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A Study on the Underrepresentation of Women in Mayorship in the Municipal Governments from the Perspective of Gender Equity

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Korean Women's Development Institute

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Contents

I . Introduction	1
1. Necessity and Purpose of the Research	1
2. Research Contents and Methods	3
II . Women Mayors in the Municipal Governments and Gender Equity	5
1. Election for Mayorship in the Municipal Governments and Underrepresentation of Women	5
2. Female Leadership and Underrepresentation of Women	7
3. Nomination of Female Candidates for Former Mayorship in the Municipal Governments by the Political Party	8
4. Characteristics of Female Candidates and Winners for Mayorship in the Municipal Governments	10
III . Election Experience of Female Mayors and Candidates and Female Leadership	12
1. The Route of Candidacy for Female Mayors (Candidates) and Strategies for Election Campaign	12
2. Causes of Underrepresentation of Women in Mayorship in the Municipal Governments	14

3. Distinctiveness of Female Mayors: Exercise of Feminine Leadership	16
4. Sub-conclusions: Necessity for Increasing the Number of Female Mayors and Institutional Improvement	17
IV. Survey of Voters' Perceptions of Mayors in the Municipal Governments	18
1. Overview of the Survey	18
2. Results of the Analysis of the Questionnaire Survey of Voters	18
V. Overseas Cases	21
1. Expansion of Female Mayors: Global Trends	21
2. Drivers of Changes in the Number of Women Mayors	22
3. Leadership of Women Mayors	24
4. Sub-Conclusions	25
VI. Conclusions and Implications	26

Tables

〈Table 1〉 In-depth interviewees by the political party, former or incumbent mayor, and candidate	4
〈Table 2〉 Question items in the questionnaire survey of voters ·	4
〈Table 3〉 Female candidates and winners in the local elections〉	6
〈Table 4〉 Female candidates and winners for former mayorship in the municipal governments	9

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I. Introduction

1. Necessity and Purpose of the Research

1) Underrepresentation of Women in Mayorship in the Municipal Governments

Of the total 749 mayoral candidates in the municipal governments in the local elections in 2018, women candidates accounted for 35 persons, or 4.67%, and of the total of 226 successful candidates, 8 women candidates, or a mere 3.54%, won the elections. This shows that the proportion of women in the government leadership was very low. Compared to 19% of women lawmakers in the National Assembly of Korea, 19% in the provincial assemblies, and 30% in the municipal assemblies, women were particularly underrepresented in governorship or mayorship. In the local elections, major parties did not apply gender

quota nor set a particular proportion of women for nomination.

2) Gender-Equal Urban Design and Women Leaders

Though the proportion of women in Korea's mayorship in the municipal governments is very low, the proportion of female governors and mayors in overseas countries' provincial and municipal governments tend to increase. The United States, where there is no gender quota, has currently 10 female governors and 12 female mayors. Major European cities, like Paris, Rome, and Barcelona, too, are represented by women mayors.

Like in overseas cases, there is a growing number of women mayors who reflect the perspective of gender equality in urban design and design their villages, cities, and communities from the gender perspective. However, there are only a small number of women leaders in the political realm of Korea, and accordingly few research has been conducted of women leaders' political visions and experiences.

In this background, this study aims to analyze causes of underrepresentation of women in politics, and present ways of improvement from the perspective of gender equity. Women's participation in local government leadership should increase as laws are implemented in the local governments in the times of decentralization. Also, the smallest unit of administration is the municipal governments where women's rights and interests are guaranteed through the enforcement of laws and policies.

2. Research Contents and Methods

1) Research Contents and Subjects

(1) Research Contents

This study i) analyzed causes of underrepresentation of women in mayorship in the municipal governments from the perspective of gender equity in the nomination system and process, ii) examined the necessity for increasing the number of mayors in the municipal governments, and the conceptual discussion about female leadership, iii) identified the current conditions of former mayors in the municipal governments by term, political party, and region, and iv) looked into which party constitution and regulations had been applied to the nomination of women candidates in the municipal elections.

(2) Research Subjects

The subjects of this research included local elections from 2006 (4 th term) to 2018 (7th term) and women candidates and mayors during this period.

