

## Gender Bias in Branching Employment Sequence : A Comparative Study between Japan and Korea

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# Gender Bias in Branching Employment Sequence: A Comparative Study between Japan and Korea

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## Abstract

In this paper, we attempt a comparative study of gender structures between Japan and Korea by analyzing the branching employment sequences among females. This sequence is based on personal job histories; however, events are composed of changing patterns of the status of employment, including turnover (changing company) as well as quitting from and re-entering the labor market. For data, we use the 2005 SSM (Social Stratification and Social Mobility) Survey in Japan and in Korea. Our basic frame of reference for comparison is the “M-shaped curve” with regard to female labor force participation, which is peculiarly salient in Japan and Korea among industrialized countries. Under this frame, by focusing on the average pattern of employment sequence, we examine the similarities and differences in the patterns between males and females, as well as between Japan and Korea. The comparison clarifies three branching patterns that are particular to Korean women. A noteworthy point is that these patterns, being different from those displayed by Japanese women, are commonly related to self-employment, thereby suggesting that a unique gender bias is prevalent in Korea. Thereafter, for the Korean married samples, we examine the effects of gender and social stratification in determining the experience of self-employment after marriage. Having a self-employed father has a positive effect and is stronger for males ; on the other hand, educational attainment indicates a positive effect even for females. The result indicates that, for Korean women, self-employment is a complex field where gender bias and stratification effects are overlapping. An additional analysis suggests that the experience as “partnership self-employed” (not being a “family worker”) could imply a career that is categorized as urban self-employment for female college graduates.

Keywords and Phrases: Branching employment sequence, gender, M-shaped curve, comparative study between Japan and Korea

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Our purpose is to discuss gender structures in the context of social stratification from the international comparative perspective. In this paper, we focus on the employment sequence among females in Japan and Korea, and analyze it in order to compare the effects of gender biases in the branching of this employment sequence. For data, we use the 2005 SSM (Social

Stratification and Social Mobility) Survey in Japan and Korea (we use the October 2007 final version with the permission of the 2005 SSM Committee).

### 1.1 Employment Sequence

The SSM Survey is conducted every ten years since 1955; its main purpose is to collect inter-generational occupational information and intra-generational occupational history. The analysis in this paper is mainly

with regard to the latter. With respect to occupational history, an important analytical aspect is timing. This is evident from the first regular analysis by Hara (1979) as well as in the subsequent event history analyses by Seiyama et al. (1990) and Sato (1998). In fact, timing is critical for distinguishing the effects of age, cohort, and period as well as for effectively analyzing intra-generational occupational mobility.

However, our viewpoint is different in terms of two aspects. First, we focus on the history of employment status (including no occupation) rather than occupational history. This viewpoint follows Okamoto et al. (1990) who, in order to precisely describe the occupational life course of females, propose the notion of “career” that indicates both labor force participation and occupational history. From this perspective, it is easier to analytically distinguish gender bias from occupational effect on change in employment status. Second, in treating the history of employment status, we compress time in order to describe the overall average figure of branching patterns in the history. In this case, a branch comprises turnover (changing company) and quitting from and re-entering the labor market. The age and year when people experience the first branching are not uniform; however, we are interested in the number of people who experienced the 1st occupation ⇒ quit ⇒

re-enter pattern within three branches, irrespective of timing.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, our viewpoint is summarized by “employment sequence” in that it indicates certain branches with regard to employment status and the transition process among them. By providing a detailed description of the employment sequence, we approach an important but difficult task of precisely evaluating gender effects in a modern pluralistic stratification system (Seiyama 2000). As will be evident subsequently, our analysis is limited to the first three branches.

## 1.2 Comparative Gender Structure of Japan and Korea

It is well known that Japan and Korea are peculiar among industrialized countries because they commonly display a similar M-shaped curve with regard to the female labor force participation pattern (Figure 1). The change in the shape of this curve for both countries in this decade is similar too. The bottom of the curve has been rising and moving slightly toward the right; however, the M-shape appears to be robust. This fact strongly suggests that a similar gender bias is prevalent in both countries. We use this M-shaped pattern as the frame of reference for conducting a comparative study on the “employment sequence” of Japan and Korea.

The M-shaped pattern of Japanese labor force

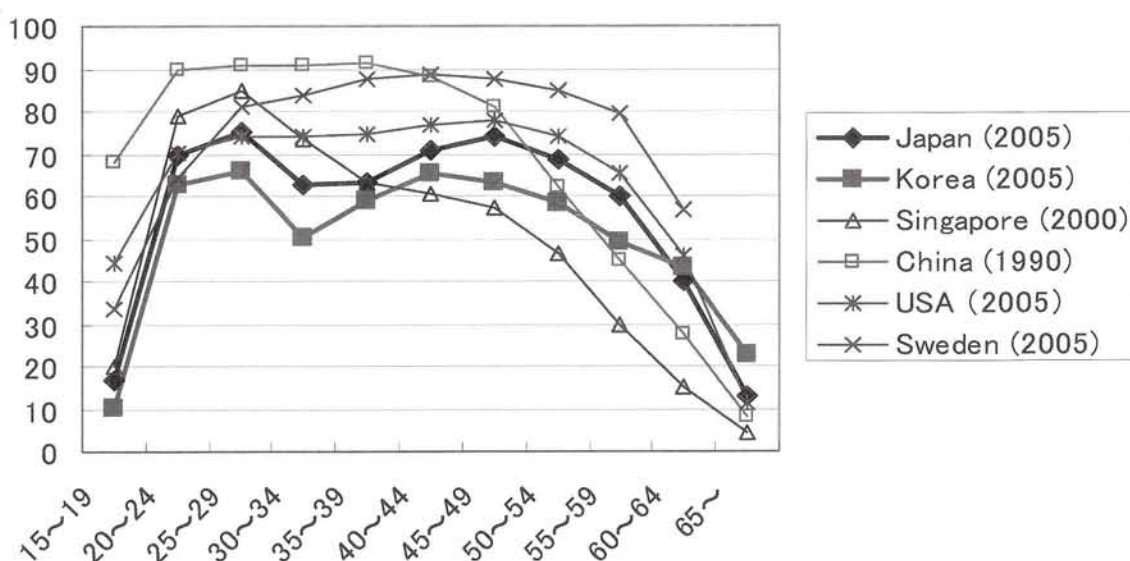


Figure 1. Rate of Economically Active Woman, by Age Group

Source) ILO, LABORSTA Internet, Data published in December 2007.

