked. This sexual oppression of married women is integrated within the socially and economically powerless position of most Korean women. For example, despite being aware of their husbands' infidelities, married women within Korea often feel unable to request a divorce because most are financially subordinated to these men. In consequence, Korean heterosexuality can be characterised as male-centred, adult-oriented and super-heterosexual.

My final investigation within this chapter considered the changing nature of Korean sexual culture. I was specifically interested in the interconnections between Korean sexual culture and western sexual culture as I believed that there would be direct mentions of the key developments taking place. I then examined Korean people's attitudes towards the sexual culture, focusing upon the peculiar affair of Miss O's case. An investigation of public opinion regarding heterosexual institutions and culture is particularly useful in understanding the specificities of Korean society. Despite the definition of Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture as male-centred, adult-oriented, heterosexual and fairly conservative, a significant proportion of Korean people have resisted and challenged the dual system represented through the differences between the informal and the formal sexual norm. Korean women in particular have gradually resisted both formal sexual norms, such as sexual chastity, and informal

sexual norms, such as selling sex. These changes within individual sexual attitudes concerning heterosexuality contribute to shifts in the sexual culture. In the next chapter I will turn to an examination of how Korean organisational culture is not only integrated with these constructions of heterosexuality and heterosexual culture but also is deeply related to the incidents of sexual harassment.

Chapter4. Gender and Sexual Culture within Korean organisations

Introduction

The features of organisational culture are intrinsically related to the factors maintaining incidents of sexual harassment. A number of feminist scholars have also noted that sexual harassment is closely associated with both gender and sexual culture within organisations (Cockburn 1991:143; Adkins 1995:3; Hearn and Parkin 2001:3). In particular, Hearn and Parkin argue that the research interests in sexual harassment have been interrelated with examinations of organisational gender and sexuality since the mid 1970s (Hearn and Parkin 2001:11), thereby reflecting the indispensable association between explorations of organisational culture and issues of gender and sexuality. In this chapter I will explore how this culture is influenced by particular notions of gender and sexuality and hence why it plays a crucial role in the tolerance of sexual harassment within Korean organisations.

Before analysis of my research data, I attempt to explain what Korean people called the IMF system as an economic collapse because during the interview periods between 1999 and 2000 Korea suffered from economic crisis, in particular, female workers considered the economic crisis as a crucial obstacle to keeping their job safe and resisting sexual harassment. Korea was bailed out by the IMF on December 3 in 1997, due to the lack of foreign currency. Kim, a Korean economist, suggests that 'the nation has undergone various hardships. Since the shutdown of five ailing banks on June 29 in 1998, about one-fourth of

all financial institutions have been closed or merged into other financial institutions. Some large conglomerates, including Dawoo and Kia, have gone bankrupt, dispelling the myth of “too big to fail”. The number of the unemployed once soared to 1.8 million, and the number of homeless also increased significantly, both of which are almost unprecedented in the nation’s history since the 1960s’(Kim, K.W. 2001:1). In this circumstance, female employees suffered from not only diverse forms of sex discrimination, such as more sex-segregated job positions, lower income and unstable job position but also diverse forms of sexual harassment (*Daily Newspaper of Joong-Ang* 16th Feb. 1998).

I will now attempt to develop an appropriate definition of ‘organisational culture’. A number of scholars from diverse management perspectives have defined organisational culture as either a metaphor (Morgan 1986 in Brown 1998:9) or as an objective entity (Shein 1985; Eldridge and Crombie 1974 in Brown 1998:9). In general from a management perspective it is suggested that ‘organisational culture refers to the pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organisation’s history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and the behaviours of its members’ (Brown 1998:9). Brown also defines the content of an organisational culture as its artefacts; language in the form of jokes, metaphors, stories, myths and legends; behaviour patterns in the form of rites, rituals, ceremonies and celebrations; norms of behaviour; heroes; symbols and symbolic action; beliefs, values and attitudes; ethical codes; basic assumption; and history (Brown 1998 10-11). The basis of this concept regarding the definition and categorisation of organisational culture can be partially applied to my own examination. For example, according to Brown’s term, the drinking culture within Korean organisations would be identified as a form of ritual or ceremony. However, Brown neglects to consider gender and sexuality within organisations,

hence his management perspective is not sufficient to an examination of my research subject.

Numerous feminist scholars have focussed upon the subjects of gender and sexuality within organisations. Newman defines organisational culture 'in terms of shared symbols, language, practices and deeply embedded beliefs and values' (Newman 1996:11). Although her definition of organisational culture is partially maintained by a management perspective, she nevertheless remains concentrated upon the relationship between gender and organisational culture: 'Each domain has to be understood as gendered and together they constitute an important field in which gendered meanings, identities, practices and power relations are sustained' (Newman 1996:11). For Newman, an organisational culture is founded on a premise of gender difference. Itzin also characterises gender culture as incorporating distinct features; it is hierarchical and patriarchal, sex-segregated, promotes sexual divisions of labour, sex-stereotyped, sex-discriminatory, creates a sexualised environment, facilitates sexual harassment, it is sexist, misogynistic, resistant to change and is reliant upon gendered power (Itzin 1996:52). Acker notes the predominant reasons why gender within organisations is a crucial issue: firstly, the gender segregation of work is partly produced by organisational practice; secondly, this gender segregation is related to the unequal income and status between men and women within organisational processes; thirdly, widely spread cultural images of gender are invented and reproduced within organisations; fourthly, individual gender identities, such as masculinity, are also outcomes of organisational processes and pressures; and, lastly, feminist works aim to reform organisations, shaping them to be more democratic and supportive of human goals (Acker 1990:140).

From the three studies discussed above. I will draw out those issues in relation to gender that exist within organisations and identify how the organisational gender culture is related to incidents of sexual harassment. Newman, Itzin and Acker tend to overlook the subject of sexuality within organisations, for example, Itzin defines sexual harassment as solely a feature of gender culture. I do not wholly agree with Itzin's interpretation as incidents of sexual harassment are categorised as only a type of gender culture regardless of the consideration of sexuality within organisations. My examination of organisational culture and its relations to sexual harassment will involve both these themes.

A number of feminist theorists have concentrated upon sexuality within organisations. Adkins informs us that until the late 1980s, the majority of feminists disregarded sexuality within the labour market (Adkins, 1995:1): for example, Hartmann and Walby purely concentrated upon the relationship between female workers and patriarchy. Hartmann suggests that 'because of these deep ramifications of the sexual division of labour we will not eradicate sex-ordered task division until we eradicate the socially imposed gender differences' (Hartmann 1979:232). Hartmann regards sexual division based on only gender division within the labour market. Walby suggests that 'the contribution of an analysis of sexual violence within organisations by radical feminism is important, but is only a partial contribution to analysing women's position in employment' (Walby 1990:39). She tends to disregard sexuality within the labour market as a central issue. Both Hartmann and Walby refer to sexuality within the labour market but they fail to consider its relationship to the labour market as fundamental, instead considering sexuality as separate from the labour market (Adkins 1995:27).

A consideration of the relationship between sexuality and the structuring of organisations

has recently begun within feminism. Pringle identifies the relationship between sexuality and the labour market when examining secretaries' work. Pringle suggests that 'the boss-secretary relation, needs to be seen not as an anomalous piece of traditionalism or as an incursion of the private sphere, but rather a site of strategies of power in which sexuality is an important though by no means the only dimension. Far from being marginal to the workplace, sexuality is everywhere' (Pringle 1989: 90). Pringle also explains how coercive forms of power and control operate in the contest of control through less coercive constructions of heterosexuality such as sexual joking and game-playing between men and women at work (Pringle 1989: 92-93). Pringle highlights the way in which incidents of sexual harassment as a heterosexual practice are constituted within organisations. Oerton explains the interconnection between heterosexuality and hierarchical organisations: 'The dominance of heterosexuality is not restricted to incidents and events within the life of an organisation, but is constitutive of the hierarchical power relations upon which organisations are based. [...] less heterosexual/ patriarchal processes and practices of power and control are more likely to be constitutive of less or non-hierarchical organisation, whereas hierarchical organisations are inevitably 'contaminated' by heterosexuality'(Oerton 1996:65). Adkins also emphasises the close relationship between the gendered relations of production and the sexualisation of female workers within the labour market, arguing that 'sexual harassment and the sexualisation of women at work is the outcome of the organisation of gendered relations of production' (Adkins 1995:155). These three feminist works suggest that organisational culture is integrated with not only gendered power but also (hetero)sexuality. In particular, incidents of sexual harassment are displayed as gendered and heterosexual practices within organisations.

In recent times, having suggested the gender-sexuality-violation complex within

organisations, Hearn and Parkin (2001) emphasise the interconnection between the gendered features of organisations and heterosexuality. Sexual harassment is hence defined as a representative practice of organisational heterosexuality (Hearn and Parkin 2001:9-12) and, therefore the concept of organisational culture is particularly useful when considering how ideas and practices relating to gender and sexuality integrate within organisations. Thus, in order to examine the main features of a particular society's organisational culture, I will consider these interactions in greater detail.

Within this theoretical context, I will examine the ways in which my twenty-eight interviewees understand, and attempt to explain, the culture existing within the companies that employ them. My initial examination focuses upon the distinctive cultural features of Korean companies and the images they portray. As a result of these companies developing more rapidly than, and in different ways to, western companies, both the overarching features of these organisations and the operations of capitalism within them are peculiar to Korea. In particular, their central philosophies are rooted in Confucianism, an important tenet within many social and cultural spheres of Korean society. Confucianism can be characterised by its tendency towards conservative, male-dominated, hierarchical and bureaucratic modes of thought and action (Lee, H. J. 1997:61). For instance, the specific culture of Korean companies in relation to Confucianism is subject to the members' loyalty to the owners and the hierarchical relationship between senior and junior members (Lee, H. J. 1997:107).

My discussion will then move on to an exploration of the role of gender as it manifests itself within Korean organisations. The various aspects of the gendered culture are related to different areas of sex-discrimination, including unequal employment, income, duties and

so on. I will also consider how sex-discrimination is interconnected with sexuality, especially in relation to the emphasis upon the appearance of female workers and the enforcement of a working uniform for women employees. This chapter will conclude with an investigation into the leisure culture of organisations in relation to sexuality. In the Korean context, leisure plays an important role in the production and incidence of sexual harassment. I therefore explore aspects of this recreational culture, which isolates female workers and allows male colleagues to define these women as sexual objects. In particular, I will investigate how the male-dominated and military-centred drinking culture¹ acts to further sexualise female workers.

I. The Cultural Features of Korean Organisations²

An examination of the cultural features of Korean organisations will exemplify the peculiarity of the organisational culture. In particular, this examination demonstrates the way in which each Korean organisation is specifically characterised as male-dominated, conservative and hierarchical. Therefore, I will briefly review some studies about cultural features of companies from a western management perspective since I need to recognise the basic way to examine cultural features within each organisation. A number of western management theorists refer to the cultural features of each company as a categorisation of typology: Deal and Kennedy (1982), Quinn and MacGarth (1985) and Scholz (1987)

¹ I use the term 'drinking culture' to indicate that most male organisational members like to consume large amounts of alcohol at the office party; and that this practice is generally forced upon female workers, even though most women prefer not to drink. I will analyse this culture more thoroughly in a later section of this chapter.

² In this research I will assign an assumed initial to each company's name, thereby indicating the differing organisations.

identified typologies of corporate culture in differing ways (Brown 1998:69-71)³. The typologies by these management theorists might display trends of corporate culture within western companies but the basic standard of categorisation is manager-centred. Deal and Kennedy suggest that 'no organisation will precisely fit any one of their four cultures and that some companies do not fit the model at all. Nevertheless, the framework is a useful first step in helping managers to identify the culture of their own organisations' (Deal and Kennedy 1982 in Brown 1998:69). The typology of Deal and Kennedy is not suitable to an analysis of the cultural features of each Korean company as its flexibility merely ensures it concurs with various western organisations. Within this research examination of the cultural features of Korean organisations I aim to identify their specific properties through focusing upon the views of the female workers rather than those of the managers. In consequence, my investigation of the cultural differences within Korean organisations is not based on the typologies of management scholars but rather, in order to facilitate an identification of the way in which the cultural features are deeply related to incidents of sexual harassment, on the accounts of the female workers.

I interviewed seventeen female workers from five conglomerates. I also conducted interviews with three female secretaries from a public institution, four female workers from

³ 'Deal and Kennedy (1982) have identified four generic cultures: the tough-guy, macho culture, the work-hard/play-hard culture, the bet-your-company culture and the process culture. These cultures are determined by two factors in the marketplace: first, the degree of risk associated with the company's activities, and second, the speed at which the company and its employees receive feedback on their decisions and strategies. [...] Based on an analysis of the nature of the transactions associated with information exchange in organisations Quinn and MacGarth (1985) have identified four generic cultures: the rational culture (market), the ideological culture (adhocracy), the consensual culture (clan) and the hierarchical culture (hierarchy). [...] Scholz refers to three different dimensions of culture, namely evolution (how cultures change over time), internal (how the internal circumstances of an organisation affect its culture) and external (how an organisation's environment affects its culture). [...] From this he derived five primary culture types: stable, reactive, anticipating, exploring and creative' (Brown 1998 69-71).

financial companies and four women from small companies. The five conglomerates⁴ are considered as the largest companies in Korea. A main feature of these huge corporations is their involvement with various industries. For example, 'conglomerate S' owns diverse types of affiliated companies such as electronics industries, machinery and heavy industries, chemical industries and financial services. Furthermore, most large firms are managed directly by their owners. In this sense, Lee⁵, a Korean management scholar, has observed that the main feature of this culture is its bureaucratic, tough, macho mode of operation. Each company participates in this specific culture, which is then modified in relation to the style and belief of each owner (Lee, H. J. 1997:61). A further defining characteristic of these organisational cultures is the influence of Confucianism. Korean people perceive Confucianism to be a form of religion which is defined by the concept of loyalty and obedience to one's seniors. Therefore, hierarchy and obedience become the most important factors within Korean organisations (Lee, H. J. 1997:107). Consequently, female workers have had to obey male workers and the organisational culture has been characterised by patriarchal modes of behaviour, and the ideals of the owners have permeated the minds of the more junior members of the companies. There are wide varieties of similarities and differences surrounding these recurring themes of Korean organisational culture. In this respect, I attempt to identify how the cultural features of each Korean organisation are specifically characterised whilst also understanding the constitution of the wide range commonalities as their discovery enables women to create strategies of resistance to sexual harassment.

⁴ Whitley suggests that 'In South Korea the economy is dominated by enormous family controlled conglomerates, or *'chaebol'*. Korean chaebol are vertically integrated and centrally control a variety of functions and activities' (Whitley 1990 in Brown 1998:47).

⁵ His ideas are not derived from a feminist perspective. However, I will refer to his works in this section, because he has researched the features of Korean organisational culture since the 1980s, and his works are useful to an analysis of as well as being unique in Korea.

1. 'Conglomerate S' - Encouraging the Utilization of Women's Labour

The traditional management belief of 'Conglomerate S', among the largest companies in Korea, reflects the dictum that 'a company is made through human ability'. This notion steers 'conglomerate S' to focus upon obtaining and developing the abilities of their workers (Sam-Sung Economic Institution 1989: 32-35). According to Kyung-Ae from 'S Insurance,' one of the affiliated companies within 'Conglomerate S', in comparison to other Korean companies, this firm tends to utilize and develop the labour of female workers and hence these women employees at S are relatively satisfied with their duties: 'The somewhat different culture here is due to the ideas of the boss. For example, the boss orders that the company employs an equal percentage of male and female workers and he tries to use female labour productively. He also attempts to give female workers equal opportunities' (Kyung-Ae).

The main reason for this less patriarchal state of affairs is the influence of the owner's opinions upon the organisational culture. Davis identifies the importance of leadership as a source of organisational culture: 'If the leader is a great person, then inspiring ideas will permeate the corporation's culture. If the leader is mundane, then the guiding beliefs may well be uninspired. Strong beliefs make for strong cultures. The clearer the leader is about what he stands for, the more apparent will be the culture of that company' (Davis 1984:8). In particular, due to the management characteristic of Korean conglomerates, in which most owners take a role as head managers, the cultural features of each Korean organisation are greatly affected by the leader's beliefs. The owner of 'conglomerate S' considers the utilization of female workers to be connected with the development of his enterprise. He

subscribes to the doctrine that a company is made effective by its workforce's ability and therefore the employees become the most important asset to develop within a firm. In this context, female workers are equally defined as possessing human ability.

Hyun-Jeong also suggested that the ability of the female workers within this firm is regarded as equal to that of male workers and this results in these women often undertaking their duties with a strong sense of commitment: 'There is no sex discrimination in this aspect of the system. Also, the atmosphere of the company encourages the utilization of female workers. The company considers the status of its female employees carefully. However, the system of organisation is very tight and the work is very intensive' (Hyun-Jeong). Despite the hard work, Hyun-Jeong was satisfied with the system. She seemed to feel that she was defined simply as 'a worker' with the same ability as her male peers.

However, Kyung-Ae reflected on the difficulty of obtaining promotion: 'There was no female head of department ten years ago, but then some female workers started to be promoted, and recently there have been some female heads of departments' (Kyung-Ae). Generally, women have not found it easy to gain promotion; however, more recently, instances of advancement among female workers have become more common. 'Conglomerate S' has also shown examples such as better female salaries and the protection of married women's employment rights, providing female workers with equal opportunity of promotion.

In the opinion of both Kyung-Ae and Hyun-Jeong, this firm is a good employer for female workers:

In other companies, female workers still have to decide whether to give up their job after marriage, but in this company, nobody considers it. For example, there has been no case of a pregnant woman being fired. Rather, this company is worried if a married woman wants to give up her job, because they think that it means the loss of an expert (Kyung-Ae).

I think that S is good to female workers, because the income and the reputation of women workers is better. For example, most seniors don't ask women to serve cups of coffee. Sometimes, they need to ask female workers, but they really are sorry about it. Since the boss of this company recommends the utilization of the labour of female workers, other members have had to follow the owner's views (Hyun-Jeong).

The owner of 'conglomerate S' expects female workers to acquire expertise and therefore encourages them to continue with their job after marriage. Under these circumstances, managers and male workers are unable to ask women to perform miscellaneous tasks such as making cups of coffee. The image of 'conglomerate S' appears to be one of rationality in the pursuit of efficiency. The status of female workers is formally equal to those of male workers and therefore women employees are able to make a valid contribution to the development of the company.

In recent years, S credit-card company, one branch of 'conglomerate S', established the Ten Commandments for the prevention of sexual harassment. The content of the Ten

Commandments for male and female workers, and seniors⁶, is determined differently according to their organisational positions. The Ten Commandments are written on a card and every member carries this with them in order to remind themselves of the specific regulations and how these help to prevent sexual harassment within the workplace (*Daily Newspaper of Chosun*, 8th December 2000). In addition, S Electrics established a counselling centre for female workers that focuses upon preventing sex discrimination and sexual harassment within S electrics (*Daily Newspaper of Chosun*, 9th January 2001). Consequently, 'conglomerate S' works both to improve its female workers' skills, and to reform engrained sex discrimination. Hence, women prefer to work for this company and generally demonstrate a strong commitment to the firm. This situation of equality and respect is beneficial for both the women employees and for the development of the company as a whole. It is clear that the cultural features of 'conglomerate S', based upon the beliefs of its owner, are characterised as less male-dominated and more rational and equal for female workers.

2. 'Conglomerate L' - Soft, Free but Conservative

The traditional culture of 'conglomerate L' emphasises the harmony and co-operative spirit evident amongst its members (Lee, H. J. 1997:141). This firm has recently developed a new slogan, 'I love L', for use in publicity materials. Their advertisements, in contrast to 'conglomerate S', promote a corporate image characterised by a friendly and relaxed working environment. This feature of amicability is conflated with a justification for the upholding of conservative modes of thought and passive behaviour (Lee, H. J. 1997:141). Here I examine how female workers are identified within the culture of their company.

⁶ In this context, seniors mean senior workers such as a head of department.

basing the argument on the accounts of four women who work for L Electrics and, in addition, the secretaries of the owners.

In reality women employees seem uncomfortable within this particular office culture. Jeong-Mi said: 'My friend, who is sassy, talkative and assertive, was not employed by this company. This company expects female workers to be feminine and virtuous in accordance with its slogan, " I love L"'. (Jeong-Mi). According to Jeong-Mi, the slogan 'I love L' is interpreted to suggest that female workers should behave in a traditionally feminine, and relatively passive, manner. As a result, 'conglomerate L' does not employ assertive and lively women, a tendency which is also heightened by the circumstances of their workplaces. Jeong-Mi and Yeon-Joo also suggested that L's atmosphere appears very peaceful and uneventful.

The office environment is like a library. It is very calm and static. Also, the tendency of members is very individual. They usually concentrate on their duties, as a freelancer would (Jeong-Mi).

It is gentle, free but conservative. For example, this company does not take on challenging new projects and rather seeks stability. The company is too conservative, because it was developed in the south [the south area of Korea is famous for its conservatism] (Yeon-Joo).

These comments might imply that L's owner does not want to reform his now obsolete system. It would seem from my previous analyses that the owner's ideals deeply influence the organisation's members. As stated by Yeon-Joo, the meaning of the word 'free' within

'conglomerate L' is surrounded by negative connotations, such as the avoidance of radical change. She also indicates a relationship between the ideological features of the organisation and its regional location in the South. Both Jeong-Mi and Ju-Mi spoke about the contradictory effects of the company's ethos.

This company has a 'kind-feeling' policy. At the time of the IMF system, for example, this company tried to keep the members of the company and did not want to fire a lot of employees. Also, I go to university after my daily work, and my seniors are interested in my studies (Jeong-Mi).

At first, this company seems to be relaxed and harmonious but it is very conservative. For example, during the last IMF system, many employees were secretly fired, which was not the case with other companies (Ju-Mi).

In the example above, Jeong-Mi identifies the positive aspects of the company culture and interprets their 'kind-feeling' policy as a form of humanitarianism. However, according to Ju-Mi, the majority of workers were fired whilst other employees remained ignorant of the situation. The image of a caring and humanitarian company may therefore be a convenient and superficial mask. Furthermore, 'conglomerate L's' inherent conservatism is particularly disadvantageous for female employees, from whom it demands passive conformity. 'Conglomerate L' has failed to implement new regulations or a welfare system with the aim of combating sexual harassment and sex discrimination.

3. 'Conglomerate H' - Tough, Active and Inflexible

The origins of 'firm H' lie in the construction industry, and the majority of workers are male. The organisational ethos of this company is therefore an example of a 'Can Do Culture', which is dominated by the values of challenge, adventure and practicality (Lee, H. J. 1997:140). Hyun-Jae states that the male-centred nature of this conglomerate tends towards violence: 'The circumstances are tough because the H Group has developed out of a construction company. In the past, there were violent arguments between male and female workers' (Hyun-Jae). It seems that in order to survive in these circumstances, women employees must also be energetic and assertive. Hyun-Jae states: ' This company hopes that female workers will be autonomous and capable. However, other companies want women to be pretty and obedient' (Hyun-Jae). This statement suggests that the desired characteristics of female workers seem to be determined by the particular features of an organisational culture. This has led me to adopt the view that women adapt their external image to suit a company's ethos. If they work for a macho and male-centred environment, such as 'conglomerate H', they will adopt similar behaviour.

However, Boo-Young complained about the inflexibility of the company's structure: 'When we deal with something, the boss and the seniors do not consider the need for flexibility within a job, so they seem very conservative and unreasonable. The specification for a job here is always very precise' (Boo-Young). For instance, Boo-Young tried to negotiate her position with her boss but when she failed she came to believe that the organisation was both irrational and conservative. Female employees in 'company H' are required to adopt and embrace a male culture and to emulate men in order to survive.

This required emulation of masculinity and adoption of a male culture seems to be the case in many Korean companies and the owners are reluctant to reform the existing system. The main reasons for this reluctance are a consequence of the particular characteristics of Korean enterprise. In general, the owners directly manage their companies without the intervention of a managing director. Hence, they can closely control the management of their companies and object to reform on the general basis that it is uneconomic and unnecessary; 'conglomerate H' is merely the example. As Korean companies are unwilling to create and implement new regulations for the prevention of sexual harassment they tend to hide the problem instead. This neglect contributes to the maintenance of sex discrimination in the workplace.

4. 'Conglomerate H. S.' - Unsophisticated and Conservative

The organisational culture of H. S. bears remarkable similarities to that of 'conglomerate S': not surprising considering the group was a part of the larger enterprise until a few years ago. However, according to Kyung-Mi and Ji-hae, the ethos of H. S. is more conservative than that of 'conglomerate S'.

In this company, each member has a persona somewhat similar to that of a 'gentleman'. Most employees seem to have an ordinary and well-rounded personality. People are relatively clean and tidy. Our boss emphasizes the cleanliness and tidiness of his enterprise (Kyung-Mi).

The members of this company consist of very obedient and unsophisticated people who adopt the persona of a 'gentleman'. Therefore, the members are not

particularly fascinating and seem like common, everyday people (Ji-Hae).

It should be noted that the owner of H. S. is an elder sister of the current proprietor of 'conglomerate S' as well as being the first daughter of the founder of that prodigious company. Since the owner of the group H. S. is a woman it might be expected that they would provide a beneficial welfare system for their female workers; however, after interviewing some women employees, my assumptions were proved wrong. Nevertheless, in comparison to the other companies, the atmosphere of H. S. is relatively liberal and not overly male-oriented. Kyung-Mi and Ji-Hae describe their male colleagues and bosses as well-rounded individuals, and as 'unsophisticated'. This term indicates a non-masculine characteristic, which indeed is often considered to be a feminine trait within Korean culture.

However, this potentially feminine feature is also linked to the company's conservative characteristics, which the majority of members openly dislike. In the case of H.S., we can observe that even though the owner is a woman, the organisational culture advocates an orderly working environment which is hostile to the notion of a radical reform of the conditions of its female employees. The owner has been educated according to the tenets of a male-dominated management style and the logic of capitalism. In order to be a successful company leader within the Korean context, a woman has to become an 'honorary man' and adopt traditional patriarchal practices. If she instigates reform she will be excluded by mainstream business culture. It is clear that the dominant culture of Korean organisations is characterised as male-dominated and conservative regardless of the owner's biological sex.

5. 'Conglomerate K'

The main industry of group K is within the area of textiles. Textile work has traditionally depended on the labour power of women and been based in the south of Korea. Despite the vast majority of the workforce being female, 'conglomerate K', has done little to consider the welfare of its women employees and its culture is deeply conservative. Ha-Jin stated bluntly: 'This company is very conservative. For example, if married female workers are pregnant, people usually assume that they will give up their job' (Ha-Jin). She was acutely aware of the blatant sex discrimination towards these married employees, and declared that if she were to get married she would resign. Thus, although Ha-Jin appeared to be an active and outspoken woman, she could not face fighting against the company to keep her post. She already knew that her resistance alone could not destroy the firm's overarching conservatism.

Soo-Hee and Mi-Yeon described the typical characteristics of other members: 'The employees of this company are relatively docile' (Soo-Hee). 'The colour of this company is grey. It is very conservative and insular' (Mi-Yeon). The word 'docile', as used by Soo-Hee, seems to suggest a desire for stability. In other words, most members of this firm are relatively satisfied with their present conditions and are not prepared to undergo further difficulties in order to reform their environment. Mi-Yeon also chose the suggestive, but ambivalent, words 'grey' and 'insular'. 'Grey' can simply indicate neutrality when employed in a relatively positive sense; but she seemed to use the word more negatively, to indicate obscurity. Her choice of the term 'insular' clearly indicates the company's reluctance to undertake any form of change. Hence, under these circumstances, the chances for the reform of female workers' conditions are almost non-existent, and thus one cannot

anticipate the introduction of measures for the prevention of sexual harassment within company K.