2) Research Methods

(1) Literature review

To analyze the current status of former mayors in the municipal governments by their political party and previous career, we reviewed the literature data from the National Election Commission of Korea.

(2) In-depth interview

In this study, we conducted in-depth interviews with 23 women, including women politicians who have been former or incumbent mayors, or mayoral candidates since 2006.

〈Table 1〉 In-depth interviewees by the political party, former or incumbent mayor, and candidate

	No. of in-depth interview	Written example in the text
Former and incumbent mayor	12	mayor 1
(Preliminary) candidate	5	candidate 1
Party official	6	party official 1
Total	23	–

(3) Questionnaire survey of voters

The subjects of the questionnaire survey included 1,000 male and female voters. But then, the municipal governments were divided into 9 regions represented by female mayors and the other regions by male mayors, with the ratio of 4 to 6 regions.

〈Table 2〉 Question items in the questionnaire survey of voters

Survey items	
1	Interest in politics and elections
2	Perceptions of underrepresentation of women in mayorship in the municipal governments and the role of political parties
3	Perceptions of competencies of mayors in the municipal governments
4	Leaders and leadership wanted by voters
5	Expectation of changes in women mayors and communities
6	Perceptions of elections for mayorship in the municipal governments in 2022
7	General conditions

3) Significance and limitations of the research

This study is significant in that it is Korea's first research that applied in-depth interviews and questionnaire survey methods to mayors of the municipal governments, focusing on the experiences of female mayors. However, the study was conducted with a limitation of its subjects because there were only eight female mayors out of the total 226 mayors across the nation. In this limited situation, we evaluated the achievements or performances of the women mayors, so the resulting problem was that we could not generalize the results of the survey. We could not include the comparison of them with male mayors in this study because sample size, selection of regions for the comparison, and the like were limited.

II. Women Mayors in the Municipal Governments and Gender Equity

1. Election for Mayorship in the Municipal Governments and Underrepresentation of Women

1) Party Nomination for Local Elections

Korea's party nomination was first implemented for mayorship in the municipal governments in 1990, and for municipal assemblies in 2006. The current nomination system for local elections is not a democratic procedure, like a secret voting, but a top-down method, in which the chairperson of a local party organization selects a nominee. This is a political culture led by men, which is counter-evidence of women being underrepresented.

2) Gender Equity

The standard of equality is applied to opportunities, justice to results, and fairness to process. Unlike discussion about social equity in general, feminism stresses that equality of opportunities and procedural fairness based on androcentric norms and logics reproduce gender inequality.

According to the argument of Young (Iris Marion Young, 2017; 427), the principle of justice is to distribute positions and rewards according to individual's abilities. Presuming a structural division between positions with scarce and high rewards and positions with numerically more but lower rewards, the principle of abilities is to regard it as being just when privileged positions are not accepted thanks to their arbitrary characteristics.

To achieve just political participation between genders, procedural fairness as equality in opportunities and consequential fairness as equality in results should be both considered.

In the local elections in 2018, women were underrepresented in the number of candidates. Specifically, female candidates accounted for a mere 8.45%, or 6 persons of all the 71 candidates for governors. In the 17 provinces and cities, all the elected were male candidates. Of all the 749 candidates for mayors, female candidates made up a mere 4.67%, or 35 persons.

〈Table 3〉 Female candidates and winners in the local elections〉

	Year(term)	Female candidates (all candidates)	Elected women (all elected persons)	Proportion of female candidates (%)	Proportion of winners (%)
Governors	2006 (4th)	4(66)	0(16)	6.06	0.00
	2010 (5th)	3(55)	0(16)	5.45	0.00

	Year(term)	Female candidates (all candidates)	Elected women (all elected persons)	Proportion of female candidates (%)	Proportion of winners (%)
	2014 (6th)	1(57)	0(17)	1.75	0.00
	2018 (7th)	6(71)	0(17)	8.45	0.00
Mayors	2006	23(839)	3(230)	2.74	1.30
	2010	26(749)	6(228)	3.47	2.63
	2014	40(694)	9(226)	5.76	3.98
	2018	35(749)	9(226)	4.67	3.98

Source: Seon-hyang, Lee (2017), Re-prepared by reference to pp. 87-88.