<sup>1</sup> Methodologically, this concept is related with Misumi (2004) who applied “comparative narratives” to the secondary analysis of life history. This method transforms narratives into graphs and compresses certain events (nodes) under mathematical rules that preserve the structure of branching patterns along time.

participation has been examined in the SSM Project, since the 1985 survey included woman samples for the first time, from the viewpoint of life course based on event history analysis. In brief, short-term employment prior to marriage and childbirth was partially observed among women whose educational level is junior high in the old educational system; this trend spread rapidly in the 1960s as the life course of a general female. Moreover, in the 1970s, the re-participation of married women in the labor market had increased; therefore, the M-shaped pattern became a salient feature (Iwai 1990: 183; Sechiyama 1990; Iwai 1998; Iwai and Manabe 2000: 82). This pattern is related to the situation of the labor market, conditions of the household economy, and the family life cycle; in addition, it is influenced by class origin, educational attainment, occupational status of spouse, and the conditions of the workplace (Okamoto et al 1990; Yamato 1998; Manabe 1998; Akaike 1998; Nakai and Akaike 2000).

With regard to this aspect, a comparative study among Japan, Korea, and Taiwan by Sechiyama (1990: 28) is noteworthy. According to him, the M-shaped pattern in the labor force participation in Korea in the 1980s was not caused by the emergence of “modern housekeeper,” as in Japan, but by middle-aged and older women in rural areas who work unwillingly in order to support a household economy. In fact, the M-shaped pattern is not evident in urban areas; moreover, the increase in the educational level has nothing to do with the bottom-up in the M-shaped curve (also see Cho 2006). In this case, Sechiyama indicates the influence of Confucian sexual norms. Another significant comparative study for the same three countries is Lee and Hirata (2001) who focus on the relationship between employment and marriage. They confirm similarity between Japan and Korea amongst the three; on the other hand, they discuss that quitting jobs by females is easily explained in terms of the opportunity cost in Japan (particularly in the case of a high-salaried spouse); however, it is not so in Korea. “The results suggest stronger normative resistance in society overall to married women’s employment outside the home in South Korea”; it reflects the tendency to remain in their jobs in the case of sales and service self-employment

(Lee and Hirata 2001:120-121).

The minimum purpose of the present study is to add the observations pertaining to 2005 to the above-mentioned discussions on gender and stratification. In effect, we extract typical patterns from earlier stages of time-compressed employment sequences and interpret the meaning of the patterns by using the M-shaped pattern as a frame of reference for comparison.

In addition, we also examine the role of education. In the case of Japan, Ojima and Kondo (2000:42) analyze 1995 SSM data to indicate the existence of gender tracks in the formal educational system. Gender and stratification have overlapping effects on educational attainment; therefore, gender tracks function to avoid competition between sexes. Women tend to undergo commercial and home economics courses in high school and attend two-year junior college; moreover, they tend to obtain jobs that are suitable for women. Hirata (1998) specifies these jobs as clerical and service work, and discusses that clerical workers have a strong tendency to quit their jobs in order to become housekeepers.

The situation appears more severe for women in Korea.<sup>2</sup> Brinton (2001:32-33) insists that large firms in Korea, which are characterized by greater authoritarian control and hierarchy, create barriers for women from the beginning. In addition, Koreans (particularly men) strongly prefer white collar occupations because of high prestige rather than income, and this preference makes educational competition particularly significant (Arita 2006). Therefore, this discussion is related to the lower level of labor force participation among high-educated Korean women (Sechiyama 1990:27; Cho 2006:2).

A noteworthy aspect for the present study is that attention has to be paid to the gender bias that functions in the transition from school to the labor market.

## 2 OVERVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT SEQUENCE

### 2.1 Creating an Employment Sequence, and Basic Statistics

An employment sequence is created in the following manner. First, we make cross-tabulations between workplace numbers in the occupational history question-

<sup>2</sup> For a comparative discussion on education in Korea and Japan, see Arita (2006), Kim (1998), Lee (2001), and Nakamura et al.(2002).

naire; by using this tabulation, we judge the local transition pattern of employment. In the SSM survey, the workplace number begins with 1 (first occupation), and 1 was added each time a respondent changed his/her workplace;<sup>3</sup> it is 0 when he/she was unemployed. Then, for respondents who have worked, the transition pattern from 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> is as follows:

[1–0] ⇒ “quit” 1<sup>st</sup> workplace to be unemployed,  
or

[1–2] ⇒ “change” to different workplace without an unemployed term.

The former includes [99–0], where 99 is no response for the 1<sup>st</sup> occupation, because it is assumed that the respondent was engaged in a certain occupation. Similarly, the transition from 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> is as follows:

[1–0] [2–0] [99–0] ⇒ “quit”

[1–2] [2–3] [2–1] ⇒ “change” (including return to the 1<sup>st</sup> workplace)

[0–2] [0–1] ⇒ “return” to the labor market (including return to the 1<sup>st</sup> workplace)

Thus, we determine, in the above manner, the transition patterns between two consecutive workplaces

whether the response is “quit,” “change,” or “return.”

Tables 1-a (for Japan) and 1-b (for Korea) indicate the rate and frequency of experiencing transition events in the overall employment sequence, divided into sex and age group. The noticeable differences with regard to gender and nation are summarized as follows.

- (1) Japanese women display a strong tendency to “quit and return” as compared with Japanese men and Korean women. The rate of “quit” is high even for Korean women (particularly the younger generation); however, their tendency to “return” is considerably weak. A relatively high rate of “quit” for Korean men can be explained by military service.
- (2) The tendency of “change” without a no-occupation term is stronger for men in both countries. In this case, the gender difference is larger in Korea; as a rule, Korean women display the weakest tendency not only to “change,” but also to “change or return.”

## 2.2 Path Diagram for Branching Employment Sequence

It is easy to extend the branching employment sequence by adding information pertaining to employ-

Table 1-a. Japan 2005, Experience of Events in Employment Sequence

	Rate (%)			Frequency (average)		
	Change	Quit(& Return)	Change or Return	Change	Quit(& Return)	Change or Return
Total	58.0	50.6(34.2)	72.5	1.15	0.71(0.45)	1.60
Male	61.8	26.2(13.6)	66.9	1.32	0.32(0.17)	1.48
60s	72.4	51.9(15.4)	77.8	1.57	0.60(0.18)	1.75
50s	66.4	19.3(14.6)	71.2	1.46	0.25(0.18)	1.64
40s	56.0	14.5(12.6)	60.6	1.23	0.18(0.15)	1.38
30s	55.4	14.5(11.9)	61.3	1.09	0.21(0.16)	1.25
20s	42.0	15.0(11.1)	46.5	0.78	0.18(0.12)	0.90
Female	54.7	72.0(52.2)	77.5	1.01	1.04(0.69)	1.70
60s	53.5	82.3(53.2)	77.9	1.00	1.28(0.70)	1.71
50s	61.0	77.5(65.4)	87.2	1.14	1.21(0.91)	2.05
40s	54.2	77.1(61.0)	81.7	0.98	1.03(0.79)	1.77
30s	53.4	63.4(40.6)	71.0	1.02	0.81(0.51)	1.53
20s	45.2	38.4(20.3)	55.1	0.74	0.48(0.24)	0.98

\*) ‘Rate’ indicates percentage of respondents who have experienced the event in question once at least. ‘Frequency’ indicates the average number of the experiences.