6. The National Assembly⁷ – Male-centred and Hierarchical

The culture of the National Assembly is a representative example of that which exists within any typical Korean political organisation. Most interviewees point out that the ethos of the National Assembly is extremely male-dominated and male-centred, because the majority of members of parliament are men, with only 5.9 percent being women (see also Table 2). For example, female secretaries usually undertake routine work, such as answering telephones and making cups of tea for office visitors and hence, they have similar thoughts about their office culture. The statements from three interviewees allow us to uncover the specific traits of this particular organisational culture.

The National Assembly is a very male-dominated organisation, because most members of the National Assembly are male, less than ten per cent are female. Therefore, the organisation is conservative and authoritarian (Eun-Young).

The National Assembly is a very conservative organisation. Most of the members have hierarchical attitudes and it is the same in our office as well (Yoon-Hee).

⁷ I mentioned companies by an assumed initial but I now call the National Assembly by a real name as I need to deal with both the specific culture of the National Assembly as a representative of Korean public organisations and the specific position of Korean assemblymen. Despite using the real name, I can protect my interviewees' anonymity since I do not mention the names of assemblymen.

Firstly, we cannot have a private life. Even if I finish my work, I cannot leave the office until my seniors leave the office. It is so hierarchical (Jin-Ju).

These three secretaries repeatedly used the words 'authoritarian' and 'hierarchical' to define their organisational ethos, and I understood both words to have similar meanings in this context. The National Assembly is organised around a strictly ordered hierarchical system, and most workers are employed to assist and support the assemblymen. Their roles are therefore subordinate in character, although they can progress from undertaking routine work to creating policies for their seniors. Workers' private lives are always dismissed: Jin-Ju said that even if she has made prior appointments with family or friends, if her boss requires her to stay in the office she has to cancel these arrangements. It is for these reasons that these women characterise their office culture as strictly hierarchical. The status of these Korean assemblymen, who possess political power beyond the economic and judicial spheres, is the main explanation for this situation of inequality. Most successful professional men, including judges, prosecutors, lawyers, professors and the owners of large enterprises, aspire to become assemblymen. As a consequence, even if these female secretaries are sexually harassed, they have little recourse to effective resistance or opposition. In this sense, the assemblymen can be identified as the epitome of institutional power within Korean organisations.

7. Small Companies: the absence of a system for female workers

In this section, a small company is defined as one which consists of less than fifty employees. Although the majority of women work for small companies, no protective

systems exist for them and therefore the female workers within these firms have greatly suffered from various and serious forms of sexual harassment (Women Link 1994:46-47). As stated by Jeong-Hee: 'We do not have any organisation for female workers such as a trade union, so we cannot talk to our boss officially' (Jeong-Hee). Thus, in contrast to their counterparts in the big firms, female workers in small companies cannot access the welfare system and make legal claims against sex discrimination. The culture of the small company also emphasises the intimacy among its members; that is, a member of a company is defined similarly to a member of a family. If female workers face sexual harassment they find it difficult to make a complaint because the harassers will argue that their actions do not constitute this threatening behaviour, but rather a representation of affection. In this sense, the harassed woman in a small company meets with even more politically charged situations.

In these circumstances, a female worker is unable actively to resist sexual harassment and assert her rights as an employee because of this ideological emphasis upon familial intimacy. Such an ideology is advantageous for the owners of these small firms. For example, the employers feel entitled to ask employees to lengthen their working hours without any extra payment when the company is busy. Therefore, the small companies' culture of intimacy is linked with the privatisation and informality of the workplace, which means that in practice most workers find it more difficult to voice their complaints concerning unequal conditions.

8. The Foreign Company⁸: relatively equal environment

Since the 1970s, a large proportion of foreign companies have begun to settle in Korea. Soo-Won, who works for 'foreign company T', is satisfied with her job. Female workers experience a lesser degree of sex discrimination within these organisations and Soo-Won compared national and foreign companies with regard to this issue:

In this company, female workers do not undertake the routine work: a new recruit will do odd jobs⁹. In comparison to a national company, a foreign firm is good for a female worker. For example, married women can work in a comfortable environment and if they finish their duties, they can leave the office early (Soo-Won).

Soo-Won's statement confirms certain aspects of Korean company culture which are uncomfortable for female workers. In general, there is widespread sex discrimination within Korean businesses, including an inequality of income, lack of opportunities for promotion, unstable employment, and so on. There is apparently no systematic sex discrimination in foreign companies. These firms seem to create relatively satisfactory conditions for their female workers. In my opinion, Korean organisations need to adopt similar policies and practices to as those of the foreign companies.

In conclusion, I would like to re-iterate that despite the existence of cultural differences

⁸ In this account, I use the term 'foreign company' to indicate that the owner is from a country other than Korea; and that the company's system is based on more modern, capitalistic methods.

⁹ 'Odd Jobs' refers to miscellaneous business.

among Korean organisations perpetuated by the different beliefs of the owners, the regional origin of the organisation and the specific types of industry – the typical features of these companies are conservatism, male domination and hierarchy. These analyses are the first steps towards an understanding of organisational culture in Korea. However, I can envisage possible changes by undertaking a comparison of ‘conglomerate S’ and ‘foreign company T’. Recently, many companies have become more aware of their corporate image, and thus more sensitive to cases of sexual harassment in their offices. Reports concerning specific incidents of harassment damage their company profile. For example, the female workers at the L Hotel made an official complaint about the behaviour of some senior staff who were then punished. Subsequently, the owner of the hotel introduced a new code of etiquette in relation to this issue (*Daily Newspaper of Chosun*, 2nd November 2000). Such processes can contribute to a gradual change in the status of female workers, and thus to the incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace. With respect to this examination, in the next section I will move on to an exploration of the gendered culture prevalent within Korean organisations.

II. Gendered Culture within Organisations

Korean organisations are mainly governed by male workers both quantitatively and qualitatively. According to the annual report on the economically active population survey by the Korean National Statistical Office, 58.7 percent is male and 41.3 percent is female and also only 4.9 percent of the higher position such as legislators, senior officials and managers are women (see also Table 2). The number of male workers is higher than the number of female workers and these male employees are also entrusted with the principal duties. Most female employees are assigned minor, supportive tasks. Therefore, these

companies are organised around the principle of a male-dominated and gendered hierarchy. This situation is related to the factor of sexual harassment. According to the Women Link's survey, 40.7 percent of clerical females indicate that the first factor in sexual harassment is due to the male dominated and hierarchical organisational climate and 28.1 percent of female workers answer that the main reason why they are sexually harassed is because of their lower status within workplaces. It is evident that incidents of sexual harassment are closely maintained by the male-dominated and sex discriminatory organisational environment.

Itzin points out that the gender culture in organisations is characterised by a number of distinct and interrelated features - hierarchical and patriarchal, sex-segregated, sexual divisions of labour, sex-stereotyped, sex-discriminatory, a sexualised environment, sexual harassment, sexist, misogynist, resistant to change and power is gendered (Itzin 1996:49-51). In a similar fashion, Korean feminists criticise the various forms of sex discrimination in workplaces, for example, Cho notes that Korean women find it more difficult to obtain a job after they graduate from a higher education institution than do Korean men of similar status (Cho, J. A. 1993:18). In addition, another feminist scholar criticises the common practice whereby Korean companies prefer to employ women workers according to a standard of attractiveness (defined as measuring over 160 metres in height and under 50kg in weight). (Cho, S. K. 1994:29). These are some obvious indications of sex discrimination, and in particular an example of the sexualisation of female bodies, within these organisations. I intend to examine how Korean organisations are characterised by a distinctively gendered culture.

My categorisation of the features of this culture will proceed as follows. Firstly, as it is

related to the inequality of opportunity; secondly, levels of sex discrimination in income and promotion; thirdly, instances of sex discrimination towards married female workers; fourthly, the unstable nature of employment for female workers since the IMF system; and finally, the significance of a uniform for female workers only.

1. Inequality of Opportunity

Korean female workers have not been granted the right to equal opportunities with men, because most Korean people believe that the abilities of women are inferior to those of men. Consequently, women are located in lower status positions commanding lesser incomes and are excluded from promotion prospects. This inequality is related to the features of sex discrimination within the whole of Korean society. Therefore, I intend to investigate these specific features through an analysis of the accounts of interviewees.

Firstly, I identify and examine the nature of the sex-segregated duties of female workers. This term, sex-segregation, is commonly defined as the separation of groups by sex into restricted areas, or separate facilities. Feminist economic theory employs two definitions of segregation: Hakim notes that

horizontal job segregation exists when men and women are most commonly working in different types of occupation- for example women are dress makers and men are tailors, women are cooks and men are carpenters. Vertical segregation exists when men dominate the higher grade and higher paid occupations and jobs, or when men are promoted further up career ladders within occupations- for example men are heads of schools while women are

teachers (Hakim 1996:149).

Korean female workers have suffered from both horizontal and vertical segregation in their workplaces (See also Table 2). They are concentrated in certain types of lower grade jobs. Table 2 demonstrates the majority of Korean women work as a clerical or retail worker, only few women are able to enter professional occupations such as legislators, senior officials and managers.

Table 2. Workers by Occupation and Sex

Unit: Thousand Persons

Total number of female workers (T): 8707		
Category of Occupations	Number (N)	Ratio (N/T x 100)
Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers	24	0.3
Professionals	387	4.4
Clerks	1208	13.9
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	3074	35.3
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	999	11.5
Technicians & Associate Professionals	720	8.2
Craft and related trades workers	633	7.3
Plant & Machine operators	299	3.4
Elementary Occupations	1364	15.7

Source: National Statistical Office, Annual Report on the Economically Active Population Survey (2000).

Eun-Young describes her job position: 'The duties of female secretaries are restricted. Even though male and female secretaries have the same B.A. degree, we are on different grades

in the office. I have to deal with miscellaneous business such as making cups of coffee and answering the telephone, but male secretaries deal with policy-making' (Eun-Young).

The following two female employees are working for an assemblyman in the National Assembly. They also have to undertake miscellaneous business, but they were located in different positions. Yoon-Hee admitted the odd jobs were her duty hence she did not complain about this. However, Jin-Joo had an opposite view.

I think that making a cup of coffee is my duty. Also, I think that I should make cups of coffee for my seniors because they are more than ten years older than me (Yoon-Hee).

The quality of female duties is lower than the quality of male duties. I have a B.A. degree and I can do anything, but I am not allowed to access or make a report and I have to do odd jobs (Jin-Joo).

According to Jin-Joo, even if the qualifications and status of the female secretary is the same as that of the male secretary, the duties of the women employees are still limited to routine work. However, Eun-Young and Jin-Joo said that they both wish, and are able, to undertake more responsible tasks such as making reports and policies, but their duties are restricted simply because they are women

Moreover, Jeong-Hee works for a small company, which specialises in the appraisal of real estate. When she was a new recruit, she undertook routine work even though this was not listed in her post specification, so she claimed that: 'Male workers ask female workers to

colour a map, even though this duty belongs to them. At first, I knew this was my duty so I did it, but it is not my job, so now I do not accept the duty' (Jeong-Hee). However, more recently she has refused the demands of her male senior, because she recognises that she need not perform mundane tasks. Thus we can see that the characteristics of female workers' duties might be changed by the accumulation of work experience.

Hae-Ja, who has worked in various companies over a period of twenty years, discussed both the changes in, and the maintenance of, routine work for female employees.

We are still influenced by sexual stereotypes in the division of labour. For example, when I started in the company in 1981, I had to clean the desks and cups for male workers. At that time, we thought it was our duty as female workers. Also, I had to do such things as buying cigarettes and cleaning ashtrays and also making cups of coffee. However, there is still a sexual division in most companies (Hae-Ja).

Hae-Ja does not undertake these personal services now, both because the office culture has been influenced by more progressive attitudes and she herself is an older and more senior member of staff. Within the Korean context, age is an important factor, because most Korean people are taught that they should observe proper proprieties with respect to their elders. This idea is rooted in the tenets of Confucianism: for instance, one most important belief is that younger people should obey the orders of older persons¹⁰. Therefore, even though female workers are assigned a lower status, younger male workers cannot insist that

¹⁰ This belief is perpetuated by the Confucian fable of 'Chang-Yoo-Yoo-Seo'. This means that the younger should give precedence to the elder.

an older woman should make cups of tea for them.

Hyun-Jae, unlike many other interviewees, suggested the positive aspects of sex-segregated duties: 'When I started to work in this office, I complained about the issue of why female workers had to make cups of coffee; but now I think that I should make cups of coffee because many male workers make cups of coffee for themselves and also they help me too, for example, by carrying heavy things' (Hyun-Jae). At first, she complained, but nevertheless felt that this task was, in some way, a part of her assigned role. Furthermore, if she cannot do something, she asks for help from male workers and thus she perceives sex-segregated duties to be a route to co-operation. Her ideas about this issue are rooted in her personality and attitudes, for she presented a quintessentially feminine, and somewhat passive, manner, and the construction of her femininity is also closely affected by the heterosexual and gendered organizational culture which enforces femininity on women (See also Chapter 3). Most female workers who adopt this persona also accept sex-segregated duties without complaint. In this sense, the sex-segregation of female workers in Korea is interconnected with both horizontal and vertical segregation. This is because both types of segregation are founded upon an under-estimation of the abilities of women employees. Therefore, sex-segregation contributes to ignoring sexual harassment, because this phenomenon is also connected to the unequal position of female and male workers.

I will now examine the sex discrimination experienced by female workers within support services. Many inequalities of opportunity in the Korean workplace are related to the inadequacy of the surrounding support systems. Within this definition I include both 'official' support, such as opportunities for further educational training; and 'psychological' support, such as the encouragement of seniors. The Korean feminist scholar Cho argues that

Korean companies consider the labour power of female workers to be temporary rather than permanent. They expect women will relinquish their jobs after marriage, and thus they do not support the training of female workers (Cho, S. K. 1989:115). It seems that Korean companies regard the labour of female workers as the professional equivalent of a 'reserve army'. According to Hyun-Jae and Soon-Joo, we can see both the differences, and the linkages, between official and psychological support.

Sometimes, when we have a meeting in the bar after a day's work, we complain about why only male workers are supported, why women are never supported. Also, most seniors think that female workers do not make an effort (Hyun-Jae).

Seniors give a male worker a good scolding if they make a mistake, but the attitudes of seniors to female workers are different. After all, they are not interested in whether women do their duty very well or not (Soon-Ju).

From these statements, one might suggest that this unconcern might be linked to the unequal levels of psychological support for women. Most seniors are not interested in the abilities of female workers; thus they do not encourage them to become more capable; hence it is inevitably the male employees who receive favourable reports in their personnel records. Thus, the unequal psychological support accorded to women is related to the unequal official support extended to them.

As stated by Yeon-Joo, even though her senior is a relatively co-operative person, he does not intend to train and help her: 'Male seniors make a plan, and I take charge of the management. The senior does not teach me how to make a plan, so we cannot share the

work even though we belong in the same team' (Yeon-Joo). Therefore, she is forced to learn new areas of work by herself. As a result of this lack of official and psychological support, female workers find it difficult to gain promotion to higher status positions.

Indeed, the unequal level of support available to women is closely connected to the devaluation of the labour of female workers, and this devaluation is also linked to sex-segregated duties and the ideal of female employees as office wives. Pringle notes that the 'office wife' has its origins in debates from the early part of the century, about whether middle class women should work outside the home. The emergence of this role signified that women's primary place was perceived to exist within the home, that additional tasks would only be defined in relation to this function and would be restricted to lower level and supportive roles (Pringle 1989:6). Boo-Young, who has worked as a secretary for ten years, complained about the devaluation of her work.

The view of a female secretary is highly stereotyped. People think that when my boss is absent, I am free and my duty is not professional business, but odd jobs such as making cups of coffee. Also, people think that I am unoccupied. If I say I am busy, people respond with 'why are you busy? You are always free'. Sometimes, a senior says to me, 'what are you doing? Aren't you busy? Please make me a cup of coffee'. When I read a book or when I think about how to organise my work, they think that I am unoccupied. At these times, I get really angry. Therefore, while I give him a cup of coffee I say to him, 'I am not free, I am really busy' (Boo-Young).

The duties of secretaries are defined as strictly routine acts of service in support of their

bosses. Therefore, most people think that the work of a secretary can be undertaken by anyone, without any specific qualifications. They also assume that secretaries have enough time during the daily working period to provide additional private services. Boo-Young was deeply upset by this characterisation. Although she agrees that her post includes a supportive role in relation to her boss, she does not perceive this to be her only function. She is also required to perform miscellaneous tasks for other seniors.

Pringle analyses the role of secretaries as part of a consideration of the term 'career women'. She suggests that 'career woman' remains a contradictory label, for it questions whether it is possible to be a woman and to have a career. Therefore, the secretary as 'career woman' shares the same origin as 'office wife': being a 'wife' is itself portrayed as a 'career' for women (Pringle 1989:16). The secretary's career is defined as undertaking the role of office wife. In the Korean context, the implication of office wives is closely related to the specificity of Korean heterosexuality within marriage whereby a Korean wife is emotionally and financially subordinated to her husband and therefore she should obey him regardless of her wishes and desires (see also Chapter 3). With respect to this situation, female workers as office wives should do emotional labour. Hochschild (1983) points out that 'the secretary who creates a cheerful office that announces her company as "friendly and dependable" and her boss as "up-and-coming", the waitress or waiter who creates an "atmosphere of pleasant dining" [...] – all of them must confront in some way or another the requirements of *emotional labour* [...] Moreover, of all *women* working, roughly one-half have jobs that call for emotional labour' (Hochschild 1983:11). Regardless of characteristics of occupations, the majority of Korean employers require female employees to do emotional labour. For example, in order to create a harmonious environment, female workers should always manage their emotion cheerfully with a smile despite feeling very

upset due to unfair treatment such as sexual harassment. Women's work associated with emotional labour tends to be degraded within the Korean context. Thus, Sun-Woo, who has worked for ten years and is educated to high school level, defined their jobs as purely supportive: 'The duty of female workers is mainly related to supporting the male workers' (Sun-Woo). Mi-Ja also said: 'In the regulation of this company, female workers were defined as the supporters of male workers, so the duties of women were related to supporting the duty of male workers in the past. But now it has changed. The duties of female workers involve practical business' (Mi-Ja).

A 'supporting job' is one in which mostly female workers help with the responsible tasks assigned to their male colleagues. For example, female workers type and photocopy the reports which a male worker has written. The work of the female employees is, therefore, neither one of independence nor of autonomy. This example indicates not merely the degree, but the basic structural forms, of sex-discrimination, because even female workers with B.A. degrees are required to undertake purely supportive jobs.

Yoo-Jin described how she is excluded from the responsible work: 'When we have a meeting in the office, sometimes my senior has the meeting with only the male workers and excludes me. Even though I have an important duty assigned solely to me, he thinks it is merely supportive' (Yoo-Jin). Her senior does not think that it is necessary for her to take part in official meetings, because he feels that she has neither the right, nor the ability, to make decisions which will affect a major project. It is evident that female workers are defined as only office wives and flowers.

Soo-Won indicated that her customers often doubt her competence as a manager: 'Even

though I can perform duties in relation to marketing, a customer does not want to contact me because I am a woman' (Soo-Won). Soo-Won works for a foreign company and, because the corporate culture promotes greater equality of opportunity among women, she has become responsible for major marketing portfolios. However, she experiences problems with her Korean customers, who are less willing to accept female managers. They frequently express doubts about a woman's competence to undertake such a job. This idea is rooted in the belief that women's ability is inferior to that of men. In consequence, the devaluation of female workers, and the specific forms that sex discrimination takes, such as sex segregation, may be rooted in the nature of the gendered culture of most organisations, whereby female workers' duties are defined as supportive rather than major, independent and autonomous. Thus female workers are mainly defined as office wives within the Korean workplace.

In this context, it is also noteworthy that many people think of female workers as the 'flowers of the office'. Consequently, female staff members need to have a beautiful face and body in order to contribute towards the creation of a relaxed and harmonious office environment. The limited abilities of female workers are thus supplemented by their decorative functions. Therefore, when Korean companies employ women, their appearance is implicitly a most important factor. One can perceive the connection between the prevalent image of female workers as 'flowers of the office' and the fact of sexual harassment. Women workers are frequently viewed as sexual objects (Cho, H. J 1994:12; Cho, S. K. 1994:29; Kim, M. S. 2000: 149). According to personnel managers, employers consider 'nice-looking women' more effective as providers of customer service than less attractive women (Kim, M. S. 2000:151). However, Kim critically comments that 'the argument that "attractive" women are necessary to institute more effective customer service

is not all tenable or is at best greatly exaggerated. The physical requirements were actually not confined to customer service positions alone but were equally demanded of every female applicant regardless of the job classification. Therefore, the claim that women's appearance was necessary to ensure high quality customer service is unpersuasive' (Kim, M. S. 2000:151). It is clear that within Korean organisations the physical requirement of female applicants is a form of sex-discrimination as well as the sexual objectification of female bodies. Moreover, female workers with beautiful appearances are expected to do emotional labour such as creating a friendly and pleasant office environment. In relation to this, Boo- Young emphasised how important a secretary's appearance is generally considered to be.

In the employment of a secretary, her appearance is still important. I think that when a company employs a secretary, the reason for her appointment is sixty per cent due to her appearance and forty per cent due to her ability to do the job. However, sometimes, more reasonable bosses consider the qualifications of a secretary, not her appearance, but her ability to do the job. However, most bosses want to get a pretty and glamorous female secretary, because they think that a secretary is the flower of an office (Boo-Young).

The important requirements of a female secretary include a beautiful face and a slim body. As Boo-Young re-iterates, even if a potential secretary does not obtain a good grade in her interview, if her appearance is good, she may be allowed to enter a company. Similarly, Pringle observes that people expect not smart, but sexy, secretaries who are long-legged, big-bosomed and, above all, young (Pringle 1989:13). However, some more radical bosses who recognise the secretary's job as important are not influenced by appearance. But most

bosses insist that a secretary's face must be pretty, because of the widely held belief that his female workers should be the 'flowers of the office'. According to Kim's recent work, 'the criteria for a woman employee's acceptability were not determined solely by employers or personnel managers. Male clerical workers also played an important role in this process. [...] The male workers pressure employers and personnel managers to select 'pretty' women'(Kim 2000:153). Cockburn also suggests that male workers are involved in the process of degradation of female workers (Cockburn 1983). It could be argued that the implication of the office flower is not only that Korean female workers have been seen as sexual objects rather than simply workers but it has also clearly promoted incidents of sexual harassment.

To conclude, inequality of opportunity is thoroughly entrenched by the lower status of female workers. Women employees are excluded from major projects, meetings, and decision-making and exist only to provide support for male workers. Moreover, most seniors do not encourage and train female workers to acquire further expertise. Consequently, the general population perceives women as inferior in mental ability, and to be valued chiefly for their decorative and sexualised physical presence. In other words, a female worker is defined as the flower of an office or as an office wife, and thus their roles are limited to trivial tasks, such as making cups of tea and photocopying. Therefore, sex discrimination within this gendered culture is interconnected with the sexualisation of female workers in the office. As a result, female workers face sex discrimination in the areas of income and promotion. I will examine these issues in the next section.

2. Sex-discrimination in income and promotion

One of the official definitions of sex discrimination is the disparity of income between male and female workers. Table 3 shows patterns in the wage group of female workers in comparison to male workers.

Table 3. Workers¹⁾ by Wage Group²⁾ and Sex

Unit: Persons, Percentage

	Female			Male			Ratio (F/Mx100)
	Workers	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Workers	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	
Total	1765005	100.0		3970067	100.0		44.5
300.0- 499.9	70240	4.0	4.0	33595	0.8	0.8	227.9
500.0- 799.9	504183	28.5	32.5	310141	7.8	8.7	138.0
800.0- 1099.9	477584	27.0	59.6	543770	13.8	22.4	69.5
1100.0- 1399.9	282407	15.9	75.6	615943	15.5	37.9	35.5
1400.0- 1699.9	156564	8.9	84.5	598686	15.1	52.9	22.3
1700.0- 1999.9	102103	5.8	90.3	516820	13.0	66.0	19.3
2000.0- 2599.9	104166	5.9	96.2	677164	17.1	83.0	13.3
2600.0- 3000.0 over	67758	3.9	100.0	673948	16.9	100.0	8.8

Note: ¹⁾ Includes establishments with 10 workers or more before 1998 and with 5 workers or more since 1998

²⁾ Average Monthly Wage = Monthly Wage + (Annual Bonus x 1/12)

Source: Ministry of Labour, Survey Report on wage structure (2001)

This table shows that 59.6% of female workers earned less than below 1100 thousand won (approximately 611pounds)¹¹ whereas only 22.4% of male workers are located in the same

¹¹ This currency rate is flexible because the rate changes day by day. Thus I calculate the amount of money by the approximate rate (1 pound / 1800 Won).

group. Around half of male workers belonged to the wage group below 1700 thousand Won (approximately 944 pounds). Moreover, only 3.9 % of women earn the big amount of money (2600 thousands to 3000 thousands over) whereas 16.9% of men are located in the highest wage group. This table demonstrates that the majority of female workers clearly belonged to the lower wage group in comparison to male workers.

In the Korean context, sex discrimination in income is often justified by men's compulsory period of military service. Most Korean men have to take part in some type of military service between the ages of twenty and twenty four years, for a span of two years and two months. This is a consequence of the division of Korea into North and South. In the military, Korean men are trained in the dominant precepts of masculinity and hierarchy. Therefore, it is a commonplace among Korean people to believe that males only become 'real men' when they enter the army (Cho, S. S. 1997: 159). During this period, they learn the values of obedience and submission within a hierarchy. Male workers who undertake military service receive financial compensation money from their company, and therefore the income of male staff members is higher than that of women who share the same responsibilities. However, the sex-discriminatory income system is related not solely to compensation for military service but also to the division of sex-segregated jobs perpetuated by male-dominated organisational climates. In relation to this, Jeong-Hee made a complaint to her boss about the unreasonable nature of the prevailing system, but she failed in her attempt to have her income increased: 'We cannot get a monthly allowance because our duty is typing, but workers on the reception desk can get a monthly allowance. So we complained to our boss officially through our senior, but we have not received an answer about our opinions and needs' (Jeong-Hee). In small companies, the requirements of female workers tend to be ignored.

Even though Soo-Won works for a foreign company in which sex discrimination is less evident, she has experienced inequality of opportunity: 'There are cases of sex discrimination such as lesser income and unequal opportunities for promotion, but I think we need to endure it and to work hard, because this society consists mainly of men' (Soo-Won). She believes that if female workers want to gain promotion and a higher income, they have to work harder than their male colleagues and prove their superiority to men of equivalent status. Even though this situation is a clear form of sex discrimination, female workers endure and overcome the situation without any complaint.

Both Eun-Young and Boo-Young also claimed the whole system of promotion was based on a principle of sex discrimination:

We cannot be admitted as secretaries. I am on the ninth grade. I cannot be promoted to the upper grade (Eun-Young).

In the race for promotion, the chance of promotion for female workers occurs two years later than that for male workers: also seniors mainly support the work of men and give good reports of them. At that time, I could not understand why, despite working hard and very well, I could not be promoted (Boo-Young).

Eun-Young, who works for the National Assembly, said that the grades of female secretary were lower than the grades for male secretaries, even when staff of both sexes possessed the same B.A. degree. Within the Korean National Assembly, the work of male secretaries is related to making a policy and supervising female secretaries whereas female secretaries

undertake odd jobs such as making cups of tea and receiving phone calls. Therefore, male secretaries belong to the fifth or seventh grade but females only belong to the ninth grade. Boo-Young works as a secretary in H securities and has observed that female workers find it difficult to gain promotion because most seniors give better reports of their male peers. She is upset about the company bias in favour of male workers. Boo-Young's statement indicates that the difficulty of promotion in female workers is closely interrelated to the lack of support system for female workers.

From the statements of the four women below from different companies, Korean female workers have experienced remarkably similar problems in the struggle for promotion.