2. Female Leadership and Underrepresentation of Women

1) Concepts and Characteristics of Female Leadership

With a combination of women and leaders, the concepts of female leaders, feminine leadership, and feminist leadership came to be often used. In other words, the concept of a female leader is used when referring to a woman who has risen to the position of leader as a biological woman. The concept of feminine leadership is used when a woman exhibits feminine traits in contrast to masculine traits. Feminine leadership has caring, non-authoritarian, and relation-oriented characteristics. Feminist leadership means putting feminist value into practice through the role of a leader and cooperating in the direction of attaining feminist goals. In particular, feminist leadership refers to leadership with political will that resists the order of suppressive power against women and aims to change the structure of patriarchal and unequal power (requoted from Seon-min Kim, 2017: Yeong-hee Gang, 2018, 108).

As the social environment changes with the change of the times, soft values, such as care, communication, peace, and cooperation, have

become more important than hard values. Accordingly, feminine leadership is required rather than authoritarian and suppressive masculine leadership.

2) Necessity for Female Mayorship in the Municipal Governments

Female mayorship in the municipal governments are needed for the following reasons: first, by representing women based on their needs and understanding, female mayors have so far achieved changes in women's policies and systems. Second, they can be expected to make a promotion structure for women officials who have been in the low positions. Third, they can embrace experiences of different groups and do politics of communication and empathy based on the experience of feminist movement. In contrast, it is difficult to resolve differences between social groups in the existing male-centered power structure, which results in gender conflict and excludes women.

On the other hand, there is a logic that unlike the centralized power structure, the attributes of local autonomy contain aspects of life or micro politics, and therefore barriers to enter politics are low for women. However, it is unreasonable to apply this logic to the municipal governments. Instead, this logic works as a logic to place women's political activity in different areas from men's.

3. Nomination of Female Candidates for Former Mayorship in the Municipal Governments by the Political Party

1) Female Candidates and Winners for Former Mayorship in the Municipal Governments

Since mayors in the municipal governments were first selected through

elections in 1995, a total of 145 female candidates have run for the municipal elections. Of this figure, 29 women won the elections. If winners from the by-elections of 1999, 2007, and 2020 were included, 32 women won the elections.

〈Table 4〉 Female candidates and winners for former mayorship in the municipal governments

	1995	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2018	Total
Candidates	4	8	8	23	26	40	35	144
Winners	1	(1)	2	3(1)	6	9	8(1)	29(3)

* () refers to the number of winners from the by-elections.

2) Female Candidates and Winners for Former Mayorship in the Municipal Governments by the Political Party

When we examined changes in female candidates by the political party, the number of independent female candidates was larger than that of candidates nominated by political parties from the first-term to third-term elections by popular vote. Independent female candidates included three persons for the first-term election, five for the second-term, and four for the third term. The first-term election had no female candidate from the centrist or progressive party, but had one female candidate nominated by the conservative party.

The number of female nominees increased from the fourth-term election by popular vote. During this period, the conservative party nominated the largest number of female candidates, that is, a total of six women. On the other hand, the democratic and central spectrum parties nominated the largest number of female candidates in the fourth-term election by popular vote, but then have never exceeded the number of the other parties' nomination of female candidates. In the

seventh-term election by popular vote, 13 women were nominated for candidates, a sharp increase from eight persons in the sixth-term election.

In the 2014 election, the then-conservative party had strategic nomination for mayorship in the municipal governments by designating seven districts with a priority given to women candidates, including Jongro, Yongsan, and Seocho in Seoul, Gwacheon and Icheon in Gyeonggi Province, Jung-gu in Busan, and Jung-gu in Daegu. Through this strategy, the conservative party could produce seven female winners capitalizing on its predominance in the elections. In the 2018 elections, however, the democratic party could produce seven women winners under the great influence of high presidential support rate from the then-ruling democratic party. Through the results of recent local elections, we found that political factors, such as the presidential support rate, the political structure of regionalism, and the party nomination, had a great impact on winning the elections for mayorship in the municipal governments.