3 Since the questionnaire for workplace number is simpler for the Korean survey, we adjusted Japanese data with regard to the following aspects. 1) We do not distinguish “change” as well as “return” to a former workplace from “change” (“return”) to a new workplace; 2) we skip and compress workplace numbers that correspond to a change in posts and occupations within the same company.

Table 1-b. Korea 2005, Experience of Events in Employment Sequence

	Rate (%)			Frequency (average)		
	Change	Quit (& Return)	Change or Return	Change	Quit (& Return)	Change or Return
Total	48.5	57.6(22.9)	60.6	0.77	0.66(0.25)	1.01
Male	59.5	40.5(22.8)	69.0	1.01	0.46(0.24)	1.25
60s	59.9	66.6(31.3)	73.5	1.10	0.78(0.33)	1.42
50s	67.1	46.1(31.6)	78.3	1.22	0.54(0.33)	1.55
40s	67.0	28.4(19.1)	74.2	1.14	0.31(0.20)	1.34
30s	57.0	29.7(17.6)	66.1	0.88	0.32(0.18)	1.06
20s	34.1	35.2(11.4)	39.8	0.50	0.39(0.11)	0.61
Female	41.3	68.7(22.9)	55.1	0.60	0.80(0.25)	0.86
60s	32.7	63.2(13.9)	41.7	0.47	0.75(0.16)	0.63
50s	41.5	64.9(25.7)	55.0	0.61	0.77(0.29)	0.91
40s	42.1	72.0(36.4)	65.5	0.62	0.87(0.42)	1.04
30s	47.3	79.0(25.0)	61.6	0.68	0.90(0.26)	0.94
20s	39.1	53.8( 5.8)	43.6	0.58	0.56(0.06)	0.63

ment status and occupation and present it in a path diagram, as in Figures 2 and 3. In this case, the additional information is employment status, which is defined as follows. (The treatment of manager is different between Japan and Korea.)

Regular employment = Japan: {Company president or executive, Regular full-time employee}; Korea: {Regular full-time employee (including civil worker)}.

Non-regular employment = Japan: {Temporary or part-time employee, Dispatched employee, Contracted employee}; Korea: {Irregular employee (Part-time, contract, temporary, dispatched, or outsourced worker)}.

Self-employment = Japan: {Self-employed, freelancer or independent worker, Family worker, Home worker}; Korea: {Manager, self-employed, or freelancer, Family worker}.

Focusing on employment status in light of the above definition enables us to form certain viewpoints on the following aspects: Labor and welfare problems of non-regular female workers in Japan and Korea (Cho 2006; Yokota 2007), unique characteristics of a large number of small self-employed in urban Korea (Arita 2007), and the relationship between rural self-employed and

the M-shaped pattern in Korea (Sechiyama 1990).<sup>4</sup>

The first branch of the path diagram indicates what percentage of respondents in each employment status in the first state experienced which transition pattern. The next branch indicates what percentage of respondents, who were previously in each transition pattern, entered into which employment status in the second state. Similarly, the figures describe four branches up to the third state (paths less than 10% are omitted for the sake of convenience).

In Japan, it is apparent from a cumulative percentage of "present" that while over half the men arrive at the present state (quit the sequence) after the second event, the rate is merely 31% for women. A reconfirmation of the rich event experiences of Japanese women is presented in Table 1. Further, Japanese women possess the following characteristics. (J1) Paths of "quit" are thick regardless of status in the first state. (J2) Paths of "return" and getting into "non-regular" are thick. (J3) Paths of "change" from "regular" and into "non-regular" are thick. Inversely, paths of "change" from "non-regular" and into "regular" are thin. (J4) Paths of "change" to stay in "regular" are thin.

On the other hand, in Korea, gender difference is not apparent with regard to the arrival rate of "pre-

4 In addition to employment status, the abovementioned white-collar orientation and size of firms, particularly with regard to self-employment, are important factors in the comparison between Japan and Korea (Arita 2006, 2007). We will treat these factors in a subsequent analysis in this paper; however, incorporating them into the employment sequence is a task for the future.

sent,” which is reconfirmed in Table 1 by suggesting a lower number of event experiences among Korean women. Moreover, Korean women possess the following characteristics. (K1) When they are employees in the first state, regardless of whether the status is regular or non-regular, paths of “quit” are thick (no gender difference with regard to self-employment). (K2) Paths of “return” toward “non-regular” are thick (but thinner than those for Japanese women). (K3) Paths of

“change” to stay in “regular” are thin. There is no gender difference with regard to the paths of “change” from “regular” to “non-regular,” and from “non-regular” and into “regular” as well.

The noticeable differences between Japan and Korea, particularly with regard to women, are as follows. (JK1) Paths of “return” from “no occupation” are thin for Korean women. This indicates their tendency of quitting jobs to become housekeepers, which was

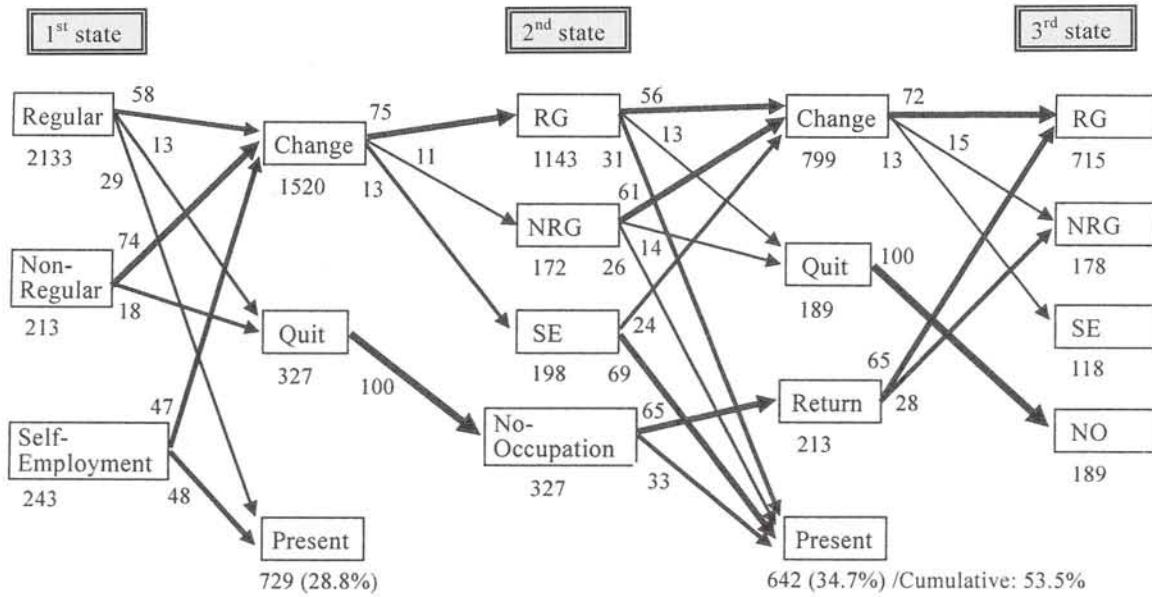


Figure 2-a. Branching Employment Sequence for Males, Japan 2005: 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> State