We need to pass an examination to gain promotion. As female workers, we qualify for the examination after ten years. However, female workers who have only graduated from high school find it difficult to gain promotion in this company (Hyun-Jae).

In order to be promoted, we need to pass an examination, but I need to wait for eight or nine years, it is so difficult for female workers (Min-Ae).

Until three years ago, female workers who had graduated from high school could be promoted, but we needed to pass an examination. Even though I was promoted, my duty and conditions have not changed although I have more responsibility. For example, our closing hour is around six pm, but I cannot leave at that time. Also, male colleagues and seniors usually do not accept my promotion, because even though I have been promoted, I am still performing

the duties assigned to most female employees, such as routine tasks (Mi-Ja).

It takes between eight and ten years to be promoted, but male workers can be promoted after two to four years (Mee-Soon).

The general conclusions one can draw from the experiences of these women within several different companies are that firstly, only women have to pass an examination to qualify for promotion; and yet still they must wait many more years than male workers to gain advancement. Secondly, even after they are promoted, women still have to perform routine tasks for their male colleagues, which indicates that female promotion is not a step towards greater responsibility, but merely a formality.

Moreover, Yeon-Joo points out that female workers find it extremely difficult to gain promotion to the highest positions, such as the head of their department: 'The percentage of female workers is less than ten per cent. When I go to search for candidates for a head of department post, I cannot find a female candidate' (Yeon-Joo). Yeon-Joo educates workers at L electrics, in return for a monetary payment. She has run the education program for potential heads of departments for five years, and has never met a female head. Thus, it is clear that it remains extremely difficult for female workers to access opportunities for higher status jobs in their workplaces. Only 4.9% of senior officials are women (see also Table 2). The main reason for this seems to be the obstacles they face in maintaining their jobs after they marry and they subsequently have children. I will explore sex discrimination against married women in detail in the next section.

In conclusion, Korean female workers still experience serious sex discrimination within the

areas of income and promotion. One cannot isolate a single factor as the cause of their predicament. One must look instead to the interconnection of various ideologies and practices, such as the reasons for initial unequal opportunity based on a strictly gendered organisational culture, which maintains sex-segregated areas of work and constructs its women workers as office wives and flowers. These diverse aspects of sex discrimination result in the most obvious forms of discrimination we have just discussed, those of lower income and the difficulty of promotion. In the same vein, I will examine the relationship between sex discrimination and female workers' married lives in the next section.

3. Sex discrimination against married female workers

Married female employees suffer from various forms of sex discrimination in the Korean workplace. This is strongly connected with the specificities of Korean heterosexuality within marriage, whereby a wife is defined as the property of her husband. Thus, married female workers are regarded as a supporter for the domestic economy rather than as a breadwinner. The implication for married female workers results in diverse forms of sex discrimination within Korean organisations. Moreover, the discrimination towards married females is closely related to that of unmarried females as the majority of unmarried women will marry and hence they are able to encounter diverse forms of sex discrimination against married women in the future. In this circumstance, the way in which married and unmarried women are treated are not markedly different.

Firstly, during pregnancy, their rights are almost non-existent. Even though legislation exists which states that the period for maternity leave is sixty days, women are uneasy about availing themselves of this right, as they then find it difficult to keep their jobs

afterwards. This fear is related to their generally insecure status in the workplace, which I will subsequently examine. Sometimes, female workers are fired when they return from maternity leave, and also during the IMF system. In general, women seem to be defined as a 'reserve army', rather than as 'breadwinners'. Finally, I will investigate the double duties of female workers. There is no social support for married women workers in Korea, and therefore they have to undertake work both in the office and at home. Through this exploration, I will suggest some specific facts about the nature of the sex discrimination which married female workers endure.

I firstly explore the lack of a welfare system for pregnant workers. The shortage of protection for maternity rights derives from the generally restrictive views about pregnancy. In Korea, women's pregnancies seem to be perceived not as a form of social reproduction, but as a part of private life only. Therefore, Korean companies avoid employing married women of child-bearing age. The objections to pregnant women are diverse, but one is intrinsically related to the aforementioned image of the female worker as 'flower of the office'. Jin-Ju stated: 'When I was pregnant, I thought to myself, many visitors do not like a pregnant woman serving a cup of coffee as a secretary' (Jin-Ju). Jin-Ju said that Korean people think that it is unsuitable for a pregnant woman to work as a secretary, because her pregnancy conflicts with her ornamental role. Thus a female worker is expected to possess conventional sex appeal, which a pregnant woman apparently cannot aspire to.

Similarly, according to Kyung-Mi and Mi-Ja, the office environment seems hostile towards expectant mothers.

Even though I am pregnant, I have to do extra work in the evening. Also, my

colleagues do not consider the fact that I need to go to see a midwife regularly. I do not want to ask permission to leave the office early when I need to see the midwife. I think that if I am equal to male colleagues, I should not have to ask for extra help because of my pregnancy (Kyung-Mi).

To keep my job, I have to make an effort. Even though I had maternity leave for two months, I had to take care of my duties during the leave. Two weeks after giving birth, for example, I went to the office to work. If I wanted to keep my job without any claims and complaints being made against me, I had to do it (Mi-Ja).

Thus in order to continue with their jobs, these women had to perform their regular duties throughout their 'maternity leave'. Kyung-Mi found it difficult to arrange visits to her midwife for important medical examinations during the daytime. Her seniors and other colleagues neglected her medical needs, and she was unable to turn to them for any support.

Mi-Ja also describes the hostile environment in relation to an office party: 'I think I need to go to the office party, even if I am a married woman. Even though I was pregnant, I went to the office party' (Mi-Ja). Usually, the office party is held after work. Therefore, the necessity to attend can cause a pregnant woman great discomfort, because the main activity is drinking. Far from being enjoyable, it is a deeply stressful experience for these women. I will undertake a more detailed analysis of the significance of office parties in the next section.

Yeon-Joo and Ha-Jin have not undergone any pregnancies; but if they ever do become

pregnant, they will give up their jobs because they are well aware of the hostility which is directed towards pregnant women.

I do not want to think about being a woman, but usually if a female worker is pregnant, she has to give up her job. Also, we cannot get equal opportunities within our posts (Yeon-Joo).

If I become pregnant, nobody will directly say to me, 'leave this company', but pregnant female workers feel that male seniors, and other colleagues, do not want them to stay. This company does not provide a good environment for married women (Ha-Jin).

Both Yeon-Joo and Ha-Jin believe that mothers are unwelcome in Korean workplaces. It is clear that the hostile environment towards married female workers makes unmarried female workers feel uncomfortable and give up their future career after either marriage or child-bearing. I would argue that sex discrimination towards married female workers is explicitly linked with that towards unmarried females.

One can perceive that married female workers have a deeply unstable employment status. They experience various forms of pressure in the office, as a direct consequence of their marital status. Boo-Young has worked as a secretary for ten years, and is unmarried, but she nevertheless feels that her position is precarious: 'Before I marry, I will try to transfer to another department, because people think that it is not proper for a married woman to work as a secretary. My senior secretary worked as a secretary after marriage but people did not like it, so she transferred to another job' (Boo-Young). This is because the Korean secretary

is popularly imagined as young, pretty and glamorous and also the appearance of secretaries is an important factor in performing emotional labour as office wives and flowers.

According to the three women below, most male workers have negative views about marriage among their female colleagues.

When I got married, a senior told me 'you need to find a successor'. I said to him, 'why are you saying this? Are you my boss or the head of the personnel department? You cannot say this to me. If you say this to me again, I will report you'. After this incident, no one said anything about my position after marriage (Kyung-Mi).

When I said to my senior, "I will be getting married", the senior said, "why are you getting married so early?" After a marriage, they try to isolate the woman at the office party, for example, they say that 'the married woman cannot drink alcohol'. Usually, the general view about the marriage of female workers is negative (Min-Ae).

Usually, people thought that if we got married and pregnant, we had to give up our jobs. But, when I was married and pregnant, I was young and so I did not want to give up my job, so I considered what I could do. However, I was able to keep my job because the members of my department, and my seniors, were nice people (Mi-Ja).

Kyung-Mi was very upset about being asked to find a successor. She recognises that the enforced retirement of married female workers is illegal and unfair. This is because female workers are allowed to take 90 days¹² maternity leave legally and the owners should not give the female workers with maternity leave unequal and uncomfortable treatment within the regulation in relation to equality of employment (The Committee for Women of the National Assembly 1998: 270). However, in reality, owners tend to be reluctant to give female workers maternity leave. Min-Ae also faced a negative response to her marriage. This was because married women are expected to undertake domestic work, and the care of husband and children, so it is difficult for them to find the time to play a similar role at the office party. Once again, we can see the connections between these expectations and the roles of 'office flower' and 'office wife', which we identified earlier. Mi-Ja also considered retirement because of her married status and subsequent pregnancy.

Furthermore, Mee-Soon stated that when a woman employee marries a male colleague, it is generally expected that she will leave the company: 'When a female worker gets married to a man in the same company, the company recommends that the woman give up her job' (Mee-Soon). Hyun-Jeong also said: 'My husband was one of my colleagues, so I needed to leave the company in the IMF system. Many female workers were in a similar position to me and left the company at that time' (Hyun-Jeong). Generally, bosses prefer that a married couple do not work for the same company. Therefore, the woman is required to leave. There are several intertwining assumptions that combine to produce this belief. Firstly, it is believed that male workers are the 'breadwinners'; secondly, that if a married couple work together and face a difficult professional situation, they will blur the distinction between

¹² Since July 2000 the regulation of the period of maternity leave has been reformed from 60 days to 90 days.

public duty and private emotion, and thus be unable to work rationally and effectively. But, however valid this worry may be, the decision that female workers must be the ones to relinquish their jobs is an obvious form of sex discrimination.

One of the major problems for married female employees is that they are subject to a 'double burden'. They have to work both in the office and at home. However, they find it difficult to voice their objections, because in the context of Korean culture, their circumstances will be generally perceived not as the consequence of an existing social problem, but of an individual choice. Thus if they do not want to endure a 'double burden' of work, they can resign from their posts and remain at home. Therefore, senior members of staff seem completely oblivious to the impossible workloads of their female employees, as Hae-Ja observes.

Usually married women experience sex discrimination. When we have an office party, if a married staff member misses the party because she has to do some domestic work, her male colleagues and seniors cannot understand the reason for her absence (Hae-Ja).

In fact, married women often find it difficult to participate in the office party, because they have to undertake both domestic work and childcare after their paid job has finished for the day. But their absence makes them easy targets for criticism. They cannot attend the parties because no social support systems, such as childcare schemes and the socialization of domestic work, exist for their benefit. Therefore, when they want to get married and pregnant, they worry about their future work prospects. In particular, they are often the first employees to be fired during a period of economic crisis. This is another consequence of

the fact that women are not perceived as independent breadwinners.

Within this context, I now propose to examine the instability of employment for married female workers since the introduction of the IMF system. At this time, large companies tried to reduce their personnel, and at first, the majority of those fired were women. According to Korean national statistics, thirty three percent of female workers were unemployed during this time (Bae 1998:1).¹³ Moreover, companies have avoided employing women since the IMF system was introduced. The first indication of the increasingly unstable employment situation for women was their gradual shift from permanent to temporary work. Kim, who is an officer for the national trade union for female workers, complains that since the arrival of the IMF system, female labour has been deployed in an irregular fashion. For example, employers force female staff members to accept a temporary contract; if they do not agree to accept this offer, they will be fired and the employer will hire a new temporary worker (Kim, Ji-Hyun 2000:2). Even though a large number of female workers had suffered sexual harassment during the IMF system, they were unable to resist sexual harassment due to the unstable position of female workers (*Daily Newspaper of Joongang*, 16th Feb. 1998). Kyung-Mi has discovered that the numbers of temporary female employees are increasing.

In the past, there were temporary female workers. If they experienced unequal treatment, they could not complain. Also, after the IMF system was introduced, a head could fire a female married worker, so the women employees had no resistance (Kyung-Mi).

¹³ This source is derived from the magazine, 'Working Women', published on the World Wide Web by the feminist body for female workers.

She also found that female workers find it difficult to protest against their fragile employee rights because they risk losing their jobs. Ha-Jin's account provides an insight into the nature of their employment situation: 'Because of the IMF system, this company does not employ female workers with a B.A. qualification. Also, female workers with high school qualifications are only taken on as temporary workers' (Ha-Jin). She also pointed out that since the implementation of the IMF system, female workers have not been employed as permanent staff members¹⁴.

Once again, we can observe that many female workers have been dismissed since the introduction of the IMF system, because they are not perceived as breadwinners, but as a reserve army of labour in both eastern and western societies (Bruegel, 1982: 106-107; Women Link 1998:3-4). However, in reality, female workers frequently shoulder the role of breadwinner. According to Korean national statistics in 1996, the number of families that contain only a mother and child has reached 800 thousand; the number of female-headed single families has peaked at 900 thousand; and the number of female householders now stands at two million. Thus vast numbers of women workers are both householders and breadwinners. Yet most employers deny the existence of this reality. The three women I quote from below said that elderly and female workers were always the first to be considered for dismissal.

After the start of the IMF system, there was a list of workers to be fired from my company. The list consisted of old female workers, so my female seniors

¹⁴ The number of casual employees is 23.4 percentage among the total female paid employees (National Statistical Office 2001).

were fired. I was worried about it (Mi-Ja).

Last year, 529 workers gave up their jobs. Most of them were old and female staff. They were pressured to give up their jobs, both directly and indirectly (Sun-Woo).

Within the IMF system, most female seniors retire and live on a pension. If female workers have kept their job for ten years, male colleagues wonder why they don't give it up (Yoo-Jin).

In the Korean context, the term 'old' is not actually used to refer to elderly workers. Usually, women over the age of thirty are considered 'old'. When they reach that age, they are entitled to retirement pensions if they leave their job voluntarily. If they disagree with the offer, they are liable to be fired without a pension. The main reason that companies want to fire older female members of staff is because they have to pay higher salaries to women who have contributed many years of service. In addition, such women are usually more assertive and thus more difficult to control. They are aware of the various forms of sex discrimination, have experienced many personal instances of it, and are more likely to make official complaints. Mee-Soon, who is a member of a trade union, was offered retirement by her senior.

In December 1998, my senior asked me to retire with a pension, but I rejected it. At that time, I was working on a new project with another senior. The senior said to me, 'do not retire, I think that you have a valuable role to play in this project.' If the senior had not asked me, I could not have stayed. At that time,

many married and older female workers retired on pensions (Mee-Soon).

If she had not been working for the new project, she could certainly have been fired because she is an old, married and female worker who is also a member of a trade union. We can see how married women employees occupy a most unstable position during an economic crisis. Any such crisis provokes a severe personal crisis for these women.

To conclude, married female workers are located in the worst marginal positions in relation to every aspect of employment, including income levels, job security and access to welfare systems. They are vulnerable to many forms of sex discrimination. One might suggest that married female workers are the most disadvantaged group of employees. As I already mentioned above, the sex discrimination against married female workers is closely connected to that of unmarried females as most unmarried workers will marry and they will also encounter diverse forms of sex discrimination as married female workers. As a result of this, it could be argued that the sex discrimination against married workers is principally affected by both the male-dominated organisational culture and marriage as a hegemonic form of heterosexuality, thereby seeing wives as the property and dependence of husbands. Furthermore, due to lack of female seniors within Korean workplaces, female workers are unable to identify female seniors as their role model.

4. A uniform for female workers only

A peculiarity of Korean companies is the fact that female workers are required to wear a uniform in the office. The uniform both emphasises their lower status and tends to further the tendency towards sexual objectification and therefore the existence of uniforms solely

for female workers might be a typical example of how Korean organisational culture is both gendered and sexualised. In a similar vein, Adkins has criticised 'the controls on what women should wear and how, together with all the other conditions relating to women's appearance, acted as processes through which women were sexualised – that is to say, they served to turn women into sexualised actors, or rather into sexual "objects" for men's use. [...] These uniform requirements meant the women were often subject to sexual attention from men, whether customers, co-workers or management' (Adkins 1992:217). Thus the requirements of a specific uniform for female workers are closely related to gender and sexual discrimination, and hence particular meanings within the Korean workplace.

My initial consideration is its role in downgrading the status of female employees. When female workers with a B.A. degree enter companies, they often reject the idea of wearing a uniform. They feel that it promotes the image of women as purely supportive workers, and therefore constitutes a form of sex discrimination. Jeong-Mi observed that the uniform indicates a lower status, and thinks that if she gains promotion she will not wear one: 'Only female workers have to wear a uniform, but if we are promoted, we do not need to wear it' (Jeong-Mi). However, most female workers do have to wear a uniform, because they find it difficult to gain promotion. Yeon-Joo has also considered the implications of the uniform in the office context.

I really don't like wearing a uniform. When I started with this company I had to wear a uniform even though I did not want to wear it. Because of it, female workers are seen as women and not as workers. If I present my opinion in the meeting, the opinion is seen as the opinion not of a worker, but of a woman (Yeon-Joo).

Therefore, the presence of the uniform only serves to encourage male workers and seniors to regard their female colleagues as 'office wives'.

The style of the uniforms also acts to emphasise conventional feminine traits. Usually, the uniform is designed as a suit, but is composed of a mini skirt and tight jacket. Many owners believe that the uniform symbolises the corporate image. Min-Hee, who works as a secretary, said that her uniform is intended to represent tidiness and femininity: 'We need to wear a uniform because we are the secretaries for the boss of this company; also people want female workers to be tidy and feminine' (Min-Hee). The uniform may be another facet of the identity of the idealised female worker, the 'flower of the office'. In her discussion of a different cultural context, Adkins hints at a similar sexualisation of female employees: that 'the women at the hotel had to wear skirts and wear them at a particular length, and they had to wear sheer stockings and not only polished shoes but high-heeled shoes; while the women who were workers in the bar at the leisure park were required to wear full skirted gingham dresses and these had to be pulled down over their shoulders: off the shoulder' (Adkins 1992:217). However, she is discussing the sexualised appearances of female workers in relation to specific industries. In Korean organisations, most female staff members have to wear a feminine, even sexualised uniform, regardless of the nature of their duties. In this sense, the wearing of a uniform is related to the more general issues surrounding gender and sexuality within organisations. It could be argued that the existence of uniform only for female workers defines female workers as office wives with femininity and as office flowers with sexual attraction within Korean organisations.

The biggest disadvantage of the uniform is its frequent unsuitability for work. According to

Yoo-Jin and Mi-Ja, their uniforms are extremely impractical and uncomfortable.

Only women workers need to wear this uniform. It is so uncomfortable: even though we do not like wearing this uniform, we cannot voice our opinion to our boss (Yoo-Jin).

Our uniform is not suitable for work. It is too tight. Also, female workers with a degree did not want to wear the uniform. At that time, we had some conflict with the female workers. Because they did not want to wear it, neither did we. The uniform was finally abolished (Mi-Ja).

The uniform was clearly designed for decorative rather than practical use, and on this basis many of my interviewees complained about having to wear it. In recent years, the widespread system of uniform for women has started to decline. Since the economic crisis, many companies have abolished the system altogether because it is too costly. Soo-Hee's and Mee-Soon's accounts indicate how it has been dismantled.

When I was employed, the uniform had gone. At that time, I felt some inward conflict. I did not want to wear a uniform, so I did not wear it even though other female workers had worn it. At that time the system of the uniform was abolished. (Why? Because of your action?) No, because this company was considering the abolition of the uniform, and because the needs of female workers were in harmony with the needs of the company, and so the system could be abolished (Soo-Hee).

Many female workers disagreed with the abolition of uniform, because if it was abolished they would need to wear a suit and could not wear casual clothes such as jeans, T-shirts and sneakers. However, the uniform was abolished because it was a means of limiting expenditure, and also because the issue of equality had been raised by the trade union (Mee-Soon).

To conclude, the dress code of female uniforms is still related to femininity and a uniform for female workers also indicates that they are regarded as being of inferior status to their male peers, and that their main roles are ones of adornment. This system therefore also has the effect of regulating women's bodies and controlling the expression of their sexuality. The system can be seen not only as a blatant form of sex discrimination, but also as a means of oppressing female sexualities within the organisational context.

In this section, I have examined how Korean organisational culture is gender biased and male dominated, and hence how female workers experience various forms of sex discrimination. Nevertheless, most female workers do not actively resist discrimination, but generally accept it despite their recognition of its existence. The main reason for their submission is the endemic job insecurity they have faced since the introduction of the IMF system, which makes them fear that any complaint will be met with a threat of dismissal. Furthermore, women find it difficult to believe that even if they do resist their office culture, they will succeed in reforming it. The highly gendered and male dominated Korean organisational culture seems impervious to attempts by female employees to improve their working conditions. While there have been some changes, e.g. abolition of uniform, the reforms were for other reasons (cost) rather than women's needs. Thus women also find it difficult to combat sexual harassment. In the next section, I will investigate this sexualised

organisational culture with particular reference to the forms of leisure activity that flourish in Korea. An examination of this facet of the workplace will uncover additional factors, which will allow us to understand precisely how this environment is sexualised; and how the construction of leisure activities contributes to the nature and incidence of sexual harassment.

III. The Leisure Culture of Organisations

Sean has pointed out the key features of the leisure culture within Korean companies. She notes that the employers attempt to instil a spirit of co-operation in their employees and emphasise the importance of relationships among members by organising various events including picnics, workshops, athletic meetings and office parties. By these means, leisure activities are defined as not merely opportunities for enjoyment, but as an extension of one's daily work and a demonstration of loyalty. Sean also observes that the leisure program, therefore, replicates the hierarchical, male dominated working relationships among the organisational members. Staff members are pressured into participating in an event they would rather avoid, and the specific schedule is organised around the interests of the male workers: we have already observed that the principal activity at the office party is the heavy consumption of alcohol (Sean 1997:192). Therefore, this leisure culture also seems to neglect to consider the needs of female workers and thus tends to isolate them. Within the specific context of the office party, moreover, the women are blatantly construed as sexual objects. I intend to explore this particular event in greater detail, because it is the most common, and popular, type of corporate leisure activity; and because it is the one

which generates a considerable number of complaints from women. Firstly, I explore the features and problems of the office party on the basis of the accounts of several female employees. I will then move on to consider other forms of leisure, and whether women have found these to be equally male-centred.

The main purpose of the office party is to drink various kinds of alcohol. Beon points out that many male workers believe a 'drinking culture' is a means of maintaining good relationship with their colleagues. Therefore, in order to clinch a business deal, they will drink with their co-workers and potential buyers. During this period, they are served and entertained by female hostesses. As a consequence in the context of the office party male members of staff have a strong tendency to regard their female colleagues not as workers, but as similarly sexualised objects (Beon 1997:233).

Most Korean companies require that their employees are able to cope with the consumption of large amounts of alcohol, and that they are familiar with the convention of a business meeting accompanied by drinking. Therefore, some companies will interview candidates for employment and demand that they drink alcohol throughout their oral examination. Many employers believe that a person's job capability is directly connected to their ability to remain unaffected by alcohol (Sean 1997:195). One of the consequences of this widespread 'drinking culture' is violence towards female workers. The office party plays a crucial role in this culture.

The 'drinking culture' is characterised by extremely heavy and rash alcohol consumption. For example, Korean men drink various kinds of alcohol for extensive periods of time and often throughout the night. It thus becomes a daily habit. If men reject these practices, they

are excluded from mainstream male culture and therefore many male workers also suffer greatly as a consequence of this enforced regime (Beon 1997:234). Hyun-Jae enjoys drinking with her colleagues, but she feels that the office party is merely an extension of daily work: 'When I drink with my colleagues, I am relaxed and comfortable, but when we have to have an office party with our seniors or boss, it is a kind of duty' (Hyun-jae). Thus the event signified for them not an enjoyable occasion, but a tiresome obligation. When Yeon-Joo was a new recruit, she was pressured into drinking alcohol: 'When I was a new recruit, we had a welcoming party for all the new recruits; at that time, I drank a lot of alcohol compulsorily. Seniors praised me. I thought that they harassed me' (Yeon-Joo). This requirement is part of a traditional ceremony for new recruits in Korean companies. It is a tradition which has been influenced by military culture. When men join the army as a new recruit, they experience a similar ceremony of heavy drinking. Because of compulsory military service, military culture inevitably influences the ethos of all other organisations, because the majority of their members are men and most of them experienced military service.

Cho, a Korean feminist researcher, notes that men who experience army service are initiated into the norms of male dominated culture, the logic underlying traditional power relations, violence, and the objectification of women. They are isolated from society and live only with men for two years within a violent and hierarchical system. Thus they attempt to seek relaxation through the purchase of sex, pornographic films and magazines (Cho, S. S. 1997: 155-157). Conversely, female workers, who have not experienced such a regime, feel deeply uncomfortable with 'drinking', and similar, ceremonies. Jeong-Mi said that her seniors force women staff members to drink, in order to facilitate the creation of a harmonious environment: 'After dinner, we usually drink, but three female workers of our

team do not like to drink wine and some seniors have forced them to join in by saying “why don’t you drink? Can’t you drink to create a harmonious environment?” (Jeong-Mi). I asked her what a ‘harmonious environment’ consists of. It seems to mean that even if female workers do not want to drink alcohol, they must do so in order to preserve, and implicitly show approval of, the prevailing atmosphere. But this environment is clearly created for the benefit of the male and senior members of the staff, rather than for their women colleagues. Therefore, even if the senior’s order is unreasonable, or an incitement to violence, the female workers must obey it.

Official office parties are held once a month within Korean organisations. Through the statements of the two interviewees below, we can construct an image of a typical office party.

When we have an office party or a picnic, most activities are related to drinking alcohol from opening to closing time. Sometimes, we sing a song or play a game (Hae-Ja).

Our culture is one of pretence. When we drink with our seniors, some male workers pretend to be loyal. For example, drinking from a big glass signifies loyalty to the boss (Soon-Ju).

Hae-Ja’s account indicates that drinking is the dominant entertainment within the organisational leisure culture. However, Soon-Ju criticises the foolishness and hypocrisy of its rituals. Yet the content of these rituals, such as drinking to show loyalty to one’s boss, clearly illustrates the hierarchical and male-centred origins of this culture. Within this

context, female workers are often seen as the sexual objects of the office party. The room salon culture encourages this male response. A 'Room Salon' is a type of drinking bar peculiar to Korea. When people go to drink in a room salon, they occupy a closed room and expect to receive sexual services from a young woman. Any kind of sexual behaviour is permitted here except sexual intercourse. Jeong- Mi and Ha-Jin talked about the behaviour of men in room salons.

I know that when men go to drinking bars or room salons, they play with the hostess and touch her body. I asked the married male seniors, 'even though they are Christians, they behave like this?' But if they want to be regarded as a normal and sociable person, they need to accept, and to participate in, this leisure culture (Jeong-Mi).

Because of the nature of my duties, I often go to the room salon with male workers. I think that although Korean men get married, they still want to enjoy sexual freedom. They enjoy other women, and they are proud of having an affair (Ha-Jin).

According to Jeong-Mi, Korean men who are defined by their peers as 'normal' and 'sociable' often 'play' with room salon hostesses. The 'play' includes strip shows, dancing, singing and petting. The hostesses have to do anything that their customers require. Moreover, Ha-Jin believes that the majority of Korean men have extra-marital affairs and feel proud of their behaviour. Within this sexual climate, many male workers apparently find it difficult to distinguish between female workers at an office party and hostesses from the room salons. Consequently, their female colleagues often find that they are the targets

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There are two female workers in this department. When we have an office party, if we sit side by side, a senior asks us “why do you sit side by side? Sit between your male colleagues”. Sometimes, the seats between the head and boss are empty. It means we have to sit there. Depending on the nature of the situation, I decline or agree to sit there (Ji-Hae).