4. Characteristics of Female Candidates and Winners for Mayorship in the Municipal Governments

1) Occupations of Female Candidates and Winners for Mayorship in the Municipal Governments

When we examined occupations of female candidates and winners, the largest number of the total 124 persons from the fourth-term to sixth-term elections was politicians, making up 48 persons or 38.7%. The second largest number was ‘other’ accounting for 24 persons 19.4%, followed by 13 public officials or 10.5%, 12 local assemblywomen or 9.7%, 8 professionals or 6.5%, 7 educators or 5.6%, 5 persons or 4.0% in the

business circles, 4 persons or 3.2% jobless, 3 persons or 2.4% office workers, and no person or 0.0% in the information & communications and publishing business, in that order.

According to the comparison of occupations of female candidates and winners with those of their male counterparts, there were more local assemblywomen than assemblymen by 4.6 percentage points. Also, there were more female politicians than male politicians by 4.3 percentage points. On the other hand, in the business community, there were more men than women by 4.9 percentage points. In the information & communications and publishing business, public services, jobless, and other as well, there were more men than women by 0.4%p, 5.0%p, 2.9%p, and 1.3%p, respectively.

Those who registered their occupation as local legislator had steadily increased since the fourth-term election. The number of government officials had gone up to 5 persons until the sixth term, but then dropped to 2 persons in the seventh term.

2) Careers of Female Candidates and Winners for Mayorship in the Municipal Governments

According to the results of analyzing careers of female candidates, party officials accounted for the largest number of 39 persons, followed by 26 municipal assemblywomen, 18 mayors in the municipal governments, 14 provincial assemblywomen, 13 professionals, 8 appointed public officials and NGO workers, respectively, 5 national assemblywomen, 2 general public officials, and one person in the business circles, in that order.

According to the results of analyzing careers of winners, former and

incumbent mayors in the municipal governments made up the largest number of 11 persons, followed by 4 appointed officials and provincial assemblywomen, respectively.

According to the results of analyzing the rates of winning the elections by career, the rate of candidates with mayoral careers in the municipal governments was the highest, standing at 61.1%. This shows that candidates with mayoral careers in the municipal governments and public officials had advantages in the elections.

Both the current democratic and conservative parties operate an extra point system for female candidates, with the former giving 25% and the latter 20% additionally for women. However, this system is criticized in that it does not actually play its role properly because the extra percentage is given to the number of votes candidates gain. As such, in the 2022 local elections, the Special Commission on Political Reform should make efforts to reform the point system in such a way that major parties can nominate a maximum 30% from candidates at the national level as female candidates for mayorship in the municipal governments.

III. Election Experience of Female Mayors and Candidates and Female Leadership

1. The Route of Candidacy for Female Mayors (Candidates) and Strategies for Election Campaign

1) Routes of candidacy

Backgrounds to individual political activity and routes of candidacy for former and incumbent female mayors and candidates to win the election

for mayorship in the municipal governments included the following five cases: i) where they had careers as district and municipal assemblywomen, ii) where they had long built foundations for politics in the communities through civil movements or social cooperatives, iii) where they worked as the party executives, mostly directors of women's bureau, iv) where they were former national assemblywomen, and v) where they were former local government officials.

When it comes to the primary race, they in general went through preliminary party convention to be nominated as mayoral candidates. Factors for the female candidates to win the elections included i) recognition they had usually built in the local constituencies and ii) extra points given for women. Most former and incumbent mayors experienced the extra points for women. In the case of the democratic party, the extra points could bring effects when the candidates had their own recognition to some degree as a basic value because the extra points were merely 25 % of the votes they gained.

2) Strategies for Election Campaign as Female Candidates

(1) Revealing women's identities

In the main campaign for nomination, women candidates had difficulties mostly because of fixed ideas about women politicians. In the election process, women mayors/candidates did not put forward women-related pledges as their main pledges. Nor did they purposefully highlight pledges about women simply because they were female candidates. However, when faced with a disadvantageous situation because they were women, female candidates stressed their image of being experts on care and education in the communities, capitalizing on

the strategy of being female mayors who ‘respect seniors and raise children well.’