\*) The figure under each event indicates frequency, excluding no answers for each state. The figure on each path indicates the percentage for the frequency of the origin event. Paths under 10% are omitted. With regard to the “present state,” the percentage is for the total number of valid respondents in the previous state, and the cumulative percentage is for the total number in the 1<sup>st</sup> state. RG = Regular, NRG = Non-regular, SE = Self-employment, and NO = No occupation.

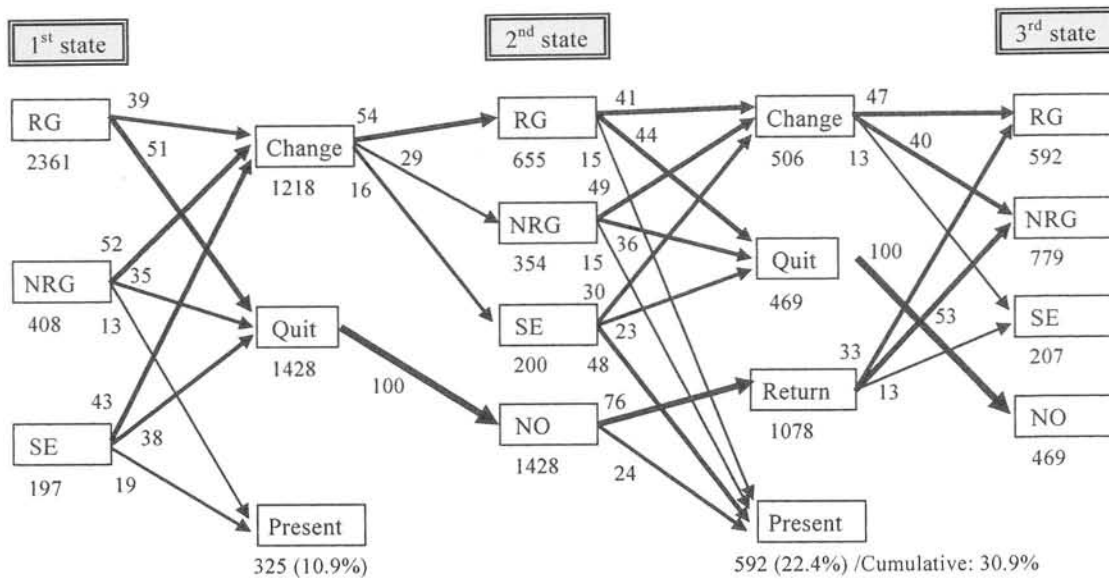


Figure 2-b. Branching Employment Sequence for Females, Japan 2005: 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> State

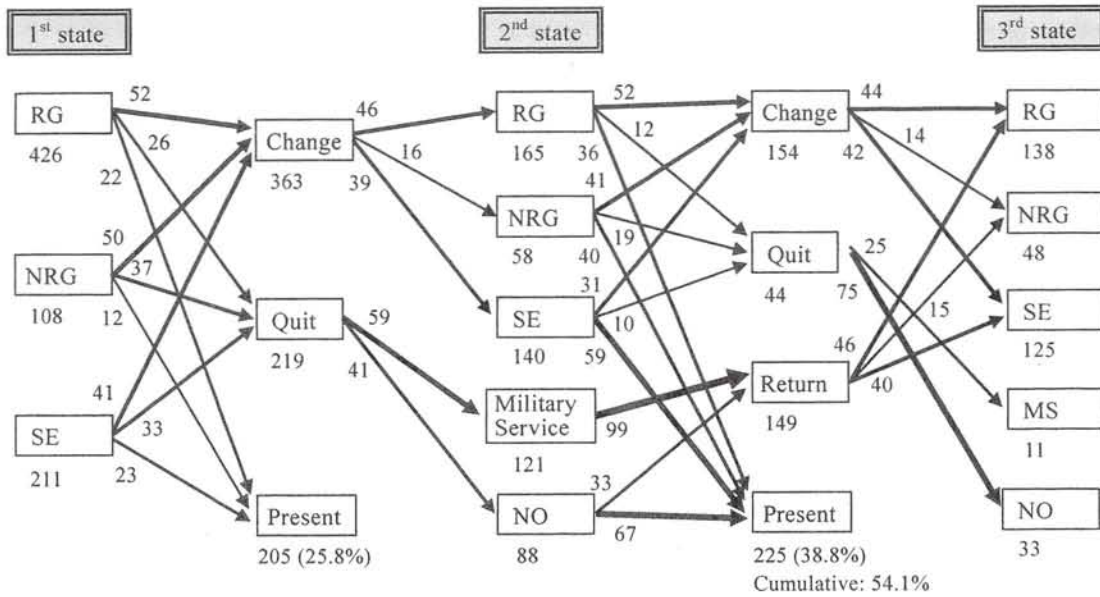


Figure 3-a. Branching Employment Sequence for Males, Korea 2005: 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> State