‘To sit beside male seniors’ is actually a euphemism for serving food and wine to these men. In such a situation, women feel themselves to be occupying the role of hostess and are often deeply uncomfortable and unhappy; but they find it difficult to resist their seniors’ demands because this behaviour is widespread and has become normalised. The compulsory nature of this female service can be defined as a type of sexual harassment. For example, drunken male workers try to touch the woman’s body, and the women have few powers of resistance, for any complaint will be met with an accusation that they are spoiling the ‘harmonious atmosphere’. Hence, women are placed in ‘dual roles’ at the office party.

In addition, the ‘drinking culture’ plays a role in the imposition of force and violence. Korean women are inculcated with the belief that a woman should not drink to excess, and we have already noted that they often avoid drinking when possible. However, they are frequently expected to drink at university and at company functions: ‘Male workers say, “we cannot refuse to drink, so why can female workers refuse to drink?” They wish female workers would drink a lot and play with them cheerfully at office parties. However, when they are drunk, we are not drunk and we do not want to be distracted’ (Min-Hee). Min-Hee states that she cannot be cheerful and engage in horseplay with drunken men; she cannot

drink very much and does not enjoy being in this environment.

Yeon-Joo's account demonstrates starkly why it is impossible for female workers to enjoy the 'drinking culture': 'When I go to the drinking bar where hostesses are serving, I am so confused and upset. The screen shows a type of pornography. Therefore, I cannot stay in the situation because I feel so uncomfortable and humiliated' (Yeon-Joo). Being expected to watch pornography is a form of sexual harassment and therefore female workers are unable to enjoy the office party. In recent years, many Korean women have begun to drink more alcohol, but this 'female drinking culture' is very different from the male equivalent. For example, women drink together as a means of establishing a greater degree of communication with each other. However, most men simply enjoy drinking, so at an office party, they do not talk about their opinions and experiences but only seek pleasure from the pornographic material. There is thus an implicit relationship between men's drinking, and their sexual behaviour and needs. This often results in the humiliation of women.

Ju-Mi has pointed out the connection between the drinking and military cultures: 'In the bar, some male workers often talk about their army experiences. During these times, I feel isolated and angry' (Ju-Mi). I have already discussed the nature of Korean military culture. As most Korean men have undergone military service, they spend a great deal of time talking about their experiences. Naturally, many female workers feel bored and excluded. It is vitally necessary to discover why the 'drinking culture' has become such a dominant strand within the wider context of organisational leisure culture. Beon believes that this state of affairs is due to the association which Korean men make between alcohol and intimacy. Most men believe that drinking with someone encourages both persons to relax, and thus talk more freely, about business and other issues (Beon 1997:233).

In this sense, Korean companies are governed according to the tenets of the philosophy of 'Sool-Sangmoo'. An approximate English translation of this phrase is 'a manager for drinking business'. It means that the 'drinking culture' is not positioned only within the spheres of entertainment and leisure, but is also an important aid to business. Ha-Jin has identified the structural bases of the 'drinking culture'.

In this society, people think that the ability to form a good personal relationship with a colleague is more important than the ability necessary for success in a job. Therefore, people try to form an intimate relationship as soon as possible, by meeting over a drink. After all, in order to have an intimate relationship with their co-workers, drinking entertainments and prostitutes are necessary. If we buy newspaper reporters drinks in an expensive bar, for example, they write a favourable article about this company, so we have to meet for drinks with our co-workers (Ha-Jin).

Ha-Jin's job is to collect information about other companies, government policy and judicial affairs. She indicates that if she wants to get important information, she will need to arrange a drinking meeting with the person who can provide her with the data. This belief is reinforced by the existence of a Korean myth, that when people are drunk they can speak truly and frankly. As a result, Korean people think that they can become friendly with each other relatively fast by means of a drinking meeting, and that they will talk very honestly. In this context, if they want to get something from co-workers, they will arrange a full-scale party with entertainments, for these colleagues. Thus, this drinking culture is based on old-fashioned and irrational habits of thought. However, Hyun-Jeong suggests that the

'drinking culture' is a consequence of the personal stress, which is generated by work pressures.

The drinking culture is the dominant culture at 'S Insurance'. As the job of insurance sales is a very stressful profession, many people like to drink very much (Hyun-Jeong).

According to Hyun-Jeong, workers in the insurance business drink to remedy their stress, because they have no idea how to alleviate it. In comparison to western countries, Koreans have little time for personal enjoyment. They have come to believe that alcohol is the easiest means of achieving relaxation after their daily work is over. This belief has become thoroughly engrained in the dominant culture.

I will briefly examine a different form of the leisure programs within Korean organisations. These events are also male-centred and male dominated, and lead to similar effects of female isolation. However, most female workers follow the program without any complaints. At these meetings, which include picnics and membership training, they again have to undertake the role of 'office wife'. Hae-Ja had to cook for her male co-workers. Therefore, the picnic does not represent leisure time, but further domestic labour, for the female staff: 'When we go to a picnic, female workers have to cook the meal' (Hae-Ja). Therefore, female workers prefer to avoid taking part in the picnic, which is a regular event in most companies. They never enjoy themselves, because they have to serve men as if they were their wives rather than their colleagues. It is a further manifestation of the rigid and hierarchical division of sex roles, and thus constitutes another form of sex discrimination.

To conclude, one can assert that the office party is a material and representative example of the ethos of Korean organisational leisure culture. The main features of this event align it closely to the 'drinking culture', which acts to isolate and objectify the female workers and encourage male behaviour toward them that can be defined as sexual harassment. This culture remains remarkably resistant to change, because it is rooted in structural and ideological features of Korean society, which are long-standing and widespread. Consequently, women employees have encountered extreme difficulties in voicing, let alone attempting to change, the iniquities of their situation.

Conclusion

I have explored Korean organisational culture with specific reference to the issues of gender and sexuality. Firstly, I tried to establish the dominant cultural construction of these concepts within a corporate setting and discovered that these environments are mainly male dominated and hierarchical. Due to the hierarchical feature, the dominant characteristic and image of each organisation is greatly affected by the belief of each owner. However, several companies, including 'S conglomerate' and some foreign firms, have attempted equitably to use the labour of female workers. The results of their innovations are encouraging and may influence the policies of other businesses.

Secondly, I investigated the various forms of sex discrimination with reference to this corporate culture. I established that within Korean organisations, the status of female workers is always inferior to that of her male peers, because women are located in sex-segregated areas of work, are not granted equal opportunities for promotion, and hence cannot reach the higher levels of income enjoyed by their male colleagues. The labour of

female employees is devalued and they are defined as office 'wives' and 'flowers'. In particular, sex discrimination towards married female workers reflects Korean specificities of heterosexuality and is also integrated with sex discrimination toward unmarried females. In consequence, sex discrimination at work is inherently related to the objectification of female sexuality within an organisation.

Finally, I examined organisational leisure culture, which seemed to highlight the specific relationship between gender and sexuality in Korean companies. The main form that this leisure activity takes is that of drinking within the institution of the 'office party'. This drinking culture is in turn deeply influenced by the ethos of the military services. Both cultures are male centred and male dominated, so most female workers are forced into sexual and service roles. The entrenched belief that one must always obey one's senior, and the commercialisation of sex in the bars, are other important factors. The consequent sexual objectification of women employees within a leisure setting fosters a climate in which sexual harassment can flourish, and be perceived as normal male behaviour. Therefore, I believe that the various forms of sex discrimination are all closely related to the phenomenon of sexual harassment. They all tend towards the perception that the female worker is a sexual object and that her body, and the nature of her sexuality, are to be defined and controlled by men. Bearing this in mind, in the next chapter I will explore the specific experiences of female workers concerning sexual harassment.

Chapter 5. Experiences of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Introduction

In the previous chapter I examined the features of gender and sexual culture within Korean organisations in order to demonstrate the close relationship between the internal dynamics of both these cultures and incidents of sexual harassment. In this chapter, I explore experiences of sexual harassment with Korean characteristics of gender and sexual culture within both organisations and society as a whole. In Korea, there have been few studies of sexual harassment within academic arenas and even feminist research arenas. My examination aims to identify specific experiences of sexual harassment and attempts to contribute to a discovery of strategies for combating organisational sexual harassment within Korea.

I will firstly explore how my interviewees perceive sexual harassment. In previous research, the definition of this has varied according to a range of social, cultural and contextual factors (Crocker 1983:697-698; Houghton-James 1995:5). Therefore, by referring to differing forms of this behaviour within the workplaces I will attempt to locate a particular understanding of sexual harassment that is rooted within the Korean organisational context. Both western and Korean feminists have noted that it encompasses a wide range of behaviours, extending from verbal to physical harassment, and within the latter realm, light touching to rape (Houghton-James 1995:2; Stockdale 1996:6; Lee, S.E. 1995:22). With respect to this wide typology, I categorise specific

types of sexual harassment based upon my interviewees' experiences and attempt to explain how the diverse aspects of sexual harassment are inter-related with the predominantly male work culture and social environment within Korean organisations. I will simultaneously consider the relationship between gender, male power and sexual harassment as an examination of the power relationships is vitally important for the future development of prevention strategies. Finally, within this discussion I will examine the respondents' own experiences of differing forms of sexual harassment and I also attempt to elicit from my interviewees the reasons behind their reluctance to assertively resist sexual harassment.

I. The definition of sexual harassment

It is only since the 1970s that discussions concerning what constitutes sexual harassment have emerged. Thomas and Kitzinger suggest that the term sexual harassment was initially used both in the middle of the 1970s in the US and in the early 1980s in the UK. In particular, the introduction of sexual harassment is closely related to the development of feminist movements (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997:1). Similarly, in Korea in the 1990s, the term was introduced within the women's movement, in particular the organisation Yeo-Seong Min-Woo-Hoe (Women Link), in the 1990s. As Women Link fought for equal opportunities for female clerical workers within Korean organisations, they began to recognise that the majority of these women were subjected to sexual harassment. The group therefore defined 'sexual harassment' as a clear form of sexual discrimination. Within Korea, this initial awareness of sexual harassment originated from the attention of the women's movement.

In general, the term sexual harassment, is used to define 'unwanted and unpleasant' sexual behaviour (Farely, 1978:17). The significant point to note, however, is the extensive range of behaviours encompassed within this definition. Hence, Russell describes sexual harassment as 'deliberate or repeated unsolicited verbal comments, gestures or physical contact of a sexual nature that is considered to be unwelcome by the recipient' (Russell 1984:269-270). This description informs us that the definition of sexual harassment should be based upon both the experiences and feelings of the victims. Furthermore, some feminists suggest that the appearance of the term sexual harassment is related to the resistance of harassed women. A key achievement of second wave feminism was to single out sexual harassment as a part of women's personal everyday experience and to give it a political definition and name (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997:2-8). Similarly, as a result of Woo's initial legal action against sexual harassment, Korean people generally recognise the term, 'Seong- Hee -Long' (sexual harassment) (Lee, S.E. 1995:12). Hence, the definition of sexual harassment tends to be related to the emergence of public complaints of types of unwanted sexual behaviours. In this context, the term 'sexual harassment' has become part of women's renaming of the world, reflecting and constructing women's experience, and labelling a form of behaviour newly recognised, as something which women need no longer passively endure but should actively protest against and resist.

In general, the introduction of ideas concerning the nature, and definition of, sexual harassment, is related to the increase in the number of women workers. Before sexual harassment was named, it was simply referred to as 'sexual violence in the workplace' and thus, sexual harassment tends to reflect a limited form of sexual violence. However, although the idea of sexual harassment is theoretically based upon the notion of public

sexual violence, social control and unequal sexual relationships between men and women, the definition of sexual harassment needs to be distinguished from these other forms of sexual oppression and violence. It is only by means of a deeper conceptualisation that we can discover the features of, and the possible solutions to, sexual harassment. Furthermore, its definitions are modified by diverse cultural and social variables and therefore my understanding of sexual harassment might be characterised as 'subjective' and 'contextual'. The problematic development of a definition of sexual harassment within a Korean context is thus different to that posed by a study of a different region. Consequently, I am seeking an understanding of how Korean female workers arrive at a definition of sexual harassment.

Some of my interviewees agreed that any definition of sexual harassment is inevitably subjective: 'I see that, even though the man acts unconsciously, if I feel uncomfortable, it is sexual harassment' (Sun-Woo). Sun-Woo acknowledges that the definition of sexual harassment is closely based upon her feeling about the behaviour. Yoo-Jin also has a similar idea: 'I think that it is concerned with emotional matters. If I feel it is unpleasant, it can be defined as sexual harassment' (Yoo-Jin). Yoo-Jin points out that sexual harassment is an emotional issue and hence, any definition of harassment derives from an individual's subjective opinion. In other words, each person can have different emotional experiences resulting from the same situation, depending on their social environment and educational background. For example, a woman holding conservative views of sexual behaviour, believing in chastity before marriage for example, can conflate light touching with intimacy, and therefore with sexual harassment. The subjective response is deeply connected with an individual's social, cultural and historical environment. Thus, particular definitions of sexual harassment are perpetuated

by the specificities of heterosexual norms, such as the enforcement of solely female sexual chastity.

On the other hand, the concept of sexual harassment is often related to the idea of the 'context'. Hae-Ja and Mee-Soon note the relationship between the context and the definition of sexual harassment.

I can feel whether the action is a kind of sexual harassment or not. I can distinguish between when a male worker tries to harass me sexually and when he just tells a joke. For example, even though two persons tell the same joke, one can be defined as sexual harassment, the other may not be named as sexual harassment (Hae-Ja).

I can define whether it is sexual harassment or not. Even though two men perform the same action, I feel one thing as sexual harassment but not the other (Mee-Soon).

These women focus upon the specific situation in which sexual harassment occurs, believing the behaviour can be defined according to context and nuance. Both Hae-Ja and Mee-Soon indicate that the same action can be defined differently, thereby suggesting that the determination of sexual harassment is connected to who performs the action, their body language and where and when it occurs. In relation to the 'context', Sun-Young points to the differences between physical and verbal sexual harassment: 'Well, the physical thing is sexual harassment but I can also feel a verbal incident is a type of sexual harassment. However, each nuance is different. I can

distinguish whether it is a type of sexual harassment or not' (Sun-Young). She maintains that verbal sexual harassment in particular is defined by the contextual nuance as it is more context-specific than physical harassment, because the latter behaviour can be more obviously recognised and defined. However, the classification of verbal sexual harassment is often more problematic. That is, even though the harassers may not intend to act sexually, if the victim feels their behaviour to be unpleasant and unwelcome, their actions are classified as harassment.

When female workers define sexual harassment, their subjectivity (which has been constructed by their social and cultural environments and the contextual situation within which the incident takes place), becomes the important factor. These women fail to agree with the oft-stated claim that sexual harassment is a purely physical form of abuse. However, in the Korean context, the majority of people tend to define sexual harassment as a predominantly physical phenomenon, citing behaviours such as unwanted touching and attempts to impose sexual relations as defining characteristics. In reality, non-physical behaviours such as staring and verbal jokes can easily be defined as sexual harassment, and this type of harassment is frequent with sexual jokes in particular creating an unpleasant environment in the office or at the office party. Although female workers may feel harassed within these common situations, it is difficult for them to offer any resistance because such behaviours are prevalent and widely accepted within Korean office culture. Boo-Young commented: 'When I listen to a sexual joke, if I am angry or my face becomes red, the joke can be defined as a type of sexual harassment' (Boo-Young). The belief that the term 'sexual harassment' purely defines physical behaviour is limited and misleading. We need to propose a definition that is characterised by a more sensitive and enlarged understanding of the issues

involved. Furthermore, physical sexual harassment and verbal abuse should not be placed within a hierarchical relationship to each other.

Female workers define sexual harassment as a form of sex-discrimination, and therefore the phenomenon of sexual harassment is closely linked to other features of gendered discrimination within Korean organisational culture. Min-Hee explained why she aligned sexual harassment with sex discrimination: 'It is an unpleasant thing, the sex discrimination that I can feel and also that which seeks to ignore me. Even though they do not directly talk about or to me, I can often feel their actions or talk as a type of sexual harassment' (Min-Hee). She defined the ignoring of her male colleagues and employers as sexual discrimination as they excluded her from their discussions. Moreover, Min-Hee pointed out that the indirect verbal sexual harassment made her feel uncomfortable. For example, when male workers made sexual jokes in front of her she felt uncomfortable, unhappy and deliberately ignored. In this sense, sex discrimination in organisations allows for the development of a context within which sexual harassment can flourish.

To conclude, the definition of sexual harassment is firstly related to the victim's subjectivity, which is influenced by their social, cultural and historical environment. In particular, the construction of these subjectivities is in part reliant upon the specificities of Korean heterosexuality, whereby female sexuality is defined as asexual and reproduction-centred, with female sexual chastity promoted as a woman's duty. Therefore, any definition is contextual and also most definitions are characteristically wide ranging. Finally, definitions of sexual harassment are on further examination intrinsically connected to the sexual discrimination that exists within a specifically

gendered organisational culture. I will move on to an investigation of the specific various types of sexual harassment in the next section.

II. The Types of Sexual Harassment

The different types of sexual harassment can be separated into broad categories and are defined in differing ways by a number of western and Korean feminist scholars. Stockdale has described this broad categorisation of sexual harassment in previous reports: 'The EEOC (1980) have recognised two categories of sexual harassment: exchange of work-related threat, and hostile work environment, and therefore, unwanted actions of a sexual nature that have the "purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment"' (EEOC 1980:74677 in Stockdale 1996:6). Gruber delineates the typology of sexual harassment, categorising sexual harassment into three types: verbal requests, verbal comments and non-verbal displays. Firstly, verbal requests consist of sexual bribery, sexual advances, relational advances and subtle pressures/advances. Secondly, verbal comments contain personal remarks, subjective objectification and sexual categorical remarks. Finally, non-verbal displays include sexual assault, sexual touching, sexual posturing and sexual materials (Gruber 1992: 451). He also indicates the difficulties within the typology of sexual harassment 'because of what is counted as sexual harassment and, secondarily, how data on the phenomenon are collected' (Gruber 1992: 460).

In Korea, Shin categorises sexual harassment through a focus upon the individual harassers, the employers and colleagues of these female workers (Shin 1993: 103). Her

analysis has been criticised as male and harasser-centred. Since Woo's groundbreaking legal case in 1993, a number of Korean feminist scholars and activists have attempted to identify the specific forms that sexual harassment can take.

In this thesis, I categorise sexual harassment as verbal, physical, non-verbal and gender harassment. I will initially highlight diverse forms of verbal sexual harassment, such as sexual and gendered jokes and comments about the appearance of female workers, then turning to an examination of the category of physical sexual harassment, incorporating all forms from touching to forced sexual intercourse. My investigation considers the ways in which female workers endure peer pressure to date co-workers and I define this pressure as a form of psychological sexual harassment. Finally, I will explore diverse forms of gender harassment perpetuated by male-dominated organisational culture. My categorisation is superficially similar to other scholars' but, nevertheless, the specific content of each type reflect Korean characteristics of sexual harassment.

1. Verbal Sexual harassment

Verbal sexual harassment is the most common type of sexual harassment and the majority of female workers have frequently experienced this behaviour. According to Women Link's survey, 76.5 percent of female clerical workers have experienced verbal types of sexual harassment within Korea (Women Link 1998:14). Gruber suggests that verbal harassment can be divided into two groups: verbal requests and verbal comments. He suggests that 'a "request" differs from a "remark" in that the former is a goal-oriented statement seeking sexual or relational intimacy. While some requests are quite explicit, others are much more nebulous and may seem like 'remarks' when in fact

they are subtle overtures that explore the possibility of a social or sexual encounter' (Gruber 1992:453). I consider the separation of verbal sexual harassment into sexual and gendered jokes and comments about the appearances of female workers.

Sexual Jokes

Twenty of my twenty-eight interviewees experienced sexual joking as a form of sexual harassment. The Women Link's survey also reported that 41.8 percent of female clericals experienced sexual jokes (Women Link 1998:15). This type of sexual harassment is indeed particularly common. In such situations, female workers feel embarrassed and isolated. According to Eun-Young's statement, she found her senior's sexual questions upsetting: 'My colleague said to me, "how do women take a bath? Last night, I went to a room salon and I felt that the hostess's breast is softer than milk"'(Eun-Young). Her senior intended to harass her by using his experience of a room salon despite his recognition that Eun-Young felt uncomfortable discussing these sexual topics. This scene reflects the frequent male enjoyment in witnessing a woman's response to sexual jokes. Even though Eun-Young did not exactly tell me, she felt that her own breast had been touched but she remarked on it. Therefore, she defined the senior's joke as sexual harassment

Moreover, the majority of male workers regard sexual jokes as their play toys within office parties. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the office party acts as a prominent factor within considerations of organisational sexual harassment in Korea as this situation is male-centred, both in relation to the drinking culture and sexual objectification that is promoted there. Both Jeong-Mi and Ha-Jin indicated the

prevalence of sexual jokes at the office party, although they held differing views of this masculine practice: 'At the office party, while male workers said to us, do not listen to our talk, they made sexual jokes, and we had to listen to them' (Jeong-Mi). Jeong-Mi's response reflects a passive strategy, whereby she listens without any reaction in order that her colleagues will not acknowledge her feelings and thus ultimately ignore her. However, Jeong-Mi appears uncomfortable and hence defines sexual joking as a form of sexual harassment. On the other hand, Ha-Jin's response is relatively positive: 'They make sexual jokes very bluntly, but I try to accept and understand the situation because my personality is cheerful. Also, if I am over sensitive I will not be able to do my job anymore' (Ha-Jin). She believes she must endure the sexual joking in order to do her job without any difficulties. Ha-Jin is working on the collection of information for 'conglomerate K' and is required to take part in business meetings with drinking entertainment. As a result, she accepts relatively tame sexual jokes at these meetings. An over-reaction or display of undue sensitivity would make it difficult for her to gain important information from her co-workers, thereby resulting in Ha-Jin's isolation from her colleagues. From this case, we witness the commonality of sexual jokes within the Korean workplace, how female workers have suffered from these discriminatory witticisms, and why they find it difficult assertively to respond to them.

In addition, Eun-Soon pointed out the relationship between the degree of sexual jokes and the marital status of the female workers: 'After marriage, the degree of joking changes. Because the married women have more knowledge of sexuality, male workers make more explicit sexual jokes. At that time, I was really upset and uncomfortable' (Eun-Soon). This shift in behaviour occurs because many Korean people believe unmarried women to be sexually chaste; unacquainted with sexual behaviour. Married

women on the other hand, are expected to be sexually knowledgeable and therefore to understand jokes. Harassment is thus interrelated with the heterosexual norm of pre-marital chastity. As a result, men tend to make sexual jokes to married women more bluntly, because the harassers want to know how married women will react to their jokes. They enjoy observing the embarrassment of these women.

In this context, the type and frequency of sexual joke is related to, firstly, the prominent view of female workers as sexual objects, secondly, this office culture is perpetuated by the male-oriented entertainment schemes such as the office party. Furthermore, the content of sexual jokes is less subtle and more detailed when they are levelled at married female colleagues, because it is assumed that a female worker's sexual knowledge is related to her marital status.

Gendered Jokes

There are times in general conversation, when the subject matter is not overtly sexual, that women workers also feel under threat from sexual harassment. The lower status of these women, based upon a sex discriminatory environment, fuelled by lower incomes for women and the gendered difficulties of gaining promotion opportunities within Korean organisations, are closely associated with these forms of harassment. Although these instances reflect a form of gender harassment, I will refer to them as 'gendered jokes' because they are verbal in nature. Boo-Young, an unmarried worker, indicated a specific example when she recounted that her colleagues called her 'grandmother', despite her being only thirty years old. Her unmarried status however, encourages this label: 'For example, a male colleague said to me, I think, you cannot get married,

grandmother, because I am one of the oldest unmarried female workers' (Boo-Young). In Korean culture, a woman of thirty is commonly thought to be beyond marriage and is often referred to as 'old miss'¹. In Boo-Young's example, the worker was embarrassed by jokes about her age and marital status. In general, men's age and marital condition are considered unimportant and hence this can be considered a 'gendered joke'.

In addition, Ju-Mi appeared to complain about the 'enforcement' of what could be termed as femininity: 'A female colleague said to me in the company restaurant, "I have learnt to speak logically because it is a feature of the job". At that time, a male colleague said, "do not be logical because a logical woman cannot be loved by a man". I think that is a kind of sexual harassment'. Ju-Mi's male colleague expresses the view that men are generally not attracted to logical women. He seems to express a gendered view that illogical and emotional women are defined as normal whereas logical and rational men are seen as common. Therefore, Ju-Mi was upset and uncomfortable with the gendered view.

Min-Ae indicated a similarly gendered joke made by a senior who possessed considerable institutional power: 'A senior said, "if you do not obey my orders, you have to stand on your head and hands" at that time, we wore a uniform which included a skirt'. Min-Ae felt threatened by this man because his statement was not only a gendered joke but also carried the weight of his institutional power. He implied that if she failed to obey those orders she would have to submit tamely to both personal insult and a curious 'punishment'. The nature of the punishment was inherently embarrassing and degrading for a woman who is required to wear a skirt and Min-Ae was consequently embarrassed and upset regarding her senior's statement as a highly

¹ 'Old miss' has a similar meaning to 'old maid' or 'old virgin' within the British context.

gendered joke. In consequence, gendered jokes derive from the perceived nature of the sexual division, which exists not only between men and women but also between masculinity and femininity. The gendered joke is one way in which this division is enforced in the male-dominated organisational culture of Korea.

Comments about the appearance of female workers

The dominant form of verbal sexual harassment consists of comments concerning the appearance of female workers, which include remarks about their clothes, hairstyles and body shapes. According to the Women Link survey, 44.7 percent of female workers have experienced this type of sexual harassment (Women Link 1998:15). This high percentage results from the fact that Korean companies require their female applicants to conform to a certain physical standard (a female applicant's height should be over 160cm and their weight should be less than 50kg)². Wolf also comments critically upon this 'professional beauty qualification' being applied to women in the labour market, when the number of women seeking to gain a job has increased (Wolf 1991). However, it seems that physical appearance is not an important criterion for the employment of male workers and thus the emphasis on female beauty constitutes another form of sexual discrimination.

This high level of interest in the appearance of female workers is rooted within the Korean cultural context that requires a woman to have a beautiful face and slim body (Jung, J. K. and Ko, S. J. 1992:68). Moreover, Chung and Ko assert that beauty is not gender-neutral because it is asymmetrically assigned to femininity and it appears to be

² Most Korean companies have formally required the physical standard of female clerical applicants graduating from high school. Although some companies do not formally state physical requirements for women applicants, they nonetheless make physical appearance the priority in the recruitment process (Kim 2000:149).

only women who are defined by their looks. Hence, to be feminine is to be beautiful. This asymmetry produces different social expectations and psychological consequences for each sex (Jung, J. K. and Ko, S .J. 1992:69). Once again, we find that the type of verbal sexual harassment is related to the gendered social and cultural environment.

In relation to this specific issue, two of my interviewees voiced their opinions about the comments on their own appearance: 'When people assess my clothes I feel uncomfortable' (Jeong-Hee). 'Sometimes, when I dress up, male colleagues say, Whoa, Whoa. Until this moment, I am pleasant. But, when they touch my clothes, I am so unhappy' (Min-Hee). Jeong-Hee and Min-Hee were unhappy with the overt attention their appearance received from male colleagues. According to Min-Hee's statement, verbal sexual harassment often overlaps with physical harassment as the excessive interest in bodily appearance often extends to touching the female worker's body. Eun-Soon also said: 'Some people comment directly about the clothes and hairstyle of female workers'. One can observe then that the excessive concern with female workers' appearances actually impinges upon their freedom of expression. As an example, Min-Hee described her experience: 'One day, I went to the office with a different hairstyle and make up, and a senior said to me, "remove your make-up and the permanent hair colour". At that time, I was really upset'. This behaviour is not only an obvious display of verbal sexual harassment, but also a clear violation of freedom. In addition, the senior's concern was affected by his desire that female workers should represent the 'flower of the office'. The employer's abrupt manner was justified by the notion that the appearance of the women employees is of importance to the maintenance of harmonious office conditions. Consequently, if a senior perceives a woman worker as unattractive, her appearance must be changed as a result of his opinion.