(2) ‘Being suitable for life politics because of being women’:
strategy and trap

It is the culture of current Korean politics that there should be a certain reason for women to do politics. This is to attach this or that reason to women because they are in a position to prove their abilities equal to men’s as ‘otherized’ entities in the political realm. That ‘women can do life politics well’ was to grant the justification for women to participate in politics. But this can lead to a logic that micro-politics like life politics should be done by women, and macro-politics like central politics by men. It is inappropriate to apply this standard of life politics to the position of mayors that supervises a basic-unit administrative organization.

2. Causes of Underrepresentation of Women in Mayorship in the Municipal Governments

1) Low Abilities to Mobilize Local Organizations

The position of chairperson of a local party organization or council is generally undertaken by lawmakers from local constituencies. These lawmakers have authority and power to nominate candidates, ranging from those for local assemblies to mayorship in the municipal governments in the local elections. As such, the power of the chairperson of a local party organization can be crucial in the candidate nomination process for mayorship in the municipal governments because even if the candidates belong to the same party, only one candidate becomes elected

for mayorship. As such, who becomes the mayor is instrumental in the next elections regarding how much the chairperson can mobilize local organizations. The problem is that because local chairpersons and organizations are connected as networks mostly for men, candidates for local elections are determined by the chairpersons' intention or selection.

2) Practices of Giving Priority to Men in Nomination

There are not many women in the political realm because they could not receive nomination as candidates for elections. If a region has a low possibility of winning the election, the competition for nomination may become low in that region. Nevertheless, women are not nominated for a reason of its own. The problem lies in the political party that does not nominate women like this, and in the untransparent nomination itself as well. The possibility of winning the election works as a primary factor in the nomination process, and how many votes the candidates can bring is the issue. But all this is related to regional ties. Men assert that they have a regional tie even when they have left a region over 20 years and then returned for the election. Unlike men, women are assessed as having no regional tie even if they have lived in a region over two decades, and built expertise or enhanced recognition in the local communities.

3) Gender Discriminative Perceptions in the Party

Voters may support any person, either woman or man, if the person can work well in the region. On the other hand, political parties have gender discriminative perceptions as they are confined with gender role stereotypes.

3. Distinctiveness of Female Mayors: Exercise of Feminine Leadership

1) Transparency of Financial Implementation

Female mayors who responded to the interview about transparency of implementing local finance mentioned women's integrity the most. Compared to men, women were relatively less connected with local organizations. Though they had difficulty doing local politics for this reason, they could implement local finance in a transparent and efficient way when they took office because they were not linked to the native forces in the region.

2) Gender Sensitivity

Responding sensitively to women's issues means being aware of what women experience in the regions or in the local governments because one shares women's lives and their experience of discrimination there. In other words, candidates can respond to women's issues when they are aware of the issues. When it comes to the issue of care, such awareness manifests as a family-friendly policy. When it comes to the issue of discrimination in the personnel affair, this appears as a personnel policy on female officials. Female mayors changed the personnel policy in the municipal governments to a vision and leadership called balanced personnel policy on the job assignment and promotion of female public officials in the municipal governments. After women were elected for the mayorship, a woman was appointed for the first time in the position of bureau director in the municipal government, and women were assigned in major departments that had never been where women were assigned.

3) Horizontal Leadership

According to the results of in-depth interview, exercising horizontal and communicative leadership was another main characteristic of feminine leadership. Communication, considerateness, empathy, and peace-oriented traits were all characteristics of feminine leadership, which women leaders themselves acknowledged.

4. Sub-conclusions: Necessity for Increasing the Number of Female Mayors and Institutional Improvement

We can find the answer to the necessity or reasons for increasing the number of female mayors from the abovementioned feminine leadership as follows: i) to reflect women's needs in the policy, ii) to transparently implement the finance of local governments in the local communities, and iii) to shift the hierarchical culture of Korean society toward a culture of recognizing diversity through communication and empathy.

Women are assessed with a slanted scale in the unlevel playground. This practice is not just harmful to women but to the development of Korean politics. The uneven playground cannot be levelled by changing perceptions alone. Until now, attempts have been made to disclose the nomination process, just in vain. Also up to now, there have been talks about political reform, but the practice of the local chairperson's nominating candidates for elections has never been addressed. Therefore, now is the time to raise an issue in earnest about the practices of undisclosed nomination process and the local chairperson's power to nominate candidates.