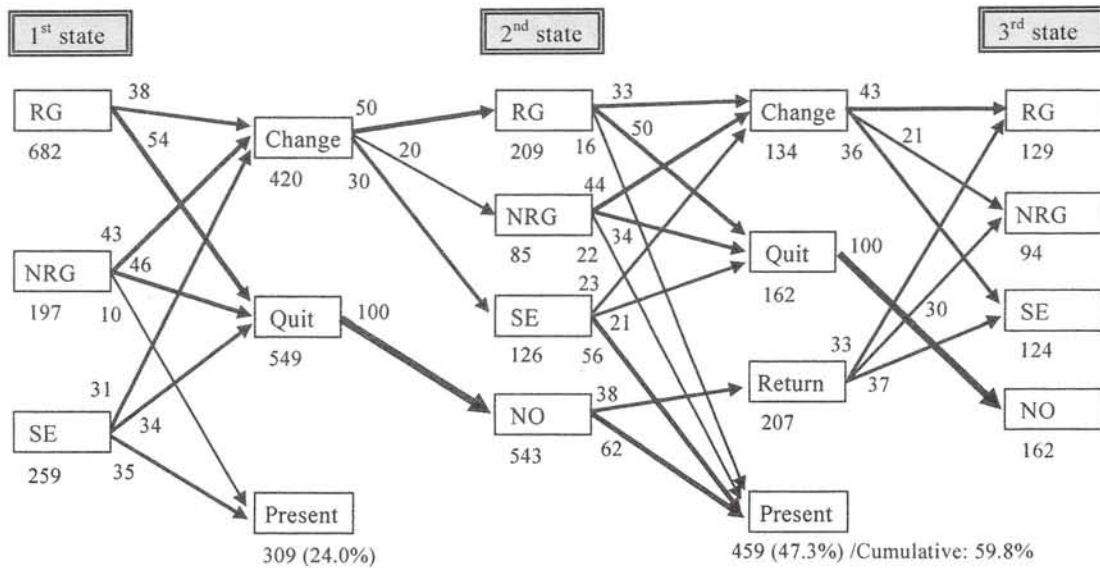


Figure 3-b. Branching Employment Sequence for Females, Korea 2005: 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> State

discussed in the previous section. (JK2) Paths starting from “self-employment” and arriving at “present” are thick for Korean women. Further, paths of “change” to “self-employment” are thick for Korean women (and for Korean men as well). (JK3) Paths of “change” to “non-regular” are thick for Japanese women.

These aspects describe gender biases that provide clues for approaching comparative gender structures. When we reconsider the M-shaped pattern that is based on these clues, we notice that the contents of the pattern are different between Japan and Korea. In fact, even in 2005, the Korean M-shaped pattern does not appear to be produced by a large amount of unlikely “non-regular

return,” as in Japan. Instead, thick paths toward self-employment in Korea imply a unique effect of continuation of work as self-employed (Sechiyama 1990; Lee and Hirata 2001). Next, we focus on this aspect by considering the timing of events. Prior to that, let us briefly examine the transition from school to the labor market.

### 2.3 The Transition from School to the Labor Market

Path diagrams in the previous section omit stages prior to the first state. However, this pre-stage is important because Japan has constructed a unique institution in which high schools help students in seeking employment before graduation; the institutional condi-



tions are rather different in Korea. Figure 4 indicates the situations of respondents just after graduating from their last schools.<sup>5</sup>

In Korea, even for high school or college graduates,

the proportion of respondents who entered the labor market at the same time as graduation is merely 40-50% (military service must be taken into consideration for males). In the path diagrams for Korea, both

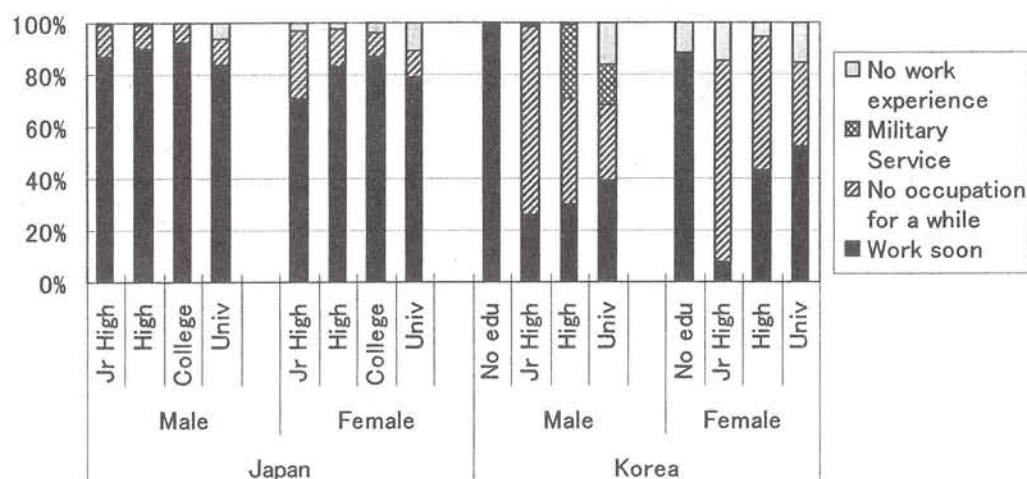


Figure 4. Situation after Graduation from the Last School

Table 2. Situation after Graduation, Korean women divided for age group

Age group (number)	Education (Composition %)	Work soon	No occupation for a while	No work experience
20-35 (413)	High school & lower (46.5%)	51.6	44.3	4.2
	College (53.5%)	52.0	26.2	21.3
36-54 (514)	High school & lower (78.0%)	30.0	64.0	5.5
	College (21.6%)	55.0	41.4	3.6
55-69 (358)	Junior high (62.6%)	5.4	75.9	18.3
	High school & College (11.7%)	21.4	54.8	31.0
	No education (25.7%)	88.0	0.0	12.0

Table 3. Relative Advantage of 'Work Soon' (Korea, College Graduates)

Relative advantages of 1st Occupation	Work soon / No occupation for a while		Military service / Work soon
	Female	Male	Male
Regular, Self-employed / Non-regular	1.45	0.85	2.24
Self-employed / Employee	0.70	0.33	5.36
Large firm, civilian / Small firm	1.20	1.54	0.54
Upper white collar / Lower white, Blue collar	2.33	0.89	0.70

\*) Odds ratio, indicating odds to be 'regular or self-employed' than 'non-regular' when 'work soon,' compared with the same odds when 'no occupation for a while,' for instance. 'Large firm' is more than 300 workers. 'Upper white collar' includes professional and clerical occupations, and the occupational categorization is based on ISCO88.

5 In the Korean survey, we directly questioned respondents regarding their situation after graduation. Respondents of "no education" did not answer this question; therefore, the graph indicates only the rate of labor experience. On the other hand, in the Japanese survey, "no occupation for a while" is the case where the year of graduation is not the same as the year of beginning the first job. In the case in which the years are not certain, respondents who answered that they obtained jobs "not soon after graduation" to another question were included. Occupational training schools are not considered in this case. In this sense, Figure 4 is a rough comparison.

females and males indicated thick paths from “no occupation” to “present.” In Figure 4, this observation corresponds to “no experience of employment,” which is more frequent for college graduates (this category does not include current students). With regard to this aspect, there is no apparent gender difference; however, educational experience has rapidly changed in Korea, particularly for women. Table 2 indicates the response of Korean women divided according to age group.