Min-Ae also experienced a similar situation: ‘When I wore a long skirt, a senior said to me, “Wear a short skirt”’. The employer’s request arose out of his perception of Min-Ae’s body as a predominantly sexual object. Young-Hee also recounted a client’s comment on her nose: ‘A client said to me, “your nose is so high. Did you have plastic surgery?”’. In the Korean context, to inquire whether a woman has undergone plastic surgery is considered particularly rude. Young-Hee felt extremely uncomfortable but could not respond because of her position as a saleswoman for an insurance company and his status as a client.

Jeong-Mi noted the way in which male workers frequently used female workers’ bodies as sources of gossip and play:

When male workers drink after work, they assess the appearance of female workers, for example, “why does she wear make-up like that” or, “she looks like a girl in the street”. Also, when a female worker with a glamorous body and heavy make- up walks near the office, male workers watch her (Jeong-Mi).

Jeong-Mi’s statement reflects how Korean male workers regard women’s bodies as sexual objects and subjects of gossip. During one occasion she notes that she felt humiliated despite the conversation not involving a discussion of her own body. Jeong-Mi realised that if she had been absent, then she too would have been an object of gossip. Frequently, female workers like Ha-Jin experience this type of verbal sexual harassment in business meetings. ‘Three years ago, a male worker commented on my

breast, so I was really upset, and I left' (Ha-Jin). In her previous account, Ha-Jin's personality appeared cheerful and non-sensitive to general sexual jokes because she did not respond emotionally to such remarks, but rather seemed to accept, and even enjoy them. However, when the latter incident occurred, she was so deeply upset she left the meeting. Ha-Jin defined sexual jokes as merely playful, but regarded the direct comment on her body as a form of sexual harassment. We can conclude, therefore that a direct comment upon a woman's body is defined as a serious type of verbal sexual harassment, which severely humiliates the victims, and is also related to the violation of their individual freedom.

To conclude, verbal sexual harassment can be categorised as sexual jokes, gendered jokes and comments addressing the appearances of female workers. These categories are closely related to the features of gendered and sexualised organisational culture and society and hence are particularly frequent and common types of sexual harassment within Korean organisations. These types of harassment tend to be ignored and have as yet not been subject to much serious analysis. We should not, however, neglect such facts as the majority of female workers having suffered from similar practices and these types of sexual harassment frequently lead to more serious abuse.

2. Physical sexual harassment

The spectrum of physical sexual harassment is comprehensive, ranging from touching to rape. Gruber defines physical sexual harassment as 'non-verbal displays' and divides them into sexual assault, sexual touching, sexual posturing and sexual materials (Gruber 1992:451-452). His categorisation is more inclusive, because his concept of 'non-verbal

displays' also consists of pornographic film and photographs. Thus, Gruber conflates physical sexual harassment and visual sexual harassment, labelling both as 'non-verbal displays'. I would argue, however, that they constitute two quite different forms of harassment, and therefore I will explore them separately. According to a Women Link's survey, 44.3 percent of female clerical workers have experienced physical sexual harassment within a wide range of behaviours (from touching to rape). Although this is lower than the proportion of verbal sexual harassment (76.5%), the proportion is quite high within the Korean context. These figures appear to result from the prohibition of physical contact between men and women within Korean traditional culture, and also the fact that the victims of physical sexual harassment are often reluctant to speak out about their experiences. Cho, a Korean feminist, argues that physical contact results in the most sensitive response and the meaning of this contact is differently determined as a result of cultural and individual background. Within Korean traditional belief, even physical contact within intimate relationships, such as between parents and children or married couples is disallowed and, therefore, bodily contact between men and women is considered under the gaze of this peculiar culture (Cho, O.R. 1994: 1). With regard to this situation, I will focus on various types of physical sexual harassment, such as touching, unwanted dancing within office parties, hugging and grabbing. However, I will not be dealing with a crucial form of physical sexual harassment, rape, because none of my interviewees experienced, or talked about, rape.

Touching

Touching is the most common type of physical sexual harassment, and the majority of female workers have experienced some form of sexual touching. It is frequently

difficult to distinguish between touching as a type of sexual harassment, and as an expression of an intimate relationship. However, some Korean feminists criticise the statement, based upon Korean traditional culture, that touching between mature men and women should not be allowed unless they are a married or an intimate couple (Cho, O. R. 1994: 20; Lee, S. E. 1995: 24). This statement suggesting that touching between male and female workers is therefore an expression of an intimate relationship seems unpredictable, unnatural and contradictory within the Korean context. From a cultural standpoint I will explore how female workers are commonly subjected to these actions of touching.

Both Jeong-Hee and Sun-Young experienced touching, but they defined it differently: 'Sometimes, I experience touching but I do not regard the action as sexual harassment' (Jeong-Hee). 'When I worked for the insurance company, a senior tried to touch my hand in his car. I was so astounded' (Sun-Young). Jeong-Hee was undisturbed by her experiences, but Sun-Young defined the touching as an obvious form of sexual harassment. The different definitions are rooted in the different situations and contexts. Sun-Young was astounded and felt sexually harassed because she was in a closed space alone with the harasser, when he touched her. However, Jeong-Hee seemed to think touching was a normal type of behaviour in the office.

The matter of whether touching is defined as sexual harassment is related to the space in which female workers are touched. Touching in a closed space, such as inside a car, is determined as sexual harassment; common, everyday touching, however, can equally be defined as sexual harassment. Furthermore, Mi-Ja pointed out the seriousness of 'common touching': 'When a senior talks with me, he repeatedly touches my arms, and

I am upset' (Mi-Ja). When Mi-Ja experienced the touching for the first time, she seemed to regard it as normal action, like Jeong-Hee. Mi-Ja became upset when the action was repeated. Therefore, the definition of physical sexual harassment is commonly associated with the frequency of the action.

Two interviewees refer to their experiences of touching at the office party: 'When drinking, a senior touched my body. When he is not drunk, he is a good person. After that I did not drink with him' (Kyung-Mi). 'When our senior was drunk, he touched my hand, so I thought, because he was drunk, he could not control himself' (Soon-Ju). Soon-Ju and Jeong-Mi identify touching patterns at office parties. Male workers often touch female workers' bodies when they are drunk. Sometimes, as Soon-Ju did, female workers excuse touching by drunken men. However, Jeong-Mi believes that the main reason her drunken boss touches her body is because of his habitual behaviour to hostesses in the room salon.

I said to a boss with whom I have friendly relations, when the senior is drunk, he thinks of a female worker as a hostess. The boss said, "I don't think so". But I recognize that his behaviour is not appropriate towards female workers, rather to hostesses (Jeong-Mi).

Jeong-Mi finds it disturbing when she is treated like a hostess because this behaviour indicates that in the context of the office party her male workers and colleagues perceive female workers as sexual objects. This type of touching reinforces the view that men think of female bodies as sexual objects. As I have repeatedly mentioned, the drinking culture within office parties facilitates diverse forms of sexual harassment and,

with respect to this circumstance, I will now move on to an investigation of how types of touching are connected with forcing women to dance in the specific context of the office party.

Unwanted close dancing

One of the activities at the office party which female workers dislike the most is unwanted close dancing. According to Women Link statistics, 39.2 % of women have experienced this type of sexual harassment and it features as the highest percentage among the group suffering from physical sexual harassment. These statistics also suggest that the drinking culture within office parties is a prominent and distinctive feature of sexual harassment within Korean organisations. In this respect, the prevalence of dancing is related to other features of organisational leisure culture. I have already discussed the male-dominated and military biased nature of this culture, which works to make women feel excluded and isolated at leisure programs. In particular, female workers prefer to absent themselves from dancing, but it is usually enforced. They particularly wish to avoid dancing with old, and frequently drunken, seniors, who often indulge in unpleasant touching. However, like Kyung-Ae, the majority of female workers cannot reject their advances.

Enforced dancing is very common at the office party. It is not a new situation. Male seniors wish that young female workers would serve in the drinking bar and dance with them. When I was a new recruit, I did. If an old senior wants to dance with me, I am really upset. However, if he has power in the company, I accept him, but if he does not have any authority, I just

reject him (Kyung-Ae).

Kyung-Ae could not reject the requirement of unwanted close dancing because older seniors possess institutional power, which they could invoke to fire her; alternatively, they could promote her career opportunities. Therefore, female workers feel obliged to undertake the duties of hostesses, which include serving wine and dancing with their bosses. None of the female workers quoted below want to dance with male workers and seniors, but feel they cannot avoid it.

When we have an office party, we have to dance with seniors. I don't like dancing with them. I do not know how I should respond to it (Hyun-Jae).

When we have an office party in a nightclub or karaoke bar, my senior asks to dance with me or touch my body. Even though I do not want to dance with him, I have to do (Jeong-Hee).

When we go to a nightclub, male colleagues or seniors force me to dance with them. I do not really like dancing (Ji-Hae).

The main reason why these women wish to avoid their male colleagues in this context is because dancing is merely an excuse for sexual opportunism. They cannot actively resist, however, because of the power disparity between themselves and their male co-workers and the particular situation of a party. Thus, if they voice a complaint, they will be accused of spoiling the prevailing mood of enjoyment and relaxation. Therefore, as stated by Eun-Soon, when female workers do not want to dance with seniors, they

escape to the toilet: 'If a person touches a female worker, other persons also touch the female worker, even though she does not like the physical contact. And, female workers do not like dancing with male colleagues and seniors in the nightclub, so some female workers escape to the toilet'. From Eun-Soon's statement, we can observe that the men's desires are not only for dancing, but also for touching. The office party is thus not an enjoyable situation, but rather an unpleasant activity for female workers.

Moreover, Mee-Soon, who has worked for 'H Insurance' for twelve years, emphasized the unchanging duties of female workers at the office party: 'Still we need to serve a glass of wine for male workers at the office party and even though we do not want to dance with them, we have to do so'. Even though she is married and occupies a senior position, Mee-Soon is still required to serve wine to her male colleagues.

This set of circumstances points to one of the specific features of Korean organisational culture: a male-centred drinking environment within which unwanted dancing can be defined as both particular and one of the most popular types of sexual harassment. In fact, the close dancing leads to other types of sexual harassment as well, such as touching and enforced hugging.

Hugging and Grabbing

In Korean culture hugging is not a common action between men and women, even when they are very friendly and intimate. Hugging is only considered appropriate for a married couple in the private space of the home; therefore hugging in the office or the

street seems to be rude, impolite and unusual and hence these actions are explicitly defined as a serious form of sexual harassment. Nevertheless, male harassers who hug female workers argue that their behaviour is not a type of sexual harassment but rather an expression of a close personal relationship. Jeong-Hee and Min-Hee experienced hugging by their seniors in such a context.

Suddenly, my senior takes me by the hand. I am so upset, but I cannot shake him off, and after that I am so unhappy. On Monday, I said to him, “how dare you?” He said that “it doesn’t matter. In other departments, female workers usually allow male seniors to dance with them.” So I feel that this is a kind of sexual harassment (Jeong-Hee).

When the members of our department walked into the street after the office party, I tried to give something to a senior: at that time, he hugged me very tightly. I said, “what are you doing?” I was really upset; even though this incident occurred a long time ago, when I think about it now, I am still very upset (Min-Hee).

Unlike the responses to other forms of sexual harassment, the reaction of these women to hugging seems to be quite active and direct. Even though the harassers were their seniors, they refuse to tolerate their behaviour because such actions are widely perceived as rude and abnormal. However, Jeong-Hee’s male colleague was unrepentant, and indeed he justified his behaviour as a normal and friendly action, which upset her greatly. Min-Hee similarly remains disturbed by the memory of her experience. It could be argued that female workers are psychologically injured by these

incidents of physical sexual harassment. Soo-Won stated: 'Sometimes my head of department hugs me in the drinking bar'. Once again, we can observe that these offensive actions are related to the drinking culture in Korea as usually, Korean men believe that drunkenness is an excuse for their sexualised behaviour towards women. It is therefore crucial when exploring issues of sexual harassment to understand the operations of the drinking culture within Korean organisations.

Eun-Soon's senior grasped her in his office: 'When I went to my senior's office to make a report to him about a document, he took my wrist and tried to grasp it. I was really upset'. Unlike hugging in the drinking bar, grasping in the closed space of the office tends to be threatening to women in a different way. The confined space makes resistance more difficult and the possibility of more serious offences such as rape, very real.

Within this context, then, even though touching, unwanted close dancing, hugging and grasping are frowned upon in the Korean culture, harassers argue that their actions are not a type of sexual harassment but an expression of a friendly relationship. In contrast, female workers, who have been educated according to the precepts of traditional Korean culture, experience such behaviour as physical and psychological assault. The contradictory view between men and women surrounding the same behaviour of physical sexual harassment is deeply perpetuated by the dual norm of female sexuality and male promiscuity; whereas women should remain chaste, men regard varied and frequent sexual experiences as an expression of strong masculinity. This situation displays what could be termed the Casanova complex (Yeo-Seung Mo-Yim Sa-Ryang 1993:64). Moreover, physical sexual harassment is deeply ingrained in the features of

organisational leisure culture, within which drinking and the office party are prominent. It is important to note that within this context the different types of physical sexual harassment lie on a continuum. Touching, unwanted dancing and hugging seem to occur simultaneously at the office party.

3. Visual sexual harassment – staring

Visual sexual harassment can consist of staring or the display of pornographic films and photographs. However, I intend to focus upon staring because none of my interviewees referred to the other activities. Although some interviewees experienced the display of pornographic films in office parties, they did not define it as a form of sexual harassment although it made them feel uncomfortable (see p231 above). At present in Korea the question of whether or not staring constitutes a form of sexual harassment is a controversial issue. It is not defined as such within Korean legislation, largely because policymakers think of staring as a somewhat vague, obscure concept. However, it can be argued that staring is a type of sexual harassment because the women who experience the staring feel uncomfortable as a result.

The three interviewees' statements below indicate that staring is for them an obvious form of harassment: 'When I expose my body in the summer, my senior stares at my body' (Jeong-Hee). 'When I wear a skirt, a client stares at my legs. I can feel his staring and it is so unpleasant' (Young-Hee). 'I know that a senior stares at me from head to foot. It is unpleasant' (Boo-Young). During these occasions women can distinguish between simple watching and overt staring. If staring is regarded as an obscure form of sexual harassment, then most types could be similarly defined because the emotional

processes are identical. In all cases the female victims experience discomfort and embarrassment, while frequently the harassers claim not to recognise their behaviour as sexual harassment. As a result, if we agree with the statement that sexual harassment should be defined from the point of view of its victims, visual sexual harassment will be determined as a clear type of threatening behaviour.

4. Demands for Dates – Psychological Sexual harassment

Demanding a date can be classified as a type of psychological sexual harassment. In particular, if a married man repeatedly asks a married or unmarried woman to dinner, the female worker is made to endure considerable emotional pressure. Gruber, however, regards the demanding of a date as a form of verbal sexual harassment (Gruber 1992: 453), basing his opinion upon the fact that the demand is verbal. Nevertheless, the efficiency of this type of harassment depends on inflicting psychological pressure, and thus I define such behaviour as psychological sexual harassment. Therefore, in this section, I will focus on how female workers experience these demands.

Young-Ju, who works for an insurance company and is also married, is often invited to dinner by her customers: 'Sometimes, some businessmen say to me, let's have dinner. I say to them, I will buy you lunch but I cannot have dinner with you because I need to take care of my children in the evening' (Young-Ju). However, she also rejects the demand because she realises that their request is not only for dinner but also for a further relationship. Young-Ju says that saleswomen for insurance companies often have sexual relationships with male customers, and then they utilize the relationship to gain more sales of their insurance products. Therefore, male customers sometimes treat

a saleswoman as a sort of prostitute, and she suffers personally from such stereotyping.³ This implies that this type of sexual harassment is related to an issue of sexual ethics because if married men demand a date from both married and unmarried women, it might be regarded as an attempt to conduct an extra-marital sexual relationship. Therefore, the victims mentally suffer from this type of sexual harassment. In relation to this situation, Bowes-Sperry and Powell suggest that 'Classification of social-sexual behaviour as sexual harassment places the behaviour within the domain of morality, because the definition of the term harass implies that the target person suffers the risk of harm. Targets of sexual harassment are often harmed in terms of their mental and physical health as well as their job-related outcomes' (Bowes-Sperry and Powell 1996:106). In this respect, victims of this type of harassment find themselves in conflict with the norm of sexual chastity and fidelity categorised as the strict duties of Korean women.

In addition Boo-Young claims that married male seniors invite unmarried female workers for private dinners: 'A senior said to me, 'let's meet tonight'; even though I did not want to meet him, I just said, "yes"' (Boo-Young). Boo-Young did not want to date her senior, but felt obliged to consent. However, she avoided seeing him privately and instead went to meet him with her colleagues. From the statement of Kyung-Ae, we can witness how male seniors seduce young female workers: 'In my department, the youngest female worker said to me hesitantly, that her head told her, "if you become my girlfriend, I will take special care of you at work"' (Kyung-Ae). The harassers offer young female workers specific employment advantages, but if the women reject these enticements they could be equally disadvantaged. It is a type of 'sexual bribery', which incorporates blackmail. This situation contradicts the notion that, while extra-marital

³ Young-Joo provided me with this information after the official interview so I was not able to record the account and hence did not write this statement as a direct quotation.

sexual relations are regarded as normal and common for the Korean husband, both married and unmarried women should follow the path of sexual fidelity and chastity: their crucial duties.

Demands for dates should therefore be defined as a serious form of psychological sexual harassment. However, this particular problem is often ignored and hidden because the harassers not only deny their behaviour is sexual harassment, but claim that they are merely showing a natural interest in attractive women. In this context, female workers find it difficult to mobilise any active resistance.

5. Gender Harassment

Gender harassment represents an overlap between a type of sexual harassment and a form of sex discrimination. The main reason why I attempt to distinguish sexual harassment from gender harassment is because the diverse forms of gender harassment are not only widely and greatly occurred but are also interrelated with other forms of sexual harassment within Korean organisations. Therefore, my examination of gender harassment aims to show the ways in which the particular types of gender harassment exist within Korean organisations and also identify how the hostile and sex-discriminatory environments are associated with incidents of sexual harassment. For Stockdale, 'gender harassment involves generalised sexist comments and behaviour that convey insulting, degrading, and/or sexist attitudes' (Stockdale: 1996:6). In addition, Herbert, in defining sexual harassment, focuses on the importance of an existing power relationship. She suggests that 'sexual harassment must be explicitly sexual in form and can be distinguished from any other behaviour of an aggressive and harassing nature by

this very characteristic. Intrusive male behaviour in which gender plays a part, but which is devoid of a sexual component, is not sexual harassment but “sexist harassment” (Herbert 1989:19). In this sense, gender harassment seems to be similar to sexist harassment in terms of Herbert’s approach. Similarly, Petrocelli and Repa note that ‘sexism is not generally understood to be the same as sexual harassment although it is predicated on stereotypes about women which imply inferiority or assumptions about women’s roles’ (Petrocelli and Repa 1992:2).

In this context, gender harassment should be not only conceptually distinguished from sexual harassment but also empirically interrelated with it. In the Korean context, I would argue that gender harassment has existed since the inception of women’s employment. Therefore, I infer from the statements of female workers that gender harassment constitutes the assigning of routine jobs to women regardless of their employment specification; for example, requiring them to make cups of tea, clean offices and desks and undertake private services for seniors. Such demands clearly derive from a stereotyped view of women’s roles (such as the office wife).

Eun-Young and Yoo-Jin think that making cups of tea is a part of their jobs and thus do not complain about it.

Usually, if my male colleague’s friend visits our office, I make a cup of coffee for the friend, because such hospitality reflects well on the image of the office. Sometimes, a secretary says to me very proudly, when her senior asks her for a cup of coffee, ‘this is not a coffee shop, but an office for work’. I said to her, ‘ you have the wrong attitude. If you work like this,

you aren't doing your job properly' (Eun-Young).

Usually, female workers do not like to serve cups of tea. However, I don't get stressed about doing it, because I make a cup of coffee because I want to and because it is a part of my job (Yoo-Jin).

Eun-Young thinks that it is wrong to complain. She regards personal services, which include making cups of coffee, as a part of the female worker's role in creating a comfortable office environment. She advises her female colleagues to think and act similarly. Yoo-Jin has a comparable view and hence, they both submit to performing routine tasks because they fear an atmosphere of hostility in the office. This implies that both Eun-Young and Yoo-Jin accept their roles as office wives. Jeong-Mi has a similar idea to the above two workers.

Someone asks me to copy documents. I think 'why should I have to make copies for him?' He has hands and he can do it himself. But, then I think again. If I do not undertake the job, he will ask me why. I cannot say anything. Therefore, if it is not a big deal, I accept the situation, because I do not want to face a hostile environment in the office (Jeong-Mi).

Jeong-Mi, then, does not like making photocopies and cups of tea for her male seniors, but she fears being labelled a troublemaker. Therefore, she convinces herself that it is an unimportant issue, which she should not take too seriously. Soo-Hee highlights below how her opinion about miscellaneous tasks has changed from when she first started work: 'When I was a new recruit, I was very annoyed at having to serve cups of tea.

But now, I think that it is one of the easiest duties' (Soo-Hee). Soo-Hee's thinking seems to be unusual: she colludes in the stereotyped view of women's roles and abilities although minimising of the importance of these duties may be a coping strategy. The insistence that women serve tea is an obvious type of gender harassment and sex discrimination because it is a manifestation of the degrading belief in women's lesser abilities. Consequently, most female workers feel uncomfortable about agreeing to such duties. Jeong-Hee describes below how she is required to perform various personal services for her male senior.

When my senior says to me, 'give me a cup of coffee', I cannot refuse his request. Also, female workers are expected to clean the desks of male workers. Sometimes, my seniors ask me to undertake private services, such as paying in money to the bank and bringing them things they have forgotten from their cars. Even though I feel unhappy about it, I have to do everything (Jeong-Hee).

It seems that Jeong-Hee is regarded as a type of servant. She is expected to obey all orders without any complaint, even if the orders bear no relation to her official job description. Soon-Ju and Min-Ae have similar experiences.

A male senior said, 'let's clean this office', and then he went out of the office, so we had to clean it. I did not want to clean our office. But I did (Soon-Ju).

I have to serve cups of tea. The first time my senior said to me, 'let's have a

cup of tea', I did not understand what he meant. He meant that he wanted me to make a cup of tea for him (Min-Ae).

Both Soon-Ju and Min-Ae possess B.A. degrees, and do not feel that they should be obliged to undertake routine work. Their primary employment is little different to that of women who have only graduated from high school. However, they are required to take responsibility for miscellaneous affairs, though their male colleagues never undertake such jobs. Min-Ae believes that female high school graduates are the appropriate people to perform these tasks. The responsibility for routine work is clearly related to the hierarchy of the organisations. This hierarchy is constructed according to gender, educational career, years of service and age and therefore, the highest positions are granted to male workers with B.A. degrees, the next level to men who have graduated from high school, and below that jobs are awarded to female workers with B.A. degrees. The lowest positions are allocated to women who only graduated from high school. The subordinate female employees are therefore usually required to undertake routine tasks and are effectively perceived to be office servants.

Age is another important factor within this office hierarchy. Ju-Mi mentioned this: 'I usually make the cups of coffee and have to go to the bank, because I am the youngest recruit in the office' (Ju-Mi). Ju-Mi is assigned these tasks because she is a young woman with unexceptional educational qualifications. However, the importance of age and period of service indicates the possibility of change, as Jin- Ju and Mi-Ja noted.

Although I know my senior needs to work, he also expects me to do his job, for example, call someone, make a cup of coffee and type this document.

When I started to work here, I did everything, but now I don't undertake those duties (Jin-Ju).

When I was a new recruit, I had to serve cups of coffee for all my male colleagues and seniors in the morning. Recently, the custom has been abolished. Seniors feel ashamed about asking for a cup of coffee, and most male recruits get a cup of coffee for themselves (Mi-Ja).

When Jin-Ju and Mi-Ja were new recruits they had to perform all the routine tasks, but since they acquired more seniority they are no longer required to undertake these menial jobs. However, another female new recruit has to do them instead as in the Korean workplace the miscellaneous affairs are always assigned to women. Nevertheless, in recent times, the place of routine work within the office culture has begun to shift as Mi-Ja stated. Both Eun-Soon and Mee-Soon, who graduated from high school and have been working for over ten years, described this process of change specifically in relation to the routine office work.

Ten years ago, female workers were required to clean the desks of male colleagues, make cups of tea and undertake the private requirements of seniors, such as going to the bank to pay his telephone bill. However, recently this has changed. When a senior asks a female worker to make a cup of coffee, he is generally very apologetic and asks politely 'please make a cup of coffee for my customer' (Eun-Soon).

When a customer visits seniors or we have a meeting, a female worker has

to serve cups of coffee. Usually the youngest female worker needs to serve it, when she is absent and my senior asks me for a cup of coffee, and he is sorry for asking. However, when the youngest female worker serves a cup of coffee, he is not sorry for her (Mee-Soon).

Female workers still generally undertake the routine work, but their male seniors' attitudes are gradually changing. In the past, the routine work was defined as an intrinsic and unquestioned part of the female employee's role. However, the apologetic requests which the majority of male seniors now make of their female staff indicates their realisation that the mundane tasks have to be performed but are not an essential or enjoyable part of their female colleagues' job. In this context, we can observe that gender harassment is inextricably connected to the factors of gender and age-related hierarchy within the office environment. Therefore, the issue of gender harassment is related to sex-discrimination, which means that women's roles are fixed through the operations of both patriarchal and institutional power relationships. The seniors with institutional power and advanced age maintain sex discrimination within the Korean workplace.

In conclusion, I have tried to determine the different types of sexual harassment which exist within the Korean workplace, by drawing upon the statements of my interviewees' experiences. There are many diverse features and types, and thus it appears that an incident of sexual harassment should be defined as such by the victims located within the specific cultural context. By these means I identified several types of sexual harassment: verbal, physical, visual, psychological and gender harassment. The typology is similar to that in other studies. However, although many researchers have

reviewed and examined types of sexual harassment in western countries, the specific contexts that they analyse are somewhat different to those that exist in Korea. The unwanted dancing at office parties, which is associated with the drinking culture that is a dominant form of organisational leisure culture within Korea, is a distinctively Korean form of sexual harassment, and one that leads to other forms of physical sexual harassment such as touching and hugging.

III. The features underlying sexual harassment

I have already noted that incidents of sexual harassment are deeply perpetuated by not only the specificities of Korean heterosexuality (see also Chapter 3), but also by the male-dominated and hierarchical organisational culture within Korean organisations (see also Chapter 4). With respect to these examinations, and basing my discussion upon the accounts of female workers, I will briefly consider how the specific factors of sexual harassment are exactly connected to organisational climates. A number of feminists have already analysed factors of sexual harassment. Fitzgerald and Shullman suggest that organisational climate and norms are closely related to maintaining or preventing sexual harassment within workplaces (Fitzgerald and Shullman 1993: 15). Stockdale points out that incidents of sexual harassment are closely ingrained not only in organisational climate based on gendered culture but also in power relationship between men and women (Stockdale 1996: 10-11). Thus, the phenomenon of sexual harassment can be related to the wider issue of sexual politics within organisational culture. Firstly, we have seen that female workers are generally located in lower status positions. Consequently, male employees tend to assume that their female colleagues are inherently inferior to them and should therefore provide supportive service. Indeed,

female employees are widely perceived as 'office wives'. Secondly, sexual harassment is embedded within a male-dominated organisational culture. The various facets of this culture were examined in Chapter 4, therefore, I will briefly point out the features of this organisational culture in relation to the specific factors involved in incidents of sexual harassment.