IV. Survey of Voters' Perceptions of Mayors in the Municipal Governments

1. Overview of the Survey

The subjects of this survey included 400 voters from the regions with female mayors and 600 voters from the regions with male mayors. They were selected through proportional sampling by sex and age based on the population registered as residents who were 18 years old or above as of July 2021. Using the structured questionnaire, the survey conducted computer-assisted Web interview (CAWI) together with in-person interview, when necessary. The questionnaire survey period was from August 16, 2021 to September 3, 2021.

2. Results of the Analysis of the Questionnaire Survey of Voters

1) Perceptions of Underrepresentation of Women in Mayorship in the Municipal Governments

Both male and female voters perceived that the situation of women being underrepresented was unfair. Women had higher negative perceptions of the gender imbalance than men did by more than 20 percentage points. Of the voters, 63.0% answered that it was difficult to solve the issue of gender equality when the number of female mayors was insufficient. This shows that voters want to have leaders who respond to the issue of gender equality.

2) Perceptions of Nomination Process for Mayorship in the Municipal Governments

Voters perceived that the nomination screening was male-centered and greatly influenced by educational and regional ties. This acted disadvantageously to female candidates who had moved their dwelling places to follow their husband upon relocation and as a result had weak regional ties. A high proportion of the voters had negative opinions about the fairness of the nomination process for mayorship in the municipal governments.

A higher proportion of women had negative perceptions of the fairness of the nomination screening committee than that of men. A high proportion of both male and female voters called for improving the nomination process in order to promote women's participation in municipal government mayorship. But there were wide gaps between male and female voters about the extra points, the gender quota, and the strategic nomination for female candidates.

3) Recognition of Female Mayors and Perceptions of Changes in the Communities

We analyzed the voters' recognition of female mayors and perceptions of changes in the communities to identify their demand for female leadership. According to the analysis of differences in mayoral competencies by gender as recognized by voters, the voters assessed achievements of female mayors higher than those of male mayors. In particular, the voters evaluated competencies of female mayors higher than those of male mayors in the areas of fair personnel management, policy development closely related to daily life, and creation of safe

villages for women, the elderly, and the weak.

The voters thought highly of the differentiated leadership of female mayors who operated administration transparently and efficiently, and who responded sensitively to women's issues, and communicated horizontally. The in-depth interview with female mayors and candidates also emphasized women's differentiated leadership.

We examined changes after the inauguration of mayors in the regions where the voters lived by dividing the mayors by gender. According to the results of the examination, the average points of the regions with female mayors were higher than those of the regions with male mayors in all question items except for the item 'community care service became active.' In particular, the average points of the regions with female mayors were high not only in the items related to the prevention of sexual violence, the expansion of community care, the promotion of women's participation, and the dissemination of a gender equal culture, but also in the items related to the facilitation of local economy and the improvement of housing problems. This shows that female mayors are highly likely to implement women-friendly policies. Also, these results imply that there is no gender gap in the mayoral competencies and that on the contrary, women are effectively performing the role of mayors in the municipal governments.

Regarding the impact of an increase in the number of female mayors on the local communities, the voters expected from the mayors that they would respond sensitively to women's issues, including the prevention of sexual violence, the expansion of community care, the promotion of women's participation, and the dissemination of a gender equal culture.

V. Overseas Cases

1. Expansion of Female Mayors: Global Trends

As there was a growing interest in expanding women's participation in politics across the world in the beginning of the second millennium, women's participation increased in each area of politics. Globally, the rate of participation in the central assemblies or parliaments was a mere 3% on average in 1945. But then, the rate gradually increased to 11.6% in 1995. As countries introduced various active measures after the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, the rate of women lawmakers remarkably went up to 25.5% in 2021.

On the other hand, women's participation in local politics did not so conspicuously increase as their participation in national assemblies. Probably because women had already taken part more or less in local politics compared to central politics since the 1970s, women's participation in local politics was slightly higher than that in central politics, but their national interest was not so high. As there was an increasing interest in promoting women's participation in local politics entering the 2000s, women's participation in local assemblies gradually rose to 36 % on average worldwide. By region, the Central and South Asian region had the highest women's participation, accounting for 41%. This was followed by Europe 35%, North America 35%, Oceania 29%, Sub-Saharan Africa 29%, East Asia 25%, West Asia 18%, and North Africa 18%. When examined by mayorship, women's proportion was much lower than this.