The rate of “work soon” is constantly increasing for the younger generation among high school graduates; however, it appears to have reached the uppermost limit at a rate of 55% for college graduates. Among college graduates, a majority of the “no work experience” group comprises the youngest generation. Both aspects are consistent with Sechiyama’s (1990:27–28) discussion that an increase in the educational level among Korean women has not escalated the rate of their labor force participation. However, it is not certain to what extent this is caused by a kind of moratorium; at the very least, there is a significant difference between “work soon” and “no occupation for a while.” Table 3 reports odds ratios for Korean college graduates that indicate whether or not “work soon” in comparison with “no occupation for a while” strengthens the relative advantages of the first occupation.

For example, odds ratio in the upper left corner indicates the extent to which “work soon” strengthens the likelihood to be regularly employed more than “no occupation for a while” does; the relative strength is 1.45 times stronger for females and 0.85 times for males. Generally, “work soon” tends to be related with certain advantages indicated by regular, large-firm, and upper white-collar jobs, particularly for women. The advantage of “work soon” is not clear for men; however, “military service” strongly intermediates regular employment or self-employment. Thus, particularly for women, the situation of “no occupation for a while” that is experienced by 20–30% of Korean college graduates is related to the gender bias that restricts women to be employed outside the home.<sup>6</sup>

### 3 Gender Bias in the Branching Employment Sequence

#### 3.1 “Quit,” “Return,” and timing of Marriage and Childbirth

We focus on information pertaining to the timing of marriage and childbirth for average age and put it back to a time-compressed employment sequence. Then, we examine the gender bias operating behind the branches, particularly with regard to self-employment. Figure 5 indicates the timing of the beginning and end of the first state (occupation).

In order to create Figure 5, we selected respondents who quit their first occupation and divided them on the basis of employment status in the first occupation. The left edge of each bar indicates the average age of beginning the first occupation and the right edge indicates the average age of quitting. Thus, the length of a bar indicates the average number of years in the first occupation for respondents who quit their first occupations. Korean men whose second state is “military service” are excluded. In particular, for women, the symbol  $\nabla$  indicates the average age of marriage and  $\triangle$  indicates the average age of first childbirth. It is apparent that the continuation effect of self-employment is stronger for Japan in the case of men; however, it is stronger for Korea in the case of women. The average timing of marriage and first childbirth suggest that a typical pattern for Korean women is to enter self-employment soon after or with a short no-occupation term after graduation and at the time of or just after marriage. This timing and long continuation as self-employed as well as the abovementioned “no-occupation for a while” implies a unique gender bias that is different from the Japanese case, in which the average age of marriage and first childbirth are in the middle of the bars in Figure 5.

When the first occupation is non-regular employment, the average age of beginning and end, as well as its timing with marriage and childbirth, indicates a clear difference between Japan and Korea, particularly for women. Korean women tend to participate in the labor market as non-regular employees in the beginning,

<sup>6</sup> Examining the effect of college graduation on the first occupation among Korean women, it is evident that college graduation is important for obtaining clerical jobs, but not for being employed as a regular employee or in large firms. Male samples reveal a sharp contrast on the latter aspects. Regardless of sex, college graduates have a greater opportunity to become civil servants.

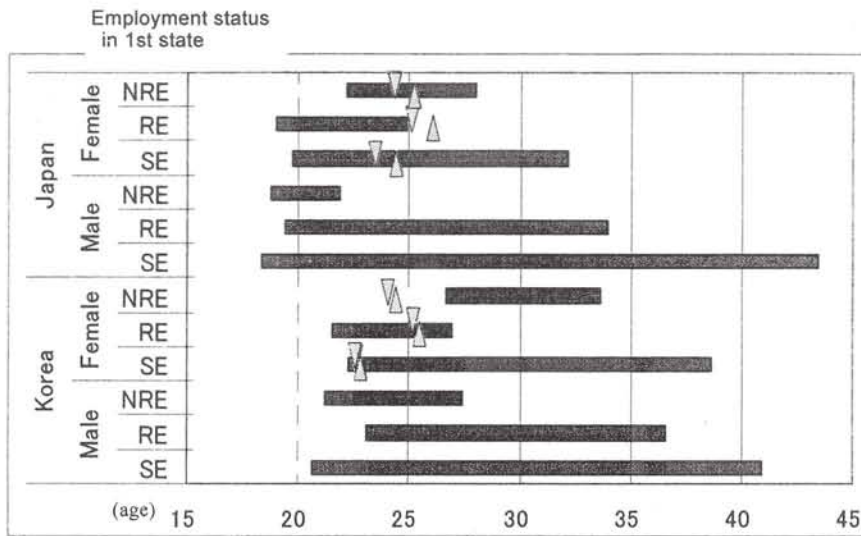


Figure 5. Average Age at the Beginning and End of the First State

\*) Respondents who quit the first occupation only. For each bar, the left edge indicates the start age and the right edge indicates the end age. Respondents who were in military service in the second state are excluded from amongst Korean males. For females, ▽ indicates the average age of marriage, and ▲ indicates the average age of first childbirth.

after the term of bringing up their first child. Again, this tendency suggests a gender bias that relates marriage and childcare with women in the course of “no occupation for a while.”

When the first occupation is regular employment, Japanese women display a stronger tendency to quit working prior to marriage. Moreover, as shown in Figure 3, the gender difference was smaller in Korea with regard to the paths of “change” to stay in “regular.”<sup>7</sup> These paths suggest that there are a number of ambitious Korean women who have careers and also enjoy their private lives.

Figure 6 provides a detailed graphic representation of the difference between Japan and Korea with regard to the timing between the beginning of self-employment and marriage. The horizontal axis indicates years defined for the age of beginning the first occupation subtracted from the age of marriage. A large number of women begin their first occupation as self-employed at the time of marriage, and the relative frequency is much greater for Korea. Moreover, in general, Korean women tend to enter the labor market after marriage; therefore, the proportion of self-employment is high. In brief, with reference to vectors that create the second top of the M-shaped pattern, while a comeback to the labor market after childcare is characteristic for Japan, the beginning of the first occupation as self-employed

after marriage and childcare is characteristic for Korea.

Figure 7 indicates, particularly for women, the average ages of the beginning and end of the second state where respondents arrived after moving from or quitting the first occupation. When the second state is “no occupation,” the end of the state implies a return to the labor market. Respondents who arrived at “present” in the first state were excluded in this case. In Figure 7, we omit the average age of marriage because it is rather close to the average age of first childbirth (indicated by ▲); instead, we indicate average age when the last child is 12 years of age by ▽. In both countries, on average, the second state continues to be experienced before the completion of childcare. Overall, the bars for Korean women are located on the right, which indicates that Korean women make rapid progress in the employment sequence as compared with Japanese ones.