1. Men's views of women

Male workers tend to define female workers as sexual objects rather than equal colleagues. This is largely due to the supportive roles women occupy within the office environment in low-status, poorly paid jobs. It is very difficult for women to gain promotion to more responsible positions and consequently, female workers often become targets of sexual harassment. According to Young-Hee, the phenomenon of sexual harassment is inextricably connected with men's sexualised view of women.

I think that there are no interactions of cause and effect between a mini skirt and sexual harassment. For example, even when I wear trousers, the same man always tells me a sexual joke. Therefore, I think sexual harassment is caused not by women's appearance, but by men's views about women (Young-Hee).

Men think of sexual harassment as a natural and common action within the workplace due to their lack of respect for women as autonomous and independent beings. They rather view them as sexual objects and physical bodies. Moreover, as Soo-Hee asserts, the most serious problem in relation to sexual harassment is the misguided view of the

harassers about such behaviour.

If female workers just accept sexual harassment and sex-discrimination, the problems are perceived as less serious and male workers think that the action of sexual harassment is not problematic but natural in the workplace (Soo-Hee).

The harassers' definition of sexual harassment as a normal action results from their assumption that their actions are an expression of friendliness and interest. Therefore, a crucial factor in sexual harassment is the misguided view these workers have of their victims.

2. Power/Powerlessness

Even though a large number of feminist researchers have determined the power relationships between men and women as the main factor within sexual harassment, only a few of my interviewees recognised this link. Due to their acceptance of these power relationships most of the female workers I interviewed were unable to identify themselves as located in the lowest position within Korean organisations. One of my interviewees, Ji-Hae, was clearly aware of the relationship between sexual harassment and power.

Female workers do not have any power within the company. Also, we do not have any female seniors to support us, so we become victims of sexual harassment and sex discrimination (Ji-Hae).

Female workers find it difficult to gain promotion, and so they are usually subject to control by male seniors who possess institutional power. These men and their male employers may sexually harass female workers, yet the women are unable to resist their advances since the men are invested with such authority. The harassed workers cannot seek advice from female seniors or managers, because there are no female bosses in Korean workplaces. Therefore, women are essentially powerless and are forced to endure sexual harassment. In this context, the unequal power relationship between men and women is a key issue in the phenomenon of sexual harassment.

3. The Male-dominated Organisational Culture

The male-dominated organisational culture not only breeds the hostile environment in which sexual harassment is tolerated, but it also encourages the harassers' behaviours. Mee-Soon and Yoo-Jin believe that the attitude of the boss is directly related to the incidence of sexual harassment.

The occurrence of sexual harassment depends on the environment of each office. For example, if the head of the office sexually harasses female workers on a habitual basis, the female workers suffered in general from a increased incidence of sexual harassment. But if the senior tries to respect the female workers' rights, the female workers can work in a comfortable environment (Mee-Soon).

The atmosphere of the office is important. For example, my head of

department said to the members of the department in the meeting, 'you need to make cups of coffee for yourself and clean your own cup'. Therefore, our members think of me not as a supporter and sexual object but as their colleague (Yoo-Jin).

As stated by Mee-Soon, if the head of department sexually harasses female workers, then the other male workers will follow suit and imitate his behaviour. The degree of sexual harassment depends upon the particular features of the organisation and the characteristics of the power relationships between the sexes. In a previous chapter I examined the environmental features of each company, whereby each feature is defined by the attitudes of the owner. Similarly, the environmental features of different departments are influenced by the attitude of their bosses. It seems that nobody can resist the actions of those with power. Regardless of whether the action is right or wrong, most junior members will obey their employer's orders. In this context, Yoo-Jin's head of department is fairly radical, but it must be emphasised that the attitude of her boss is very unusual. Most managers believe that female workers should undertake the routine work within the office; however, Yoo-Jin's male colleagues are influenced by their head of department's enlightened ideas.

To conclude, the factors which promote sexual harassment are deeply related to the power relationships between men and women. In particular, the nature of power in the office environment seems to be institutional and hierarchical. Moreover, this institutional power relationship is connected to the male-dominated organisational culture. As a result, this culture is a fundamental background to, and also a predominant contributing factor in, the incidence of sexual harassment.

IV. Responses to Sexual harassment

In this section, in order to identify the practical methods of response against sexual harassment, I will explore how female workers respond to this behaviour. A number of studies have already discussed the subject, with Gutek and Koss suggesting that:

one axis consists of individual attempts to cope with harassment and coping with harassment and coping responses involving another party such as a supervisor, therapist, physician, spouse, co-worker, or an outside agency or institution. [...] The second axis consists of indirect (e.g., ignoring, avoiding, evading) versus direct responses (e.g. confronting) [...] individual, indirect coping response (e. g., ignore the incident, avoid the perpetrator) are more common than responses that fit into the other three quadrants (Gutek and Koss 1993: 37).

Fitzgerald and her colleagues classify the response types of sexual harassment. They indicated that 'the system consists of ten strategies, classified as either internally focused (endurance, denial, detachment, retribution, and illusory control) or externally focused (avoidance, appeasement, assertion, seeking institutional or organisational relief, and seeking social support). Internal strategies are characterised by attempts to manage the cognitions and emotions associated with the event whereas externally focused strategies are problem solving in nature' (Fitzgerald, Swan and Fischer 1995: 119). These scholars also indicate that 'a common response is simply to ignore the harassment and do nothing (endurance), or to pretend that the situation is not happening

or has no effect' (Fitzgerald, Swan and Fischer 1995: 119). My investigation will centre upon the division between indirect and assertive responses. I will then move on to an examination of the changed process of the respondent patterns.

1. The Indirect Response

The majority of female workers respond to sexual harassment both indirectly and passively. When they are sexually harassed they keep silent or try to avoid reference to the incident and ignore the harassers. Ultimately, they may leave their company, because they have been repeatedly and frequently harassed and have suffered severely as a result. Women Link survey reported that 50.8 percent of female clericals used indirect means (silence, ignoring, avoidance) as their tactics against sexual harassment (Women Link 1994: 51). I will now investigate the varied and specific aspects of the indirect response based upon my interviewees' accounts.

Silence

Silence is not only a method of responding to sexual harassment, but it is also enforced as a rule, and regarded as a virtue in female workers within Korean organisations. Male seniors do not like female employees who argue, voice their opinions or are generally willing to speak. Hence, most female workers tend to avoid speaking out. Eun-Young's statement allows us to see why female worker adopt this strategy: 'When I go to the office in the morning, I say to myself, I need to endure everything and do not have to speak out much more' (Eun-Young). During the interview, I had the impression that Eun-Young was a cheerful, active and talkative person. However, she makes an effort to

subdue her personality within her office life because she feels that male colleagues and seniors prefer her to be quiet and self-effacing. The male-centred Korean organisational culture is heavily critical of assertive and opinionated female employees. Hence, if female workers insist on stating their opinions, they are quickly labelled as troublemakers. In such a climate, most female workers find it difficult to respond assertively to abuse. Yoon-Hee seems to deny her seniors' behaviour within office parties.

When we had the office party, my seniors said to me, "serve me with some wine", and sometimes, they touched my shoulder. At that time, I thought that they were my brothers or uncles, so I did not think of their actions as sexual harassment (Yoon-Hee).

She tried to think of these men as her relatives because if she were to view them as harassers it would be almost impossible for her passively to endure their behaviour. This is a common strategy for coping with sexual harassment.

Hae-Ja identified the main reason why she is unable to resist sexual harassment: 'In a small company, even though I am harassed sexually, I cannot resist, because I need to face the harasser every day' (Hae-Ja). She is clearly worried about the outcome of an assertive reaction; if she were to vigorously resist him, she could no longer work with this colleague. It seems that Hae-Ja does not want to be responsible for making the office environment uncomfortable and hostile through an assertive response to her harasser.

Sun-Young mentioned another reason why she should be silent on matters of sexual harassment: 'I was so upset because I felt that he did not need to be like this, but I cannot speak to the harasser because he possesses institutional power and authority' (Sun-Young). Sun-Young emphasises that the main reason for her silence is because the harasser is invested with institutional authority. Consequently, she fears for her own position in the office. If she resists the harasser, she may be disadvantaged: for example, she could be fired, demoted, or accused of non-cooperation in relation to her duty. As a result, female workers feel forced to remain silent and endure sexual harassment.

Ignoring

Ignoring sexual harassment is a similar strategy to silence and is invoked for similar reasons. The types of indirect response, which include silence and ignoring the behaviour, overlap and are difficult to classify precisely. However, the method of ignoring is slightly more assertive than that of silence since female workers choose the method of ignoring in order to ensure their own mental comfort. Nevertheless, this method is not sufficient to prevent sexual harassment.

Young-Joo and Hyun-Jae both indicated why they ignore sexual harassment: 'I ignore the situation. I am confused but I cannot express my real emotions because the harassers are my clients' (Young-Joo). 'I try to ignore the situation or laugh it off, I think, if I become angry, the situation will only get worse' (Hyun-Jae). They do not consider their own feelings but rather worry about the reactions of their harassers. In the case of Young-Joo, because she could not express her real emotions frankly, as she needed to

keep an insurance contract with her client, she simply ignored the situation. Hyun-Jae has a similar attitude.

Unlike Young-Joo and Hyun-Jae, Min-Ae merely ignores the sexual jokes because her previous efforts of prevention were to no avail: 'I ignore it. This is because even though we said to them, 'don't do that!' they do not change their behaviour and attitudes' (Min-Ae). Min-Ae gave up attempting to find a solution to the problem, and now tries to ignore it. It seems, then, that even when the recipient of sexual harassment does actively respond to the harassers, her efforts are always fruitless. Young-Hee also said that: 'I think that ignoring is a good way' (Young-Hee).

However, I doubt that this approach is effective in dealing with serious incidents of sexual harassment. While it may help individual women to cope with harassment, the harassers often misperceive women's ignoring as an acceptance of the situation, and thereby ignoring might lead to more serious and advanced forms of sexual harassment.

Avoidance

The second sort of indirect response is avoidance. When female workers are sexually harassed for the first time, they generally say nothing and attempt to ignore it. As these experiences accumulate, female workers attempt to avoid the principal harassers. Hae-Ja gave information on how she avoided both the habitual harassers and the situation: 'I try to avoid the habitual harassers. Also, I try to avoid situations in which acts of sexual harassment are likely to occur' (Hae-Ja). Jeong-Hee discussed her avoidance strategies when it comes to verbal sexual harassment: 'I avoid the situation or try to change the

topic' (Jeong-Hee). When Jeong-Hee was subjected to verbal sexual harassment from her colleagues, she tried to change the topic of conversation. This was her way of attempting to deflate the situation. Soo-Won also states that she combines both strategies of ignoring and avoidance as her individual tactics against sexual harassment.

I think that ignoring is quite a good way. Maybe, it's because I did not experience serious sexual harassment, that I think avoiding and ignoring are good responses to sexual harassment. For example, we do not drink at the office party and we do not sit beside drunken men (Soo-Won).

Soo-Won is keen to emphasise that ignoring those behaviours that make female workers uncomfortable can be a good strategy when the degree of sexual harassment is relatively mild. Hyun-Jae also quoted other means of avoidance at office parties: 'When my senior wants to dance with me, I cannot reject his request even though I do not want to dance. Therefore, I try to avoid the situation' (Hyun-Jae). At office parties in particular, the avoidance appears to be a wise choice because a more assertive response to drunken harassers might result in more violent abuse to the woman. According to Soo-Won, she initially could not resist her harasser but, after that, she took steps to ensure that she would no longer be trapped in the same situation again. She maintained a physical distance from her harasser.

Avoidance, despite being an indirect and passive response to sexual harassment, is nevertheless, a safe and reasonable strategy for female workers. It appears that avoidance may not be the best tactic but is a pragmatic method. Unfortunately, an assertive response to sexual harassment often provokes a crisis in the female worker's

professional position.

Leaving the company

When female workers have experienced serious and repeated sexual harassment, and find they cannot have recourse to official complaint, many decide to leave their company. They do so because they have exhausted the methods for dealing with sexual harassment. Jeong-Hee said: 'I think that resigning from the company is a method of response to sexual harassment' (Jeong-Hee). Jeong-Hee has not yet experienced a serious degree of sexual harassment, but if she did so, she says she would resign. She sees resignation as a realistic response to sexual harassment.

In conclusion, the main reason why female workers choose indirect and individual responses such as silence, ignoring and avoidance, is because they want to retain their position within the office without incurring any trouble. They also believe that if they were to engage in active resistance, it would not assist in reforming the nature of the organisational culture, which promotes sexual harassment. These women clearly recognise the institutional power of their harassers, which would not easily be destroyed by personal resistance.

2. Assertive Responses

I use the term 'assertive response' to refer to assertive attempts to stop perpetrators and the seeking of institutional redress. Through the experiences of some interviewees about the assertive responses, I will show how this reaction is effective in reducing incidents

of sexual harassment.

Attempts to stop perpetrators on an individual level

The assertive responses chosen by each individual are contextual and therefore, the types of the methods used are diverse and flexible. The first tactic is to assertively speak out about one's feelings. A potentially positive measure against sexual harassment, Hae-Ja and Yeon-Joo directly asked their harassers to refrain from making sexual jokes.

I asked the harasser directly "do you like these jokes or are you a sexual pervert?" And then, some harassers feel sorry. Others try to make more abusive jokes. However, most harassers do not make sexual jokes after that (Hae-Ja).

I confront the harasser directly when a male worker makes a sexual joke. Therefore, my nickname is "female soldier" (Yeon-Joo).

However, we can see from Hae-Ja's statement that some men do not accept the women's criticism of their behaviour and instead progress to more abusive actions. Yeon-Joo has acquired the uncomplimentary nickname of 'female soldier' because of her assertive response to sexual harassment; regardless of male workers' comments upon her, she directly confronts them.

Eun-soon and Mi-Ja respond to sexual harassment in a different way: 'When a male worker makes a sexual joke bluntly, I make stronger sexual jokes and then he does not

make them anymore' (Eun-Soon). 'I do not get angry but I confront the harasser with a blunter joke' (Mi-Ja). Their strategy appears to be to confront the harassers' intention, which is their curiosity about the reactions of women to sexual jokes, and then deflate it through their lack of embarrassment. Thus, the men are unable to tease Eun-Soon and Mi-Ja about the nature of their reactions. This method sometimes works in preventing sexual jokes in the office but it can also be a dangerous tactic as the harassers often misunderstand the women's reaction as indicating a sexual interest in them.

Like Boo-Young and Ji-Hae, many female workers confront harassment in a more roundabout way.

A senior asked me, "would you like to have dinner with me this Friday?" I said, "I have already made an appointment with my boyfriend", or "I want to have dinner with my female colleagues", or "I do not want to meet you after work", or, "I want to have lunch with you" (Boo-Young).

If I am angry, it will be awkward. Therefore, I say with a laugh, "Why? I can dance only with my boyfriend" (Ji-Hae).

Both women state that they have a boyfriend and are unavailable for another man's attentions. They are obliquely referring to conservative Korean tradition, whereby men should not approach women who have spouses in a sexual manner. However, this custom is clearly disregarded, because married female workers are often sexually harassed within Korean organisations. These polite refusals might be categorised as a relatively assertive response within the Korean context, where the victims find it

difficult to resist sexual harassment.

Furthermore, Jeong-Mi responded to a case of sexual harassment in relation to the peculiar ideology of ageism: 'If my senior asks me to dance or serve wine, I say, "I cannot do it because I am too young". I do not try to confront the senior, but respond to him pleasantly' (Jeong-Mi). She is aware that men are often embarrassed to be served by young girls in drinking bars, because sexual relationships between older men and young girls are deeply controversial and indeed illegal at present in Korea. Therefore, in order to confront sexual harassment, Jeong-Mi utilised a social convention. She talked to these men in a roundabout way because she did not want to confront her senior, but she also wanted to avoid an uncomfortable atmosphere.

Eun-Soon also chose to politely but firmly resist their harassers: 'Politely, I said to the harasser, "I do not like your behaviour, please don't do that"; after that, he did not harass me anymore' (Eun-Soon). Ji-Hae had a similar tactic: 'I cannot endure, so I will try to respond to, sexual harassment. For example, if the incident is not too serious, I will ask the harasser for an apology' (Ji-Hae). At the time, their responses effectively deal with the harassment, but these women have only been involved in relatively mild incidents.

When the recipient feels that the degree of sexual harassment is more serious, extremely frank and strong language has to be employed to deal with the matter, as in Soon-Ju's case: 'When we drank at the bar, a senior kissed my cheek. I was angry with his behaviour and I went home. After that, he apologized to me, and now our relationship has improved' (Soon-Ju). The senior apologized to her and consequently, her honest

and frank response was sufficient to reform the man's behaviour.

Kyung-Ae also pointed out how a direct confrontation with a harasser can often improve a bad situation: 'We told the harasser that we knew that he had demanded a date with a young woman and that this is a kind of sexual harassment. After that, no similar cases were reported, fortunately' (Kyung-Ae). Kyung-Ae's female junior had repeatedly suffered demands for a date from a male senior and then told Kyung-Ae about this harassment. Kyung-Ae discussed the matter with her female colleagues and they decided to report the harasser. As a result, the problem was solved. Transforming the experience of sexual harassment into more collective public issue can thus be a positive response to harassment as it provides a way of eradicating sexual harassment without incurring the risk of individual professional disadvantage.

Attempts by individuals to stop the perpetrator are categorised as wide ranging: from direct and assertive speaking out to politely talking with harassers. It is evident that the attempt chosen by each individual depends upon the context of the situation and therefore these methods are both flexible and varied. It could be argued that this is a first step in declaring sexual harassment to be a serious social problem and might in itself be a preventative measure.

Seeking institutional redress

Attempts to seek institutional redress are divided into reporting harassment to the trade union, and support from an organisation for female workers. These methods are more assertive and powerful responses than those that involve attempts to stop the perpetrator

on an individual level. However, female workers are uneasy about using this public strategy, because they are concerned about the consequent attention surrounding their case. Therefore, the proportion of those attempting this tactic is fairly low. Sun-Woo, who works for a trade union, criticised the shortcomings of trade unions in relation to their reluctance to support female workers who have been sexually harassed.

A female worker reported her experience so we recommended that the harasser should leave the company. However, we did not deal with the case publicly because the victim did not want this (Sun-Woo).

She pointed out that a case of sexual harassment is difficult to deal with publicly because if the victims of sexual harassment become widely known they are unable to maintain their jobs due to the culture of blame surrounding the victims and the labelling of the women as 'bad girls'. Victims of sexual harassment therefore want to pursue their case secretly. However, as stated by Eun-Soon, the percentage of women publicly reporting cases of sexual harassment has slightly increased since female workers have begun to believe that reporting such incidents to the trade union is helpful in preventing further harassment and tends to ensure the punishment of the harassers.

Once, a female worker reported her experience to the trade union and she received an official apology from the harasser. Recently, cases of sexual harassment have often been reported to the trade union (Eun-Soon).

Trade unions can be important in eradicating sexual harassment in the workplace. However, those unions that support and help harassed women are rare. Since the

establishment of legislation on sexual harassment in 1999, supporting harassed women has become one of the trade union's duties. Nevertheless, many women still doubt whether using the policies is either practical or effective. I will develop a more detailed discussion of these issues in Chapter 6.

3. Changes in Responses

The respondents' strategies for dealing with sexual harassment have recently changed as a result of an accumulation of female workers' experiences and of changes in the social environment. I will now investigate how the response methods of my interviewees are changing; in doing this, I will suggest the developmental direction of response methods.

The accumulation of the female workers' experiences is closely related to more assertive responses to sexual harassment. Eun-Soon pointed out that her increased work experience has given her the confidence to respond to sexual harassment: 'I know how to respond to sexual harassment, because I have worked here for thirteen years now, but new recruits are upset about harassment and do not know how to respond to it' (Eun-Soon). Hae-Ja also said: 'When I was young, I couldn't speak to the harassers, but now I can, because I am older' (Hae-Ja). Through their various experiences they have come to recognize sexual harassment as a clear form of sex discrimination and have also learnt how to respond to this behaviour during the course of their career. When they were new recruits they found it impossible to respond directly to sexual harassment, but, based upon their cumulative experiences, now they have the ability to discover useful strategies of resistance. This factor implies that if senior female workers share their accumulated experiences with new female recruits, these less experienced women might

be able to respond to sexual harassment more effectively. Min-Hee describes below how she is undergoing a process of change.

When I started to work at this company, I had to do all the things that the male seniors and colleagues asked me to do. Actually, I had to do most things and I did not complain. However, after three years, I do not want to do these things and I do complain about it. Sometimes, I am distressed. It seems that I am undergoing a change of consciousness (Min-Hee).

Min-Hee now feels empowered to make a complaint about sex discrimination and sexual harassment. Her increasing work experience led her to identify the unfairness of both sex discrimination and harassment and she refers to this growing awareness as a 'change of consciousness'. We can therefore observe that female workers' level of awareness and confidence are an important tool in the eradication of sexual harassment.

On the other hand, the change in response tactics is perpetuated by developments in the socio-cultural environment, which is associated with changes in consciousness for female workers. Soo-Hee described the nature of these developments: 'The consciousness of male and female workers has changed, thereby the social environment is changing, especially in the venture industry'⁴ (Soo-Hee). The implication here is that some male workers are starting to rethink their attitudes to their female colleagues; increasing numbers of men regard women as their equals and respect their workplace rights.

⁴ Since the IMF system, the venture industry has been introduced as a new type of industry within South Korea. The representative features of this industry attempt to challenge old-fashioned organisational climates, such as sex discrimination and hierarchical system.

Changes in society have had positive results in reforming the status of female workers. Hence, these changes have also had the effect of preventing incidents of sexual harassment. In conclusion, the response strategies to sexual harassment can be divided into two categories: indirect response, which include remaining silent, avoiding and ignoring the harasser and types of assertive response, such as trying to stop sexual harassment on an individual level and seeking institutional redress. The majority of female workers have chosen indirect rather than assertive responses and I will examine the main reasons for this choice in the next section.

V. Why are victims unable to respond assertively to sexual harassment?

The majority of my interviewees are reluctant to legally and publicly respond to sexual harassment. Fitzgerald and her colleagues considered why victims simply do not report their harassers: 'the victims believe that nothing can or will be done and many are reluctant to cause problems for the harasser. The most common reason, however, is fear – fear of retaliation, of not being believed, of hurting one's career, or of being shamed and humiliated' (Fitzgerald, Swan and Fischer 1995:122). In my MA dissertation I also discovered that the majority of Korean female workers experiencing sexual harassment made indirect responses to the problem. They ultimately felt that an assertive reaction would fail to achieve a better solution as the harassers were usually in positions of authority. Therefore, many of these assertive responses would actually provoke a worse scenario and result in the victim being fired from their jobs. These women also worried about their sexual reputation and the damage their reaction would cause to their perceived feminine image. Women who are involved in sexual scandal are often stigmatised in Korean culture, even when they are the victims of sexual harassment.

Finally, there is a complete absence of appropriate social policies and an official system to support any assertive responses to sexual harassment: for example, the opportunities for legal action or the chance to sue the harasser (Lee, S. E. 1995: 65-89). The Korean government have, however, recently shown interest in developing policies for dealing with sexual harassment. They established some specific legislation for preventing sexual harassment in 1999, recommending that Korean companies consider sexual harassment an important factor within the elimination of sex discrimination and suggesting that they educate their employees in these issues. Within this thesis I aim to discover why the majority of harassed female workers nevertheless still avoid actively confronting their harassers.

Some interviewees think that individual responses can be ineffective. Both Hae-Ja and Mi-Ja individually resisted sexual harassment on separate occasions and found this response did not reduce, nor solve, the cases of sexual harassment in their workplaces.

Although I want to talk about my experience of sexual harassment, I do not know where I can speak out. Also, I doubt whether legal action can solve the problem of sexual harassment. I think that social changes must occur in order to deal with the issues around sexual harassment, but I do not believe that individual legal action can prompt social change (Hae-Ja).

Even though I resist it, I do not believe that cases of sexual harassment are generally reduced. Because men still think the actions which constitute sexual harassment are not illegal, but natural. After all, if men's consciousness is not changed, even if we resist them, the problems will not

be solved (Mi-Ja).

Most Korean people still do not consider sexual harassment as an illegal action. Therefore, in such a cultural climate, female workers avoid taking active, yet alone legal, measures. They are aware that such efforts make little impact on general societal attitudes. Furthermore, female workers are afraid to confront harassers with higher status jobs. The harassed woman finds it difficult to resist the more powerful male worker. Hyun-Jeong also stressed the importance of the male-dominated atmosphere of Korean organisations.

The opinion of a man is regarded more highly than the opinion of a woman in every aspect of this society. Therefore, even though a woman resists sexual harassment, if the harassing man denies his action, the response of the woman is dismissed. Thus, women cannot resist easily because of this male-dominated atmosphere (Hyun-Jeong).

Women come to recognise that ultimately an assertive response is ineffective because of the priority afforded to men. Both Ji-Hae and Ha-Jin thought that individual assertive responses to sexual harassment generally had negative outcomes.

If the harasser has a lot of power in the company, I cannot resist him, because I am a powerless person and he can disadvantage me in my work (Ji-Hae).

I will not respond to sexual harassment, because a direct response puts my

job at risk. So, a strong response is the wrong way to solve the problem (Ha-Jin).

Ji-Hae felt unable to resist a powerful harasser due to her concerns about the possible disadvantages she may incur. Ha-Jin was also worried about workplace retaliation. The possible disadvantages they fear consist of refusal of promotion, a negative evaluation of existing work and the possibility of being transferred or fired. Several western studies examine the possible outcomes of an assertive response. Fitzgerald and her colleague note that 'more assertive responding is associated with more negative outcomes of every type (job, psychological and health-related), even after severity of harassment was controlled' (Fitzgerald et al. 1995:123). In addition, Loy and Stewart also suggest that 'retaliation for their responses to harassment, including lowered job evaluation, denial of promotion, and being transferred or fired - and the most assertive responses often incurred the greatest costs' (Loy & Stewart 1984 in Fitzgerald et al.1995: 122). As in the case of Woo's legal action, the legal attempt tends to result in female workers being fired. Once again, it is the greater institutional power of the harasser which means that they are able to disadvantage their victims.

Ji-Hae also indicates why female workers are powerless: 'Because women are of low status and younger, female workers cannot speak about their experiences of sexual harassment' (Ji-Hae). Ji-Hae feels that she belongs within a powerless group, because she is located in a low status position and is younger than her male seniors and bosses. In Korea, age is an important factor in relation to power. The majority of Korean people believe that young persons should assent to, and obey, their elder's opinions. Therefore, any older person can exert a degree of cultural power.

Both Ju-Mi and Young-Hee emphasised their own powerless positions within hierarchical organisations.

At the time, I did not know how to respond to it because I was a new recruit⁵. Therefore, I did not make contact and talk with him, and I ignored him (Ju-Mi).

The relationship between a client and a sales woman is not equal, so even though we are unhappy about sexual harassment, we cannot express our opinions. Also, when we are educated about relations with clients, the lecturer says to us, “if male clients harass you, you need to ignore it” (Young-Hee).

Ju-Mi thought that she could not choose an individual assertive response to sexual harassment because she was a new recruit. On the other hand, Young-Hee points out the power relationship between saleswomen and clients. Even though her clients sexually harass her, she has to endure or ignore it if she wants to sell her insurance product.

As a result, the power relationship between harassers and victims is the most important feature in an analysis of response strategies to sexual harassment, because the question of institutional power is intrinsic to the fact that victims find it difficult to respond assertively. Thus, the phenomenon of sexual harassment is closely connected to the gendered and institutional power relationships within organisations and its eradication is

⁵ The term ‘new recruit’ indicates that she is located in a low status position and is relatively young.

bound up with the eventual deconstruction of these gendered and institutional power relationships.

Yet another reason why female workers feel uneasy about offering an individual assertive response to sexual harassment is because Korean organisations are male-centred and male dominated. In fact, the status of female workers is not only lower, but also more unstable than that of male workers. As stated by Mee-Soon and Ha-Jin, most male workers understood sexual harassment as a normal matter in the office.