According to the City Mayors Foundation, a mere 20% of all the mayors in the world are women. However, it is somewhat encouraging

that the number of large cities governed by women mayors has been on the rise across the world in recent years. For example, these cities include Tokyo, Madrid, Washington D.C., Rome, Sydney, and Paris. In the case of the United States, female governors account for 20%, and female mayors 30%. It has not been long before women came to take such positions. Prior to the 2000s, the number of female mayors was very small, but since the beginning of the 2000s, women's participation in local politics has gradually increased.

2. Drivers of Changes in the Number of Women Mayors

1) Dissemination of Global Gender Equality Agenda

The first driver of an increase in the number of women mayors from the beginning of the 2000s is the dissemination of global gender equality agenda in local politics. As there was a demand for women's greater participation in local politics though the demand began from central politics, preparation of election systems advantageous to women's participation spread globally. Starting from 1995, gender quota has expanded globally, then more countries have introduced gender parity. As a result, it has become easy for women to enter politics. As their abilities have been recognized in this process, female politicians have grown to win the elections for mayorship.

2) Proliferation of Women-Friendly Local Election Systems

The second driver of changes is the proliferation of women-friendly local election systems. In the beginning of the 2000s, a number of countries adopted gender quota, then gender parity. Beginning with France, Belgium and Spain in Europe and Tunisia and Senegal in Africa

introduced gender parity. In Latin America, eight countries, including Mexico, Chile, and Argentina, adopted gender parity. Also, by adopting legislative gender quota or parliament seat reserve system, many countries made efforts to guarantee women's entry to policy-making process. Most of these measures were legislated in such a way that a certain proportion of women should be nominated in the municipal or local assembly elections. In many cases, it was also legislated in such a way that any political party could not participate in the elections unless its party list observed the legislated quota.

Thanks to these active measures, the proportion of winners in local assemblies has risen. In particular, countries adopting proportional representation in local elections select their mayors in the following manner: when the number one on the party list who gained the most votes becomes mayor, then the remaining numbers become city assembly persons. Because many European countries adopt proportional representation in local elections, female mayors came to win the elections when the number one on the party list with the most votes became women.

3) Decentralization

The third driver of changes is decentralization. As decentralization has globally progressed, changes in political contexts that enable local politics independently of central politics have become an important factor. In particular, as local finance has become autonomous from the central finance and as there have appeared issues that the local governments should solve without help from the central government, it has become necessary to foster local politicians who are autonomous

from central politics. These local politicians are likely to pay attention to women politicians who are more friendly to unique local issues, such as needs for care and support for childcare service in a low-fertility and aging society in order to resolve such important problems.

3. Leadership of Women Mayors

1) Transparency from Corruption and Budget, and Financial Operation with Integrity

How do women mayors change municipal governments? Many cases showed that women mayors operated the budget in a transparent and fair way and cut off from corruption. According to an empirical study of Spain, female mayors implemented the budget more transparently and with a lower and stabler interest and debt service ratio than male mayors did. Also, studies found that death threat and physical harm to female mayors increased in South America because they refused to collude with corrupt forces.

2) Expansion of Social Welfare Policy

Compared to male mayors, female mayors paid more attention to social welfare. The backgrounds to the emergence of women mayors included the necessity for life politics and response to residents' needs. It can be said that women mayors respond well to these needs of the times. Furthermore, women mayors are proactive in constituting women-friendly assemblies and municipal governments. As revealed in the case of Spain, once a woman becomes mayor, the proportion of women in the municipal assembly goes up, and again the number of women increases in the composition of municipal governments. These

changes then will lead to greater attention paid to social welfare policy, and result in efficient operation of the finance.

3) Composition of Women-Friendly Local Governments

Compared to male mayors, female mayors composed more women-friendly local governments or municipal assemblies. This again had a positive impact on implementing women-friendly policies in the municipal governments. The basis for this argument is clearly shown in the local elections in Spain. As explained earlier, each party prepared a list of candidates and the number one on the party list became mayoral candidate for local elections in Spain. If the number one candidate was a woman, the list allocated more female candidates to positions that could win the elections. When the number one female candidate became mayor by gaining the most votes, municipal assemblies had more assemblywomen.