With regard to labor force participation of Korean women as self-employed, which was focused on in Figure 5, the second wave begins when the first child enters elementary school (at the age of 29, on average, for women). In this second wave, Korean women tend to continue working for a long period because they quit working at the age of 40 on average. However, in this case, a longer continuation period as self-employed is evident for Japanese women who begin working simul-

<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, as is evident from Table 1, there is a large gender difference with regard to the opportunity to enter the “regular” path.

taneously with the first childbirth. The beginning of “no occupation” occurs simultaneously with the first childbirth for Japanese women, while this is not the case for Korean women. However, both Korean and Japanese “no occupation” groups (mainly married housekeepers) quit the state (i.e., return to the labor market) in the first half of their 30s. This is a noticeable common characteristic that is related to the second top of the M-shaped pattern.

### 3.2 Marriage, then Self-employment

With a short no-occupation term after graduation,

soon or after experiencing the first occupation, women enter self-employment when married and continue for a long time. In this life course, we found a unique gender bias that restricts married women to work outside the home in Korea. This interpretation is compatible with the M-shaped pattern as our frame of reference for comparison, and with certain previous studies as well. However, in Korea, the tendency for self-employment is also strong for men; therefore, we must examine the gender difference in greater detail with regard to stratification effects. Hereafter, we limit our analysis to Korean samples.

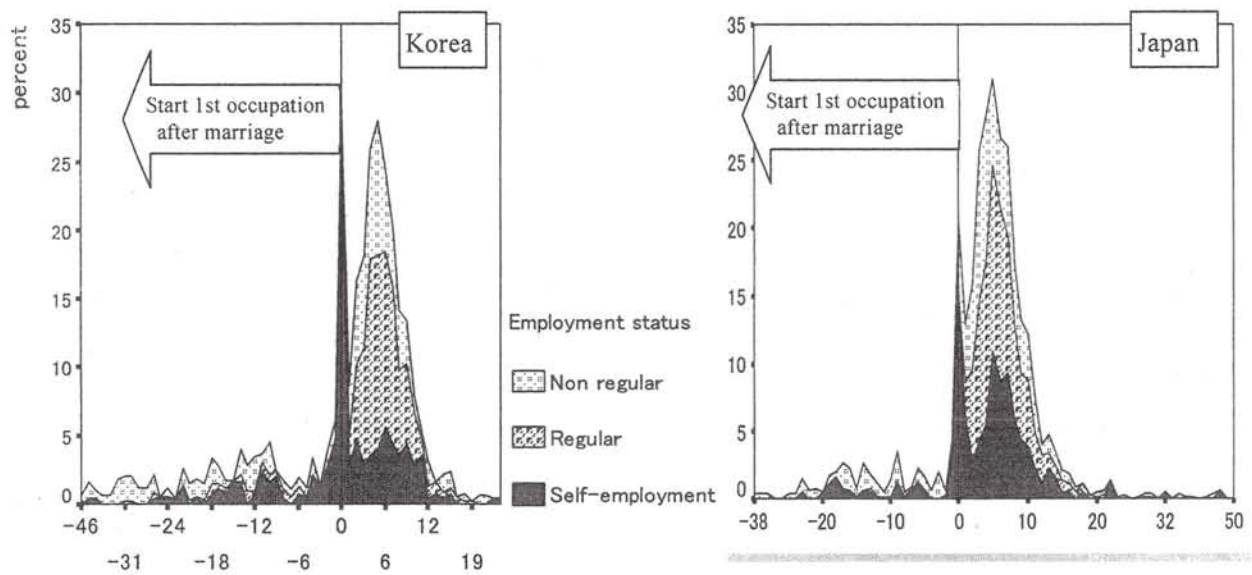


Figure 6. Distribution of [Marriage age] - [Start age of 1st occupation], by Employment Status of the First Occupation.

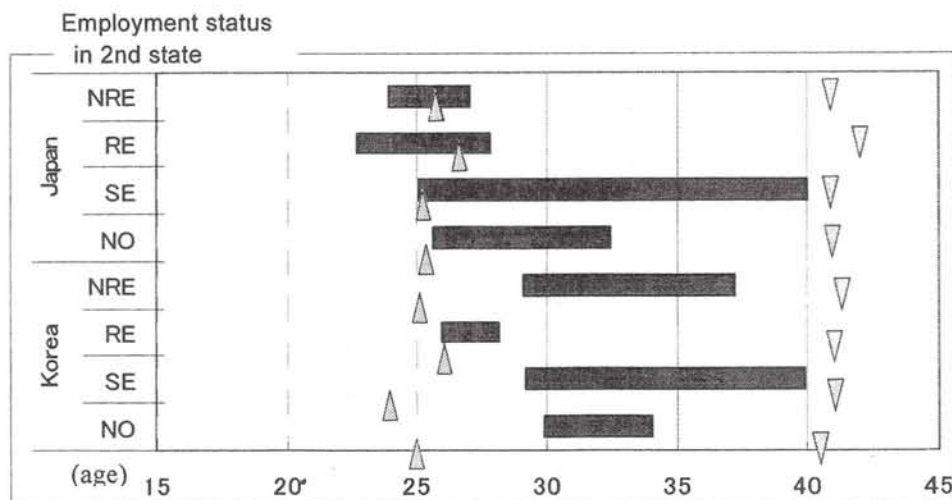


Figure 7. Average Age at the Beginning and End of the Second State

\*) Respondents who quit or changed their first occupation only. The left edge of a bar indicates the start age and the right edge indicates the end age. End of “no occupation” (NO) implies re-employment.  $\triangle$  indicates the average age of marriage, and  $\nabla$  indicates the average age when the last child is 12 years old.

From among certain aspects for examining the abovementioned life course, we focus on the beginning of self-employment simultaneously with or after marriage. This is because we expect that the timing of marriage with that of entering self-employment is an aspect where influences of gender structure must be salient. Operationally, we define a dichotomous variable that represents whether or not respondents have experienced self-employment after marriage (including the same year) through the present state.<sup>8</sup> We call it “marriage, then self-employment” (Marriage-SE). As evident from Table 4, there could be a few variations in “Marriage-SE”; moreover, the experience rate for males is more than that for females in every experience type, except the last one—“after marriage, as family worker.” Leaving this exceptional type for analysis at a later stage, we determine the second type—“after marriage”—as the dependent variable here.