Both female and male workers think sexual harassment is a trivial problem. For example, the harassed woman hesitates about her right to feel angry and to demand an apology from the harassers. Once, a male worker hit the cheek of a female worker in a nightclub, so the female worker asked him for an official apology. At this time, another male worker thought that his male colleague made a small mistake because he was drunk and that the female workers responded in an over-sensitive manner (Mee-Soon).

A male senior said, “women workers avoid the hard and physical work and if you are over-sensitive, you need to give up your job and just take care of your baby at home” (Ha-Jin).

Ha-Jin’s statement implies that the only way for women definitely to avoid sexual harassment is to leave the labour market and undertake a domestic role in the home instead. Ha-Jin complains that her reaction is trivialised and she is criticised for taking offence too easily. The male dominated organisational culture remains oblivious to the

unpleasant and uncomfortable situation which many of its female employees are forced to endure.

The frequent stigmatisation of the victims of sexual harassment provides the final reason why female workers are uneasy about taking legal action to these situations. Taking legal action is even less common than individual assertive response to sexual harassment. Women who become publicly known in relation to any sexual issue tend to be stigmatised, despite their role as victims of sexual harassment and violence. This embarrassment results from the importance still placed upon the retaining of sexual chastity for Korean women. Therefore, the causes of sexual harassment and sexual violence supposedly lie with the victims. It is widely believed that if these women had acted in a more cautious and modest manner, they would not have been harassed. In such a context, female workers find it difficult to publicize their experiences of sexual harassment. Eun-Soon and Sun-Woo described the ways in which harassed women are stigmatised after any official action.

After the case has finished, the harassed woman still suffers from the experience, because people remember and sometimes stigmatise the victim for a long time (Eun-Soon).

Usually, female workers do not claim their rights. Therefore, they do not want to respond to sexual harassment and they want to ignore it. Also, they worry about the consequences after the case finishes, so the serious cases of sexual harassment are not disclosed (Sun-Woo).

In other words, the woman is punished by the male dominated sexual culture. Mee-Soon gave specific examples of stigmatisation.

There was an official action against a case of sexual harassment in this company, and the harasser was fired, but the harassed woman could not keep her job. After the case was over, she was transferred to another branch, but most people knew her as the harassed woman. Therefore, she gave up her job (Mee-Soon).

The woman felt she could not maintain her job in a safe and secure working environment, even after the case was over and the harasser has been fired. Therefore, female workers find it difficult to gain any advantage from an assertive response, and in particular legal action, and are consequently reluctant to respond in this way. Furthermore, one of the effects of stigmatisation is a sense of personal guilt and responsibility, as the following statement from Ji-Hae indicates.

When I visited Canada, I was sexually harassed on the bus. However, at the time, I could not do anything because I blamed myself, I thought I was harassed because of my behaviour or appearance. As I held myself responsible, I could not speak out (Ji-Hae).

Ji-hae's views reflect those of the majority of Korean women. Even though sexual harassment is obviously the fault of the harasser, the victims nevertheless blame themselves and women who experience serious and frequent sexual harassment often suffer from psychological problems. As a result, the stigmatisation of victims is a

worrying outcome of assertive responses to sexual harassment. We cannot, therefore, state with any certainty that such responses are a desirable way in which to deal with this behaviour. The stigmatisation of the victim derives from a male-dominated sexual culture which imposes an oppressive double standard.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed Korean female workers' specific experiences of sexual harassment in their workplaces. I initially searched for a definition of sexual harassment based on the opinions of these workers. They defined sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination, and when they considered what sexual harassment consists of, they took into account the context of the incidents of harassment. Thus, the definition of sexual harassment varies according to the historical moment and specific culture.

Secondly, I classified the types of sexual harassment. These are also highly subjective. My typology was once more based on the experiences of victims in the Korean workplace. I identified verbal, physical, visual, psychological and gender harassment, with all four coexisting, and interrelating with each other, in practice.

I then developed my discussion through noting the different factors in sexual harassment. These factors are determined by the male dominated and sex-discriminatory organisational culture, which is represented as gendered and based on institutional power differences between men and women.

Finally, I investigated how female workers responded to their harassers. The majority of

women chose indirect and passive strategies, such as silence, avoidance and ignoring the situation; only a few female workers assertively confronted their harassers. I proceeded to investigate why these women found it difficult to respond assertively to the behaviour of their colleagues. I discovered that female workers recognised that assertive responses strategies often provoke negative outcomes, including the threat of dismissal and the stigmatisation of the victims. Hence, assertive response methods are not always effective in preventing incidents of sexual harassment. I will therefore examine in the next chapter what alternative measures exist to tackle the problem of sexual harassment within Korean organisations.

Chapter 6. Combating Sexual Harassment

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discovered that the victims of sexual harassment find it difficult to respond to their harassers assertively and that such reactions in any case do little to eradicate the problem. In this chapter, basing the discussion on my interviewees' opinions of legal action, I attempt to explore practical alternatives in dealing with problems of sexual harassment. A number of feminists have indicated that legal action is the rarest among all response strategies to sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al. 1995: 123; Gutek 1996: 273). Terpstra and Baker also argue that only about one percent of victims take legal action (Terpstra and Baker 1988 in Fitzgerald et al. 1995: 123). As in the outcomes of these studies, I found that legal action against sexual harassment is uncommon. Furthermore, in Korea there has only been one legally fought case of sexual harassment. Nevertheless, since Woo sued her harasser in the 1990s, the concept of sexual harassment has been introduced into Korean public discourse and her legal action contributed to the introduction of Korean legislation on sexual harassment (Lee, S. E. 1995: 3). This situation appears to imply that within the Korean context the initial legal action is closely connected with the recent legislation on sexual harassment. An examination of this relationship (between the legal action and legislation) might contribute to the discovery of practical strategies to challenge sexual harassment. I will thus examine female workers' opinions about the value of legal action, and then move on to an analysis of the implications of the legislation on sexual harassment established in Korea in 1999. My aim is to discover whether the legislation is efficient in dealing with, and preventing future cases of, sexual harassment. The discussion will then move on to explore the effectiveness of educational programs in relation to sexual harassment

in the workplace. While the Korean government has ordered Korean companies to implement guidelines with the aim of preventing sexual harassment amongst their members, I aim to discover the content of these programs and whether they have succeeded in altering the ethos of office cultures. Finally in this chapter, I will try to suggest practical measures based on the female workers' own ideas, for reducing sexual harassment in Korean workplaces.

I. Opinions on legal action

The Korean government established the legislation on sexual harassment in 1999. Within the constitution of Korea, regulation on sexual harassment is a part of the law of equal opportunities between female workers and male workers because Korean legislators define sexual harassment as a type of sex discrimination. They believe that by limiting this discrimination they will succeed in reducing the number of incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace. The regulation on sexual harassment maintains that if seniors or co-workers with institutional power harass other workers through unwanted sexual behaviour, such as physical and verbal sexual play, and this behaviour then results in employment disadvantages for the victim or creates a hostile work environment, the behaviour is then defined as sexual harassment. In addition, heads of companies should display an intention to prevent incidents of sexual harassment in their workplaces by following specific regulations. Firstly, they should provide an educational programme for their employees that promotes the prevention of sexual harassment. If the employer breaks these regulations, they will be required to pay three million won (approximately one hundred and fifty pounds) as a penalty. Secondly, if they find harassers in their companies, they should punish them in such ways as disadvantaging them in personnel management and conducting a disciplinary dismissal.

Thirdly, the employer should not allow the victims of sexual harassment to suffer any employment disadvantage. If these regulations are broken, the owner of company must pay five million won (approximately two hundred and fifty pounds) as a penalty (Women Link 2000: 293-294). The Korean legislation appears to borrow from foreign regulation, such as American and European legislation on sexual harassment. When this legislation was first demanded, a number of Korean feminists suggested the regulation should be established as a special law in relation to sexual violence; however, Korean legislators rejected this suggestion since they recognised that the legislation on sexual harassment was related to the institutional power relationship within organisations (The Committee for Women of Korea Assembly 1998:289). The principle of this legislation seems to be correct because incidents of sexual harassment are related to both sexual relations and the institutional power relations. Nevertheless, the legislation does not appear effective or workable at present in Korea.

When I interviewed my interviewees, legislation on sexual harassment was newly established. Although female workers have been interested in the legislation, they are reluctant to take action based on it. I now examine the main reasons why the majority of female workers view legal action as a preventative method against sexual harassment negatively. The ultimate reason for their lack of enthusiasm regarding legal action is that it is regarded as another assertive response strategy, which has a negative outcome and is unhelpful at solving the underlying causes of the problem. Nevertheless, a few women take a positive view of legal action and I will initially briefly review these attitudes. Some women feel that if they experienced serious sexual harassment they would make a legal claim. Both Young-Joo and Yeon-Joo said: 'If I were harassed seriously, I would take legal action, but if the experience was fairly trivial, I would endure it' (Young-Joo). 'If I had to confront a serious problem, I would respond to

sexual harassment legally. I think the harasser should not be forgiven' (Yeon-Joo). Thus, the two interviewees quoted above would all respond indirectly to less serious forms of sexual harassment, but feel that they might take legal action if they were confronted with more serious behaviour: defined as physical abuse such as rape. It is evident that the decision to take legal action depends on the degree of such behaviour.

Hyun-Jeong also said: 'If I am harassed seriously, I will consider legal action. Even though the harasser has power in this society, I will report his behaviour, because I think that he needs to change his attitudes and behaviour' (Hyun-Jeong). Young-Hee believed strongly in the importance of legal action. 'I would definitely go to the law. The harassers must be punished' (Young-Hee). They state unequivocally that the harassers should be punished, regardless of their power.

Hyun-Jae is worried about possible stigmatisation after legal action: 'I could report the harasser legally, but afterwards I would feel embarrassed, although the harasser is to blame. But, I think because the social circumstances around sexual harassment are changing, we can access the law' (Hyun-Jae). Boo-Young also identified the negative result: 'I could do it, because if we endure it, if we willingly submit to sexual harassment, we would also suffer from disadvantages' (Boo-Young). Even though they clearly acknowledge the stigma attached to victims of sexual harassment, Hyun-Jae and Boo-Young would still make a legal complaint against the harasser. They recognise that social attitudes to sexual harassment are beginning to change and therefore their harassers could be punished.

However, we can observe from the statements of Ju-Mi and Jeong-Hee why female workers find it difficult to choose legal action in relation to the negative outcomes. 'If I

decide to leave this company, I can report my experience of sexual harassment to a court of law. If I leave this company without any claim, I will suffer from unfair treatment' (Ju-Mi). 'If I give up my job, I can legally report my experience of sexual harassment' (Jeong-Hee). Both Ju-Mi and Jeong-Hee assert that in order to take legal action, they would have to resign from their jobs. Thus, even though they might succeed in punishing their harassers, they would find it difficult to maintain their jobs due to their consequent stigmatisation by their colleagues and seniors. Although a company is not legally allowed to fire the victims of sexual harassment, it can make it difficult for them to stay. In this context, the decision to take legal action is a difficult and potentially life-changing one for female workers. Many female workers therefore do not want to access legal action because they would be disadvantaged by doing so.

These women are worried about the possible results – including stigmatisation by peers and dismissal – of undertaking legal action after being sexually harassed. However, they also think that the legislation on sexual harassment is not dealing effectively with the problem. Yoon-Hee and Min-Ae pointed out that the stigmatisation of the harassed woman is based upon a double standard.

I cannot act legally, because if I want to punish the harasser, I need to talk about my experience of sexual harassment. I do not want to speak about my experience, because of social attitudes. In our society, when a woman is involved in a sexual matter, most people think the woman is a bad woman (Yoon-Hee).

It depends on the seriousness of the case, but I would not act legally. (Why?) I think, even though I could get economic and legal compensation, I

would suffer from the experience and it is difficult to predict the outcome of legal action. For example, people remember not the actions of the harasser, but the victim (Min-Ae).

Both Yoon-Hee and Min-Ae indicated that the victims of sexual harassment are stigmatised as 'bad girls'. In Chapter 3 I identified the derivation of this condemnation of the female victim from the heterosexual norm of sexual chastity. It could be argued that the stigmatisation of victims ensures these women avoid taking legal action. Most female workers do not want to sue their harasser, because of the additional problems they would incur by doing so. However, if women's organisations support victims, the attempted proportion of legal action may slightly increase.

Women's negative views of legal action also result from the risk it represents to their jobs. In general, female workers think that legal action over sexual harassment necessitates resigning from their job. The three female workers below share this fear:

How can a female worker resist sexual harassment by legal means? If we want to keep our jobs, we have to endure sexual harassment. If we report the harassers legally, we cannot work at this place anymore. Therefore, female workers simply need to endure sexual harassment (Jeong-Hee).

If I experienced serious sexual harassment, I would speak out about my experiences and leave the company. I do not want to get involved in legal action (Jeong-Mi).

Regulations for dealing with sexual harassment exist in this company, but

they are not effective. If they do not want to give up their job, they cannot access the regulations (Min-Hee).

These interviewees believed that they had no choice but to endure sexual harassment in the workplace in order to safely keep their jobs. This view again derives from the fear of stigmatisation: companies cannot formally fire harassed women, but other members isolate them as peculiar and unchaste and hence the women feel that they cannot stay.

The two women quoted below are also afraid publicly to report their harasser because of the risk to their job status: 'While I am a worker in this workplace, I cannot report my experience of sexual harassment legally' (Hae-Ja). 'I will not report the case legally, because it would feel uncomfortable. The legal action will not help me to keep my job' (Soon-Ju). Both Hae-Ja and Soon-Ju are reluctant to take any legal action due to their desire to keep their jobs. Min-Hee, in particular, thinks that she has to downplay her own experiences of sexual harassment in order to maintain a harmonious environment.

I hope that I will not encounter serious sexual abuse. Even though I admit that I am being sexually harassed, I think that in order to continue to work in a harmonious environment, I have to pretend that things are all right. I do not want to use legislation (Min-Hee).

This idea bears a remarkable similarity to male ideas that female workers should endure less serious incidents of harassment to promote good feeling in the office. Within such a context, therefore, most of my interviewees are concerned about their position in the workplace. This is also because the status of female workers is more unstable than that of male workers; in particular, female workers are the first to be fired in an economic

crisis. Therefore, Korean women in employment do not want to lose their jobs as a result of legal action over sexual harassment, because they would then find it difficult to gain new employment. Consequently, many types of sex discrimination prevalent within Korean organisations – including unequal opportunity, job instability, lower income and status, all help to maintain sexual harassment in the workplace.

Widespread ignorance of the actual content of the 1999 legislation on sexual harassment also contributes to negative attitudes towards legal action. The majority of my interviewees do not know how to use this legislation effectively and what kind of remedies it can provide. ‘Legal action is not practical for me. I feel that legal action is very complicated and useless’ (Mi-Ja). ‘I do not know how I can use this legislation. I do not feel that it is useful for me’ (Jeong-Hee). Neither Mi-Ja nor Jeong-Hee know how the legislation works towards a solution for sexual harassment, and thus they regard the legislation as useless. Mi-Ja feels that accessing the legislation is a complicated affair, and therefore not practical or realistic for her. Sun-Young also claimed that:

In fact, legislation around sexual harassment is a problematic solution to harassment. Firstly, I do not know the precise details of the legislation. In general, we do not speak out about sexual experiences. In this context, if I talk about my experiences of sexual harassment, people think of me not as a victim but as a sexually harassed woman. Therefore, I cannot respond to sexual harassment legally (Sun-Young).

Thus, the Korean government needs to provide more information about the content of the legislation to both female and male workers, and to explain the details practically

and precisely.

Both Soo-Won and Eun-Soon criticise the non-practical and inefficient nature of the legislation on sexual harassment: 'I won't make a legal complaint, because this company does not support the system' (Soo-Won). 'I do not feel that the legislation is useful and effective. I actually do not know about the specific compensation system and how I can use the legislation' (Eun-Soon). Soo-Won's company has not yet constructed regulations for female workers. Since the establishment of the legislation in 1999, the Korean government has asked Korean companies to prepare and enforce regulations against sexual harassment. A number of larger companies have obeyed the orders of the Korean government; however, there are business that have not yet set up any regulations. Female workers hence find it difficult to take legal action without the support of their companies. Eun-Soon also complains about the shortcomings of the specific system for preventing sexual harassment. In consequence, Ji-Hae suggests how the shortage of support systems should be reformed.

I hope that the legislation will be effective. For example, that a specific department with responsibility for sexual harassment is established; that the officers of the department will visit each company regularly; they will need to suggest solutions to sexual harassment also, they need to check whether company systems operate well or not. In addition, they can advise the boss of the company about the specific means of preventing sexual harassment (Ji-Hae).

Ji-Hae proposes the advent of a department for fighting sexual harassment and also emphasises that both the government and companies need to make an effort to prevent

this behaviour.

In order to implement the legislation, the Korean government must firstly hold an official conference for propaganda on the legislation and, in addition, compel Korean companies to support regulations against sexual harassment. Korean companies also need to provide support for harassed female workers so that they can easily access these regulations. Furthermore, companies should develop regulations which protect harassed women from any disadvantages, such as stigmatisation or losing their jobs. In addition, trade unions and women's organisations need to monitor and supervise whether companies efficiently undertake the regulation or not.

II. The Implication of the Legislation on Sexual Harassment

Legislation on sexual harassment has been established in western countries since the 1970s, and in Korea since the 1990s, but most feminists criticise it for a number of reasons because it has failed to be effective. For example, Livingston states that 'Given the immense psychological and economic costs to individuals who use formal action, in contrast to the potentially meagre gains, it is not surprising that so few victims choose this response' (Livingston 1982:15). Nevertheless, the legislation is meaningful in that its existence means that sexual harassment is defined as both an illegal action and an obvious form of sex discrimination. MacKinnon suggests that when considering the law and how it can be used to address sexual harassment, it should be remembered that harassment is an issue of power rather than a question of right or wrong (Mackinnon 1979:173). In this context, I questioned my interviewees on the implication of the legislation on sexual harassment as I wanted to discover whether, even though they did not use the legislation, it was at all useful. The aim of this process was to elicit what

kinds of shortcomings the legislation was perceived to have, and therefore what reforms are necessary in Korea.

Although many female workers have not yet used the legislation, some interviewees regard it as meaningful. Jin-Ju identifies the fact that the legislation foregrounds the issue of sexual harassment in Korea: 'Since the introduction of legislation concerning sexual harassment, some people tend to think more about the issue of sexual harassment' (Jin-Ju). She implies that most people did not consider the issue of sexual harassment as a social problem before the establishment of the legislation. However, Korean people have recently begun to understand sexual harassment as a social issue. In addition, Sun-Woo and Yoo-Jin argue that it is because of the legislation that Koreans have begun to recognize sexual harassment as illegal behaviour.

The establishment of legislation is good and positive. Because of the existence of the legislation, people feel that sexual harassment is illegal and wrong. Therefore, if the legislation is widely disseminated, it has practical effectiveness (Sun-Woo).

It is valuable, because if the legislation affects office life, it is a means of preventing sexual harassment. After all, people will come to recognize that sexual harassment is illegal (Yoo-Jin).

Although neither victims nor harassers want to be practically involved in the legislation, the victims of sexual harassment recognise the legislation as a protective tool and the harassers begin to acknowledge that if they habitually harass their colleagues, they could have to pay compensation. Therefore, the legislation seems to bear a symbolic

implication and, according to my interviewees, the acknowledgment of the existence of sexual harassment is implicitly helpful in its prevention in the workplace. Moreover, the function of the legislation is to define the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable actions, and thus it might set a new norm whereby the majority of Korean people come to regard sexual harassment as unacceptable as well as illegal in the future.

Young-Joo and Ju-Mi add that the legislation will also help to change the attitudes of both sexes: 'The legislation on sexual harassment is necessary both for Korean women, and to change the mindset of the habitual harasser' (Young-Joo). 'I don't think the legislation makes a great difference, but public information and education about the legislation is important. It is necessary' (Ju-Mi). Although Ju-Mi's statement indicates that there has not been a dramatic change in attitudes, she nevertheless believed that if education was ongoing, people's attitudes would be altered. Sun-Young suggests that the nature of the change will be an increased number of women who make practical use of the legislation.

At present, few people use the legislation but I guess that the number of female workers using it will increase gradually. Due to this change, maybe I will feel able to use the legislation if I experience a serious problem with sexual harassment (Sun-Young).

Sun-Young thinks that most people have not yet recognized the effectiveness of the legislation because they rarely use it. However, if the number of harassed women making use of the legislation gradually increases, female workers will come to recognize its value. If they do not suffer from other disadvantages, these women will attempt to use the legislation in the belief that it will work for them in both a positive

and a practical way. Therefore, the legislation needs to be reformed to take account of these desires.

The majority of my interviewees had negative views concerning legislation on sexual harassment and I will now conduct an examination of the specific features of these opinions. Female workers pointed out that the first negative aspect of the legislation is that male workers make fun of it. The women in the workplace then become the objects of their gossip. Jeong-Hee and Jeong-Mi experienced a type of sexual harassment in relation to the legislation.

Since the establishment of the legislation on sexual harassment, when male workers have sexually harassed female workers verbally, it has been defined as sexual harassment. One of my male colleagues said to me, "if I harass you sexually, will you report me?" I think that many men do not consider sexual harassment as a serious problem in their workplace (Jeong-Hee).

About one month after the establishment of the regulations, it was a kind of joke between male workers. "If I do this, are you going to report my action legally? My actions are not sexual harassment". When a senior is staring at me, he says, it is not sexual harassment (Jeong-Mi).

Male workers had not yet thought of sexual harassment as an illegal action and thus they enjoyed joking about the legislation. The main reason why the men joke in this way is because of the financial compensation that victims can receive. In 1993 Woo's case was settled when she was privately awarded compensation of around fifteen thousand pounds. After this case many Korean men thought that if they could pay the

required compensation, then they could still sexually harass female workers as they might buy prostitutes. Ji-Hae and Hyun-Jae discuss male workers' attitudes towards compensation below.

People talk about the legislation around sexual harassment, especially about the compensation. I suspect that the men cannot harass us sexually any more because of the legislation, even if they believed that sexual harassment is a right and normal action (Ji-Hae).

I don't think the problem of sexual harassment is getting better because of the legislation. Instead, male workers laugh at the legislation. For example, if you touch her shoulder, you need to pay her ten million won (approximately five thousand pounds). If I touch your hip, how much do I need to pay you? Therefore, the legislation can be regarded as something funny (Hyun-Jae).

According to Hyun-Jae, male workers are not worried by the legislation but rather find it full of humour. Therefore, female workers suffer from yet more forms of sexual harassment in relation to the penalty of compensation. Clearly then this penalty is not an appropriate punishment for sexual harassment in Korea. We need instead to establish a more powerful and effective retribution for harassers.

On the other hand, some interviewees claim that the legislation was designed only for a few powerful companies. This means that the harassed female worker, who has little power of any kind, will find it difficult to fight and succeed against a large corporation.

I do not care whether the legislation exists or not. I am only interested in the effectiveness of the legislation, when I want to use the legislation, is it really useful for me or not. However, I think the path of legal action would be disadvantageous to me, because I would need to fight a big company (Yeon-Joo).

I need to protect myself. I think the legislation on sexual harassment is very political. Also, the reason why our company has a regulation about sexual harassment is due to its social position and the possibility of public attention. I do not think that the regulation is useful for me. It is just nominal (Min-Hee).

Yeon-Joo realizes that legal action involves an internal battle, because Korean companies have not yet acknowledged sexual harassment as a social problem and a form of sex discrimination and their culture remains male-dominated and male-centred. Therefore, if a harassed female worker attempts to take legal action against her harasser, the company might support the male colleagues rather than the victim. In addition, Min-Hee indicates that the nature of the legislation is not practical but purely political and nominal. In other words, the regulation on sexual harassment in her company has not proved useful for the harassed women, but promotes a good image of the company as reasonable and rational.

The legislation on sexual harassment in Korea has not yet addressed the victims. However, the existence of such legislation is nevertheless meaningful and useful as a symbolic guard. In consequence, the legislation needs to be revised to make it more practical and accessible: Nevertheless, reform of the legislation will be unable to solve

all problems relating to sexual harassment.

III. The Effectiveness of Education about the Guidelines concerning Sexual Harassment

Since the establishment of the legislation on sexual harassment in 1999, the Korean government has required that Korean companies provide their female and male workers with an educational programme about the guidelines concerning sexual harassment. This programme has been distributed on videotape and screened by some companies. The videotape, made by the Ministry of Labour within the Korean government, superficially describes the types of sexual harassment, such as verbal and physical, but fails to suggest that sexual harassment is perpetuated by a male-dominated office climate, merely defining it as an issue of sex discrimination. Rather, the video appears to make light of sexual harassment as a humorous and inconsequential incident in the workplace. For example, the main characters in the videotape are played by comedians, who are therefore unable to depict sexual harassment as a serious and social problem. With regard to this, I asked my interviewees what they thought about this educational tool because I was eager to discover whether it was effective at combating sexual harassment. Some interviewees were critical of the programme. Below, three female workers comment on it.

One day at lunchtime, we watched the videotape about the guidelines on sexual harassment. Every worker had to watch this video. It was a kind of enforced duty, but many workers did not watch, because it was played at lunchtime, so people missed their chance. After watching the videotape, people said it was funny, but they did not think that it was useful (Mi-Ja).

After watching the videotape about the guidelines on sexual harassment, we tried to discuss the content, but most people were not interested in the educational program (Sun-Woo).

We watched the videotape on the guidelines regarding sexual harassment, and people did not think sexual harassment was a serious problem, but rather viewed it as a joke (Mee-Soon).

In Mi-Ja's company, the educational programme was shown at lunchtime, which meant that many employees did not see it at all. This scheduling implies that the company did not seriously consider whether the programme might be useful in helping to prevent sexual harassment. The company only needed to meet the requirements of the government, so the viewing appears to have been a purely nominal gesture. Sun-Woo and Mee-Soon both said that it was ineffective; after watching the videotape, male workers thought of sexual harassment as a joke. The content of the videotape was therefore problematic and lacked enough description of real situations of sexual harassment. In addition, as stated below by three of my interviewees, workers might doubt the usefulness of educational programmes.

In the company policy, we try to inform workers about the guidelines governing sexual harassment, but I doubt whether such education is helpful in preventing cases of sexual harassment (Ji-Hae).

A female worker posted an article from the newspaper that discussed another company educating its workers about the guidelines on sexual

harassment, on the bulletin board of her company. And she was reproved by the department of personnel (Ha-Jin).

We had a lecture about the guidelines on sexual harassment. At that time, male workers said to me, "why do we need to be educated about sexual harassment, you are a harasser" (Soo-Hee).

Watching the videotape is proved to be educationally inefficient. Moreover, Ha-Jin indicated that the company seemed uninterested in the educational programme because her employers do not welcome female workers who desired workforce to be educated on the guidelines concerning sexual harassment.

On the other hand, Eun-Soon emphasizes the significance of educational programmes concerning both sexual harassment and sexual knowledge.

I think that each company needs to educate its male workers about sex education and the guidelines concerning sexual harassment. Also, if the company does not undertake an educational programme itself, it needs to be punished, because education is effective in reducing cases of sexual harassment (Eun-Soon).

Eun-Soon believed that the educational programme was useful in dealing with sexual harassment, maintaining that the strategies should be strengthened systematically and effectively. At present, the educational programme is in its infancy but in time it could be an effective means of altering workers' attitudes. The content and intensity of these programmes are important as the phenomenon of sexual harassment is deeply related to

the existence of a male-dominated and sex discriminatory sexual culture. A widespread change in this culture can only be effected by a deep-seated transformation of popular attitudes.