4. Sub-Conclusions

First of all, the global expansion of gender equal regimes can be applied to Korea, but the changes are still insignificant. Because Korea has not yet prepared election systems that enable more women to be elected, the proportion of assemblywomen in the municipal and provincial assemblies is still a long way to go compared to that of overseas countries. When the proportion of these assemblywomen goes up and the group of female mayor candidates broadens, there will be more mayors.

Second, it is necessary to foster female politicians who can work in the arena of local politics. In the overseas cases, women mayors

increased in number because women politicians built their careers in the local political arena and the political parties nominated them for mayoral candidates. If it is the demand of the times to expand female politicians in local politics, the political parties should take more proactive interest in fostering women politicians who can work in the local political arena.

Third, local politics should no longer be an extension of central politics or bring the agenda of central politics, as they are, to local elections. Unlike central politics, local elections need to pay heed to the problems and needs unique to the local areas. Globally, women have distinguished themselves in such unique local agendas, with a favorable environment created for them to win the elections. Therefore, it is necessary for local politics to develop a discussion focusing on unique local agendas that are different from those of central politics.

Most countries with many female mayors adopt proportional representation as an election system. This proportional representation system with a party list nominates a woman as the number one on the list. Then, if this number one female candidate receives the most votes of support, this female candidate is elected as a mayor. Currently, it is not easy for Korean political parties to nominate women as candidates for mayorship in the municipal governments. In this situation, it is necessary to consider improving the election system to proportional representation in the long term.

VI. Conclusions and Implications

Academic contributions of this study include: first of all, through the questionnaire survey and overseas case study, we identified causes of

underrepresentation of women in mayorship in Korea's municipal governments from the perspective of gender equity. Second, based on the theoretical discussion of 'female leadership,' we found the reasons why women's participation should be expanded in local politics. Third and last, we confirmed that Korea's nomination process has structural limitations in raising the number of women elected for mayors in the municipal governments.

In this study, we analyzed three aspects that are directly related to the participation of women mayors, that is, the political party, female politicians, and voters, as follows: First, from the aspect of political party, we analyzed the nomination process in the party to identify causes of women's low participation in the local mayoral elections. Second, from the aspect of female politicians, we examined the potential of female leadership based on the experiences of female politicians who were former and incumbent mayors in the municipal governments and candidates, albeit at a limited level. Third, from the aspect of voters, we analyzed the survey of opinions about the gender imbalance of mayorship in the municipal governments and perceptions of female mayors.

This research has a character of rudimentary study focusing on causes of underrepresentation of women and ensuing social issues rather than a policy study centered on seeking ways of improving the underrepresentation of women. Therefore, in conclusions, we examined the research results and implications from the abovementioned three aspects, respectively, and the academic significance of this study. To sum up, first, causes of underrepresentation of women in mayorship included the absence of the party's accountability, the lack of systems for increasing the number of women mayors, and the power of nominating candidates concentrated on the chairpersons of local party or council.

Second, regarding the exercise and potential of female leadership, it is necessary to build qualitative data on female leadership and to lay a basis for studying female leadership. Third, regarding voters' perceptions of nomination process and female mayors, it is necessary to i) share the data on voters' opinions about nomination of female mayoral candidates, ii) enhance the gender equity of the party's nomination process, and iii) to increase the number of female mayors in the municipal governments.

This study presents the following five policy implications: first, set the proportion of women at 50% when nominating candidates by applying the clauses on strategic nomination of major party officials or nomination with a priority. Second, give priority to women when nominating candidates for the empty seats of mayors who left after serving three terms consecutively. Third, as a standard of nomination for municipal elections, make it a requirement to have careers in elected positions, including national, provincial, or municipal assemblies. Fourth, increase the number of assemblywomen in provincial and municipal assemblies so as to expand the human resource pool who can give it a try to run for mayorship. Fifth and last, improve the election system for the municipal government mayorship and municipal assemblies to proportional representation, and operate them in the form of the municipal parliamentary system.