IV. Possible Strategies against Sexual harassment

Over the last two decades some feminist scholars and activists have considered possible solutions to sexual harassment. Although these discussions only started in Korea in 1993, activists have found it equally difficult to find suitable strategies for eliminating sexual harassment. Rowe points out that many writers have attempted to elucidate suitable policies and procedures for dealing with harassment, but believe that there is no 'perfect' policy or procedure (Rowe 1996:243). She examines the main reasons for reaching this conclusion.

First, it is nearly impossible to design a complaint system that users will think is satisfactory. Once harassment has occurred, it is difficult to bring about any resolution that is wholly positive. The second reason there is no perfect system is that institutions differ. They have different missions, for example, readiness in the armed forces, education and research in a university. They are subject to different law and rules and traditions, in different industries, different states and countries. The third reason is that different people have very different ideas about what constitutes a good system. It is therefore not possible to design a policy or procedure, even within a single workplace, that everybody will find acceptable (Rowe 1996: 243-244).

Rowe's explanation is quite reasonable and persuasive and I also found that incidents of sexual harassment are closely related to both the gender and sexual culture within each society, and the organisational culture present in each workplace. In this sense, solutions to sexual harassment appear to be connected to the specific and contextual circumstances and are therefore not fixed but flexible. We cannot simply say that it is possible to find any 'perfect' strategies against sexual harassment, the features of any strategies will have to be varied in relation to the differences of the social, cultural and historical environment in each country and organisation. Nevertheless, we must not despair of finding some basic commonalities since the majority of women still suffer from sexual harassment. I will therefore attempt to suggest possible methods against sexual harassment within Korean organisations, based upon my interviewees' accounts.

Firstly, female workers have pointed out that changes in the consciousness of harassers are an important factor in any solution to sexual harassment. Jeong-Hee states: 'The attitudes of male seniors and colleagues must be changed' (Jeong-Hee). Yoo-Jin also claims that male workers have stereotyped views about female employees: 'People need to see female workers not as women but as colleagues and workers. Female workers are not office accessories any more' (Yoo-Jin). As Yoo-Jin indicates, many male workers still see female workers as 'office wives' and 'flowers'. She asserts that if their views do not change, the phenomenon of sexual harassment will continue.

However, Hyun-Jeong pointed out that there are differences of attitude between men of different generations.

Attitudes are changing gradually depending on age. Young male workers try to act more cautiously towards female workers in relation to sexual

harassment and they see female workers as their colleagues. But I think that legislation is not implicated in this change (Hyun-Jeong).

The differences seem to be related to the degree of education that each member has undergone and also to the changes in social environments. On the other hand, Hyun-Jeong has negative views of the legislation on sexual harassment. This is because the legislation is not yet familiar to both male and female workers, and has not in itself been successful in changing people's opinions. For this reason, some female workers feel that in order to eradicate sexual harassment, a change in the attitudes of harassers is the first and most important factor.

Secondly, some interviewees proposed that the relationship between changes in the social environment, and a solution to sexual harassment is vitally important. The present legislation on sexual harassment is not perfect but the existence of any legislation is useful. The main reason that legislation was established in 1999 is because Korean sexual culture had undergone some slight, but positive changes. This legislation, as a result of those changes, has consequently affected the ideas of Korean people. These factors are inevitably interconnected. Hae-Ja and Mi-Ja focused on this relationship.

The social environment is changing. The consciousness of male workers is changing because legislation around sexual harassment was established and the harassed woman can successfully sue for harassment. In the past, men thought that their sexualised actions were acceptable and normal. However, some men can now recognize that such acts are unacceptable and rude (Hae-Ja).

If we can talk about sexual opinions and sexual culture, we can talk about the issue of sexual harassment and not hide these cases anymore (Mi-Ja).

Hae-Ja clearly identifies the relationship between individual and social change. Mi-Ja feels that if sexual culture can be radically changed in this way, then responses to sexual harassment can also undergo a dramatic shift. Therefore, one can suggest that changes in sexual culture are the most important factor in finding a solution to sexual harassment.

Furthermore, in order to reform the specific problem of sexual harassment, some interviewees felt that women needed to abandon passive responses and take more assertive action. Sun-Young stated: 'If we don't want to be a harassed victim, we need to present ourselves as people with strong minds who can express our opinions' (Sun-Young). Sun-Young thought that a strong mind and a willingness to express frank opinions were key weapons with which to fight sexual harassment. Yeon-Joo also indicated how she responded to sexual jokes in her office. Her direct and active response to harassers frees her from further problems: 'If I respond to sexual jokes lightly, they think it is funny. Therefore, we need to respond to their behaviour directly. After all, I need to inform them that I do not want to listen to the joke. If we hush up the action, we fall into a trap ourselves' (Yeon-Joo).

On the other hand, Young-Joo suggested that self-control was an important tool which would enable her to protect herself: 'Women need to practise self-control. I think that women's actions are factors in the causes of sexual harassment. After all, if we control ourselves well, we will not be harassed like this' (Young-Joo). Young-Joo's view

appears contradictory as her suggestion about self-control is basically right but the reason for this seems to be maintained by the unreasonable myth that occurrences of sexual harassment are the victims' fault. Soon-Ju has a similar idea to Young-Joo: 'For example, even though we drink a lot with male colleagues, we need to control ourselves and ensure that we do not need to depend on a male worker when we are drunk' (Soon-Ju). Feminine and passive attitudes in the drinking bar can prompt actions of sexual harassment and therefore, female workers need to control themselves and not become drunk. This effectively suggests that if women are drunk, they provide male workers with an easy target of abuse. However, self control as a practical strategy against sexual harassment seems to be passive rather than assertive since it might lead to tension in the female worker's behaviour at the office party and therefore these occasions would become stressful instead of enjoyable for the women. Moreover, this strategy might also support and reinforce the distorted myth that many cases of sexual harassment are perpetuated by the victims' behaviour: if a woman wears a mini skirt, she is obviously asking to be sexually harassed by anyone in the street.

One can observe, then, that the change in the attitudes of female workers is also an important development in the search for a solution to sexual harassment. Even though society has changed and legislation has been passed, if harassed women allow themselves to be victimised, the former changes will not be helpful in reducing sexual harassment. Therefore, in order for the change in women's attitudes to continue, educational programmes are particularly important. Eun-Soon recognizes the significance of education for female workers.

While I have taken part in education on sex-discrimination, sexual violence and sexual harassment, I have recognised the social problems and inequality

between men and women, etc. And then, I think, in order to solve the problem, I need to take part in the trade union movement (Eun-Soon).

Eun-Soon's suggestion is that a kind of collective action by sharing their experiences is an efficient strategy against sexual harassment. In relation to the above point, I will finally examine the significance of trade unions in the attempts to find a solution to sexual harassment. Most female workers are located in low status jobs and possess little institutional power, and thus a female worker finds it difficult to respond to a harasser without any official support. Therefore, the supporting system of trade unions, or organisations for female workers, is crucial to female employees who have suffered harassment in the workplace.

Both Eun-Soon and Sun-Woo, who have experience of working as officers of trade unions, recognize that the support system of the trade union is helpful for the harassed women in any official response to the harasser.

Recently, the issue of sexual harassment has been officially spoken about and there is an officer for the representation of female workers' opinions in the union. The trade union is useful in solving the problems of sexual harassment. Usually senior female workers become negotiators in cases of sexual harassment in the department. If a new recruit or young female worker is harassed sexually, they talk with the senior female workers. And then the senior makes a complaint to the harasser officially (Eun-Soon).

When cases of sexual harassment are raised, the officers of both the company and the trade union deal with the case (Sun-Woo).

The issue of sexual harassment is fairly complicated and controversial and so the harassed woman finds it difficult to deal with the matters relating to sexual harassment without any support.

Ji- Hae indicated that female workers are distanced from the supporting group and system: 'If female workers frequently become seniors and have power in the office, this can be a kind of support group for female workers. Therefore, we can resist sexual harassment on a more official basis'. Ji-Hae thought that if a significant proportion of female workers can gain promotion to a high status, the female seniors and heads could officially support the harassed women. If these women had more institutional power, they would then find it easier to resist sexual harassment by those who already possess such power. In this context, the lower position of the female workers ensures their passive and ineffective responses to sexual harassment. A solution to sexual harassment thus ultimately lies in changes to the power relationships between men and women, both within the organisations and in society.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to outline some practical strategies against sexual harassment, but I am well aware that this is not an easy task. The difficulties lie in the fact that the incidents of sexual harassment are deeply related not only to a society's gender and sexual culture, but also to the organisational culture within each workplace. Therefore, the features of practical strategies are diverse, contextual and flexible based on the circumstances. Despite legislation on sexual harassment having been established, it has not been sufficiently accessible or successful. Nevertheless, the legislation has

had the positive effect of defining harassment as illegal behaviour and as a social problem. Many feminist scholars admit it is extremely difficult to find any 'perfect' strategy against sexual harassment. However, we cannot relinquish this task because millions of women are still victims. I suggest that in order to reduce incidents of sexual harassment people firstly have to be educated to understand that sexual harassment is not a form of fun and therefore educational programmes should be implemented on a regular basis within all organisations. Secondly, female workers need to take an active and assertive approach toward their harassers. They also need to realise that the harasser is the guilty party, and not themselves. Finally, trade unions and women's bodies should provide practical support to victims. These suggestions are not intended to be comprehensive, but they lay the foundations for eradicating sexual harassment within Korean organisations. Ultimately, in order to reform sexual harassment, the male-dominated and hetero-sexualised organisational culture should be changed associated with socio-cultural changes within the whole of Korean society.

Conclusion

In 1993, the groundbreaking legal action taken by Woo, Hee-Jeong succeeded in introducing the term sexual harassment (Seong-Hee-Long) to Korean people. At the same time, I began to concentrate on sexual harassment within the Korean workplace as a research subject for my MA dissertation. Since this initial interest I have continued my focus upon the issue within my doctoral thesis, begun in 1998, in order to develop a more in-depth analysis of sexual harassment within Korean organisations. One of the most important discoveries within this thesis is that an exploration of Korean sexual harassment is closely related to an examination of not only Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture but also Korean organisational culture. Therefore, I have explored: the changing features of Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture (Chapter 3); the way in which male-dominated organisational culture contributes to the maintenance of incidents of sexual harassment within the Korean workplace (Chapter 4); how Korean sexual harassment is specifically constituted within Korean organisations in relation to its definition, the forms it can take, methods of resistance and its various features (Chapter 5); possible strategies available to reduce sexual harassment within the Korean context (Chapter 6). Conclusions are presented at the end of each individual chapter. Therefore, my concluding thoughts will concentrate upon the overall

contributions of this research and future direction for studies of sexual harassment within organisations.

Korean feminist studies of sexual harassment, including my MA dissertation, have merely examined the phenomenon as a gendered issue. However, this thesis has revealed the fact that sexual harassment is also related to sexuality within organisations.

In discovering this, I initially concentrated upon developing the framework for analysing my interview data. The approach to gender used within my work is based upon the materialist feminist view that gender is socially constructed by hierarchical relationships between men and women. This viewpoint then allowed me to examine how the gendered and sexual selves of Korean female workers are associated with the organisational hierarchy of the workplace. Kelly's notion of the continuum of sexual violence provided me with the prominent reason why my research needed to concentrate on an examination of the specificities of Korean heterosexuality within the whole society and, in particular, organisations. The continuum implies that most women experience sexual abuse in some context, at some time and thus an exploration concerning sexual harassment should consider the wider socio-cultural and historical features of each society where such abuse occurs. My research, based upon these western feminist works, highlights how even though these western feminist thoughts are

socio-culturally distanced from the experiences of Korean female workers, they remain applicable to an analysis of these women's lives.

I chose the in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interview as the main method. During the interview process, I discovered that as a feminist researcher aiming to examine the experiences of sexual victims within the Korean context, the in-depth interview promoting a one-to-one conversation proved to be an effective strategy. Due to the conservative and traditional Korean sexual culture, I found people were reluctant to speak publicly about their sexual experiences. Moreover, once I had established a rapport between myself and the interviewees I obtained rich and lively information from the female workers. However, approaches to creating a rapport within Korea differ from those within Britain (See also Chapter2). Despite the existing socio-cultural differences between Korean women and western women, there remain commonalities, such as women's reluctance publicly to speak out about their experiences of sexual harassment and the fact that the threat of sexual harassment exists for them both in any place and at any time throughout their lives.

I found that within the Korean context, incidents of sexual harassment are deeply embedded in Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture. My approach and the links between sexual harassment and heterosexuality might encourage Korean feminists

to concentrate on an exploration of heterosexuality in the future, since they have tended to disregard it as a crucial issue up to the present. Furthermore, my research might have the potential to inform western feminists of the features of Korean heterosexuality and heterosexual culture, by developing a recognition of the ways in which Korean heterosexuality not only differs from, but is also similar to, the western situation.

Another crucial finding is that the male-dominated organisational culture contributes to maintaining sexual harassment within Korean workplaces. My research suggests, therefore, that in order to examine sexual harassment, an exploration of organisational culture is necessary. Moreover, the features of organisational culture, determined as male-dominated, hierarchical and sex-discriminatory are closely interrelated with the features of Korean society as a whole and the Confucian ideas underpinning Korean culture. This implies that an examination of organisational culture needs to address the particular features of each society. Since sexual harassment is related to both gender and sexuality within organisations, it could be argued that research defining sexual harassment as merely a gendered issue is not sufficient to explain this phenomenon.

Thus, definitions, types of, and responses to sexual harassment are diversely constituted within particular societies and are therefore related to the socio-cultural and historical backgrounds of each society. In particular, I found that the main reason why victims are

reluctant to respond assertively to their assailants was because these women recognised that assertive strategies often produce negative results, involving the threat of dismissal and the stigmatisation of the victims. We can thus conclude that the main reason for a woman's reluctance results from the oppressive heterosexual norm of sexual chastity. With regard to this situation, we find it difficult to suggest practical strategies to combat sexual harassment. Hence, legislation on sexual harassment is symbolically meaningful in that it defines sexual harassment as an obvious form of sex discrimination and an illegal action but is in practice less efficient. In order to reduce the frequency of incidents of sexual harassment, my suggestion is to provide both female and male employees with efficient educational programmes against sexual harassment, involving information on the assertive approaches available to the victims. I further maintain that the reform and strengthening of a support system from trade unions and women's bodies is also required. Ultimately, the eradication of sexual harassment is dependent upon the destruction of male-dominated and heterosexualised society. However, this argument is not a practical solution but rather a utopian declaration. Therefore, the possible solutions are concerned with developing programmes of consciousness-raising for both victims and assailants. My suggestion in relation to practical strategies of defiance contribute to not only developments in the way in which the victims resist sexual harassment without negative outcomes, but also how the owners of Korean organisations make efforts to reduce sexual harassment.

Despite having examined various aspects of sexual harassment throughout my chapters, it was not possible to pay detailed attention to a number of issues concerning sexual harassment. Although I have studied in Britain, my thesis has purely concentrated upon Korean women's experiences of sexual harassment. When I proposed my doctoral project in 1998 I had planned to conduct a comparative study between Korea and Britain and therefore wanted to interview British women also. However, I recognised that it would have been difficult for me as a non-native speaker to interview, and then create a rapport with, these British interviewees, whose culture, society and history differs from my own. My research therefore did not deal with the specific experiences of sexual harassment in Britain. I did, however, achieve an understanding of how theory and research by British feminist scholars is applicable to, and related to, explorations of the relationship between sexual harassment and heterosexuality/heterosexual culture within Korean organisations. I would argue that despite having concentrated on the Korean specificities of sexual harassment and heterosexuality, this research still contributes to the development of controversial debates upon the differences and commonalities among women. It achieves this through its demonstration of how Korean sexual harassment and heterosexuality are differently developed, but also basically similar to the western models.

With respect to these limitations and the contribution of my research, in the future I would like to develop comparative work concerning sexual harassment within Asian countries. This further research might contribute to a discovery of how Confucianism as a common belief of Asian people is influential in maintaining Asian heterosexuality, and also how imported western sexual culture is related to changes in heterosexuality as an institution and sexual harassment as a practice.

I believe that Korean sexual harassment is affected by male-dominated and hierarchical organisational culture and perpetuated by the specificities of Korean heterosexuality: its norm of female sexual chastity and the definition of sexuality within marriage as normal. It could be argued that the issue of sexual harassment is centrally placed within controversial debates on the relationship between gender and sexuality and therefore a resolution to sexual harassment should be associated with challenges to the male-dominated, super-heterosexual and conservative sexual culture of Korea.

Appendix I. The Sketch of Interviewees

Eun-Young (27 years old/ unmarried): She has worked as a secretary for five years in the National Assembly. Her age is twenty-seven years old and she has a B. A. Degree. She seems to be proud of her job and is satisfied with her work and loyal to her assemblyman. When I interviewed her, I felt that she gave relatively honest answers.

Yoon-Hee (24 years old/ unmarried): She has a B. A degree. Her personality seems to be mild-mannered and obedient and her style is very fashionable and quite luxurious.

Jin-Ju (27 years old/ married with one child): She got married to one of her colleagues. She thinks that her assemblyman and his wife like her and believe her to be a good secretary. Therefore, she has been able to maintain her job as a secretary, despite being married and having had child. She has a B. A. degree

Jeong-Hee (24 years old/ unmarried): She works for a small office of appraisers. Her job involves the input of data by word-processing. After she graduated from high school she applied for this job. Since she had her B.A degree, she has not been satisfied with her work and therefore is looking for a better job. As a result of this situation, she has been arguments with her boss due to her low income.

Hae-Ja (38 years old/ unmarried): She has worked for D service for five years, however, her total years in employment are closer to twenty. Most of her answers were very official. She is satisfied with her current job and therefore does not want to change her present conditions. She has a qualification of high school.

Sun-Young (27 years old/ married): She got married to one of her colleagues. She has a qualification of high school and Hae-ja's junior colleague.

Young-Joo (30 years old/ married with two children): She has worked for K Insurance for six years. Her work records are sometimes the highest in her branch. She has a qualification of high school.

Young-Hee (31 years old/ married with one child): She is my friend at University. She got married to a fellow student five years ago but thinks of her married life as unhappy. Since her marriage, her husband has been predominantly concentrating on studying for the judicial examination and has thus been unable to earn their living costs. Therefore, Young-Hee needed to earn their money and live with her parents in order to take care of her son. In this context, she often fights with her husband. Now her husband has passed the examination, they are finding it difficult to rediscover their relationship.

Hyun-Jae (24 years old/ unmarried): She has a qualification of high school. She does not want to tell her story frankly and so most of her answers are a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

Boo-Young (30 years old/ unmarried): She has worked as a secretary for ten years in Conglomerate H. She thinks that she is not equipped to be a secretary because she cannot speak English very well and did not get a B.A degree. She also thinks that she is too old for her job as Korean people assume a secretary to be young and pretty. She therefore wants to transfer to another position.

Kyung-Mi (29 years old/ married): When I interviewed her, she was pregnant. She seems to be lively and cheerful. However, since the IMF system in 1998, she has tended

to underestimate herself. I think that this is because she is unable to undertake her job during the pregnancy. For example, in order to collect the various information for her company, she is required to drink alcohol with her co-workers but, since becoming pregnant, she has been unable to do this. She has a B. A degree.

Ji-Hae (27 years old/unmarried): She works as an announcer for the broadcasts of Conglomerate H. S. She frankly told me her opinion of sexuality based upon her own experiences. She also has a B. A. degree.

Soon-Ju (26 years old/ unmarried): She is keen to achieve success in her job and has had a B. A. degree. She is unmarried and she wishes to live as a bachelor.

Jeong-Mi (24 years old/ unmarried): When I interviewed her, she is studying at university after her daily work. She has worked as a secretary of the head manger in conglomerate L.

Min-Hee (24 years old/ unmarried): She is not satisfied with her job and is therefore learning new skills for the baking of bread. The main reason for this is because she thinks of her job as trivial and simple. She has a qualification of high school.

Yeon-Joo (30 years old/ married): She is satisfied with her job, hence does not like to resist the basic regulations of her company. She has worked for a department providing workers with educational programmes in Conglomerate L. for six years. She has a B.A. degree.

Ju-Mi (26 years old/ unmarried): She is a junior worker of Yeon-Joo and works in the same office. In comparison to Yeon-Joo, she is very cheerful and talkative. She has a

B.A. degree.

Min-Ae (27 years old/ married): She has worked for CJ Investment and Securities for one and a half years. She complains about her work. Even though she graduated from university, her work is similar to the duties of female workers with only high school qualifications. She assumed that the main reason for this similarity with less qualified women is because of an economic crisis. For example, employers avoid taking on female workers with qualifications from high school when they can employ women with B.A degrees for the same cost. Therefore, Min-Ae must produce original work whilst also carrying at routine duties.

Eun-Soon (32 years old/ married with two children): She was the president of the organisation for female workers in G Securities and therefore has a kind of feminist consciousness concerning the change in the status of female workers. She has attempted to recognise why female workers are located within lower positions in comparison to male workers and worked to educate her female colleagues and juniors through the regular meeting of the trade union. She has a qualification of high school

Kyung-Ae (31 years old/ unmarried): She is very satisfied with her job and status and concentrates solely upon her work and promotion. For example, in order to ensure her promotion, she is able to endure the sexual harassment of seniors with greater power than hers. She has a B. A. degree.

Hyun-Jeong (27 years old/ married): She was fired from S Conglomerate because of the IMF system and is a married woman. She worked with her husband in S. When the economic crisis arrived, her senior pressed her to give up her work and she therefore felt she must resign. At present, she works for L Securities as a temporary worker. She has a

B. A. degree

Ha-Jin (27 years old/ unmarried): She works as a collector of information in Conglomerate K. and thus needs to have frequent business meetings with male co-workers in drinking bars or room salons. She hopes that she can pass as a man for if her co-workers assume her to be female worker they will not reveal the valuable information she requires when in the drinking bar. As a result of this, she looks like a man and her personality appears to be lively and vigorous. She has a B. A. degree.

Soo-Hee (26 years old/ unmarried): She believes that she has not experienced any kind of sex discrimination. However, it appeared that even though she has experienced various kinds of sex discrimination, she disregards her experiences as this form of behaviour. She has a B. A degree

Mi-Ja (30 years old/ married with two children): Since she has been employed as a worker in conglomerate K, she has taken on the role of a survivor. Even though her marital status and experiences of pregnancy are an obstacle to maintaining her job, she is able to keep her job as a result of undertaking greater duties. For example, despite being pregnant, she took part in the office party until midnight. At present, she is the president of the organisations for female workers and hence she attempts to reform diverse forms of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment. She has a qualification of high school.

Sun-Woo (29 years old/ unmarried): She has worked as the vice president of the trade union of H Insurance for three years. Her total period of employment with the company has been fourteen years. Although she is a female worker, she has concentrated on the common issues for both female and male workers rather than focusing upon sex-

discrimination issues for women. She thinks of sexual harassment as trivial at present compared to the unstable employment environment. She has a qualification of high school.

Mee-Soon (32 years old/ married with two children): She looks like a typical married woman. She appears to be exhausted from her job. She told me that when she began to work she was very lively and attempted to change her unequal status through being a member of the trade union. At present, she wants to be comfortable and stable and therefore does not try to resist the regulations of her company. She has a qualification of high school.

Yoo-Jin (26 years old/ unmarried): She is satisfied with her job. She looks like a typical office lady and her personality seems to be obedient and passive. She also does not like to confront any kinds of trouble. She has a qualification of high school.

Soo-Won (28 years old/ unmarried): She has worked for T foreign company for five years. She is satisfied with her job and position. She has a B.A. degree.

Appendix II. Interview Questions

General information

Could you tell me your age, married status, length in current employment, the duties of your job?

Do you enjoy your job? If you do not enjoy your job, why?

Sexual culture and organisational culture

Could you tell me the specific duties of your job?

How do men's and women's jobs differ? For example, do women need to be employed in 'routine works' with uncomplicated and simple duties.

Do you think that your job is one of the most important roles in your office?

Can you make decisions without the permission of your bosses?

Does your boss expect you to serve them a cup of tea privately or are you required to act as a waitress during the office party? If you said yes, how does this make you feel ?

Do you think that it is your official duty or represents a kind of sex discrimination?

When you meet your customers and clients, do they expect you to fulfil different tasks to your male colleagues?

Do you think of your colleagues as friends? How do you think of the relationship between male colleagues and female colleagues (male/male, female/female, male workers/male bosses, female workers/male bosses, male workers/female bosses, female workers/female bosses)?

I think that male workers like to go for a drink after work, do you join them? If you said, 'yes' or 'no', why?

Do you spend time with your female colleagues after work? If you said 'yes', what do you do with them?

Do you think that sexual harassment is related to sex discrimination in your office? For example, sexual division in the specific job and lower income and so on. If you think that sexual harassment is related to sex discrimination, why?

Do you think that sexual harassment is related to sexual culture? For example, the double standard is dividing good girl from bad girl in relation to sexual chastity. If you think that sexual harassment is related to sexual culture, why?

What do you think are the features of Korean organisational culture and sexual culture?

Sexuality and Gender

How do you define a feminine woman? I think that most bosses hope that female workers are feminine women. For example, they believe that women workers should unconditionally obey their bosses. How about your boss?

How can you learn about sexual knowledge? From your family, the official education programme, your friends or the media?

Sometimes, people think that sexuality is negative, seeing it as dirty, non-reasonable and emotional. what do you think about it?

Do you talk about your sexual experiences with your friend or your partner (if you have

a boy friend or husband)? If you do not want to talk about it, why? If you talk about sexuality with your friends, please tell me the specific contents of your conversations.

Recently, some people have been interested in homosexuality (gay activism and lesbianism). What do you think about it? Have you ever experienced homosexual desire?

When you feel sexual desire, how do you express it?

Experiences of sexuality

When did you recognise what sex was?

What is a sexual relationship? For example, does it have to include sexual intercourse or petting or kissing?

Could you tell me about your first experience of sexual intercourse?

Sexual attitudes have recently begun to change in Korea. Examples of these changing attitudes are the increase in the number of people having pre-marital sexual intercourse, the rise in single mothers. What do you think of these changes?

We have accessed to westernised films, novels and television dramas. I think that those are influenced in our sexual attitudes. What do you think about it?

There is a changing morality in relation to female sexuality, such as pre-marital sexual intercourse and extra-marital sexual intercourse, female sexual pleasure. Do you think that this is helpful in the development of Korean women's social status?

Experiences of sexual harassment

Have you experienced sexual harassment? If you said 'yes', which kind of sexual harassment did you experience? For example, verbal, physical behaviour or staring?

Sometimes, men who harass women deny that their behaviour is a kind of sexual harassment although the women believe that it should be defined as such. Have you experienced a situation like this? If you said 'yes', what do you think are the differences between women's and men's views of sexual harassment?

Can you recognise the distinction between sexual harassment and friendly behaviour? If you said 'yes', how?

Usually, a man is the harasser and a woman the harassed. What do you think of this fact?

When you are sexually harassed by your co-workers, bosses and clients, how do you respond to the situation? Also, how do you feel it? What kind of disadvantages do you suffer from sexual harassment?

When do you say "stop it"? Tell me the specific situation, including the harasser's reaction and your own feeling. If you feel unable to resist sexual harassment, then please explain why.

How do you define sexual harassment?

What do you think about the present legislation on sexual harassment? Do you think

that the legislation against sexual harassment is helpful in preventing this behaviour in the workplace. If the legislation against sexual harassment is not helpful for you, please explain why. If the legislation against sexual harassment is helpful for you, please explain in what ways.

If you experience the serious problem of sexual harassment, will you turn to the legal system? If you do not want to take legal actions act legally, why not?

Why do you think incidents of sexual harassment occur within your workplace?

Issues of sexual harassment have recently received from Korean people and politicians.

What do you think are the reasons for this increased awareness?

What do you think about the possible strategies against sexual harassment? What do you think of the educational programmes through the videotape produced by the Ministry of Labour in the Korean government? Is it efficient to reduce incidents of sexual harassment within your workplaces?

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