Table 5 reports the result of the logistic regression analysis for Marriage-SE (“after marriage”) as the dependent variable. The sample is limited to married males and females in this case. The elderly are more likely to engage in agricultural self-employment; thus, we control for age. Then, Model 1 examines the gender difference with regard to the influence of educational attainment (years in education) and occupational attainment in the first occupation (dichotomy of professional and clerical vs. service, manual, and agricultural). Marriage-SE is weakened by white-collar occupational attainment, and the effect is common for both sexes because the interaction effect between gender and occupational attainment is not significant. Educational attainment has a weak but significant interaction effect with gender—higher education weakens Marriage-SE only for women.

Model 2 examines the influence of class origin in

terms of father’s education (dichotomy of high school and higher vs. lower than that) and father’s employment status when the respondents were 15 years old (dichotomy of self-employed or not). Since the main effect of father’s self-employment is significant, it strengthens Marriage-SE for both sexes. However, since it also has a significant negative interaction effect with gender, the effect of father’s self-employment is diminished in the case of daughters. The father’s high education does not have a significant main effect but a weak interaction effect with gender; therefore, it weakens Marriage-SE only for women. After controlling for class origin, white-collar occupational attainment continues to have a significant effect on weakening Marriage-SE; moreover, educational attainment has a weaker but significant effect in a similar manner.

In brief, we see two types of influences that restrict Marriage-SE, particularly for Korean women. One is the influence of gender-biased inheritance that limits the opportunity for women to initiate self-employment by inheriting assets; the other is the influence of high educational and occupational properties in the course of meritocracy. In a sense, Marriage-SE is at an overlapping point between gender bias and the stratification process. At the very least, female college graduates probably experience a conflict between “no-occupation for a while” after graduation and Marriage-SE. On the other hand, a university diploma does not guarantee the avoidance of gender bias.

In such a complicated situation, how strongly is self-employment related to upward mobility in the stratification process? In Table 4, “after marriage, as family worker” was mentioned as an exceptional self-employment experience in which gender difference is inversely apparent. By subtracting this category from Marriage-SE as “after marriage,” we obtain cases in

Table 4. Experience of Self-employment (% of ‘yes, once and more’)

	Through life	After marriage	After marriage, in small shop	After marriage, as family worker
Married men (746)	52.8	41.6	38.5	1.9
Married women (1139)	39.2	32.3	30.6	16.2

\*) ‘Small shop’ is less than five employees.

8 In the 2005 SSM in Korea, the maximum number of states in occupational history is 11. This variable checks employment status in every state after marriage in order to ascertain whether the person is an “employer” or “family worker.” The “partnership” type in subsequent analysis limits the case to that of “employer.”

Table 5. Logistic Regression for Marriage-SE (=1) (Korean married men and women)

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Age	0.04 ***	1.05	0.05 ***	1.05
Education (year)	-0.01	0.99	-0.05 **	0.95
Gender [female = 1]	-0.06	0.94	0.17	1.19
1st occupation [upper white = 1]	-0.58 ***	0.56	-0.41 ***	0.67
Gender * Education	-0.06 *	0.95		
Gender * 1st occupation	0.24	1.27		
Father education [high school = 1]			0.33	1.39
Father occupation [self-employed = 1]			0.76 ***	2.14
Gender * Father education			-0.71 *	0.49
Gender * Father occupation			-0.84 **	0.43
constant	-1.88 ***	0.15	-2.21 ***	0.11
	-2 logL=1924.7 Cox & Snell R <sup>2</sup> = .153 N=1613		-2 logL=1553.2 Cox & Snell R <sup>2</sup> = .177 N=1341	

which wives substantially participate in management as “employers.” We term this “marriage, then partnership self-employment” (Partnership M-SE). In order to explore the factors determining this experience among Korean married women, Table 6 presents the results of the logistic regression analysis by determining Partnership M-SE as the dependent variable.

Initially, Partnership M-SE is related with the older generation and earlier marriage age, which implies a certain career after marriage. It is strengthened by educational attainment; however, the effect of white-collar occupational attainment is not significant. This effect of educational attainment remains even if we control for class origin by father’s education and spouse’s status by his education.<sup>9</sup> With regard to the effects of education of father and spouse, the directions are not consistent (i.e., the latter is positive but the former is negative). Since these are significant only at the 10% level, in this case, we rather emphasize the above-mentioned consistent effect of educational attainment.

“Partnership” merely implies not a “family worker” but an “employer”; however, “employer” includes various categories (manager, self-employed, and freelancer). In order to consider the significance of Partner-

ship M-SE as a career, in Table 7, we examine the relationship between this experience and current occupations. For the Korean sample, this table compares the distribution of occupational categories (percentage, divided for age group) among three groups — male M-SE, female M-SE, and female partnership M-SE. Apparently, generational change is drastic regardless of the groups, and the central change is transformation from agricultural into urban occupations. In this case, a noteworthy aspect is that women, who have experienced Partnership M-SE, in every generation tend to be currently employed in non-agricultural (urban) occupations. With regard to generational change among non-agricultural occupations, in addition to a contrast between manual occupations for males and sales and service occupations for females, women — particularly of the younger generation — appear to compete with each other for professional and clerical occupations. In the competitive situation, Partnership M-SE appears to bring an advantageous position.

With regard to industrial fields, this competitive situation reflects on educational and medical fields. In fact, women whose current occupation is in these industrial fields account for 23.4% of Partnership M-SE

<sup>9</sup> In this case, it is difficult to utilize the occupational information of spouse because we are concerned with self-employment. However, the spouse’s current occupation (white-collar or not) or size of firm (equal and smaller than 4 or greater) does not have a significant effect on Partnership M-SE. The 2005 SSM Survey does not include occupational information of the spouse’s parents; therefore, we cannot examine the relationship between class origins. Since occupational information includes numerous missing responses, not only for spouse but also for father, we use education to represent household class properties.

women, which is five points higher than 18.2% in the case of Marriage-SE women.

Thus, Partnership M-SE has a significant implication as a career in urban self-employment based on college-level education. Hypothetically, we conclude that this category indicates a method to avoid gender biases in the field of self-employment for high-educated married Korean women.

#### 4 Concluding Remarks

In this paper, by investigating the M-shaped pattern with regard to female labor force participation that is commonly observed in Japan and Korea and using it as our basic frame of reference for comparative analysis, we have interpreted gender differences in the branching

employment sequence and the variance between Japan and Korea. Then, we focused on three branching patterns that are characteristic to Korean women, which are as follows.

- (1) After graduation, entering the labor market and then quitting work because of marriage and childbirth. As compared with Japanese women, the tendency of “return” after childcare is weak.
- (2) Engaging in self-employment at the time of marriage and continuing for a long period.
- (3) After graduation, continuing “no-occupation for a while” until marriage and childbirth, and later participating in the labor market for the first time.

In particular, the latter two patterns share a common component for self-employment, which indicates that self-employment is of key importance in Korean

Table 6. Logistic Regression for Partnership M-SE (=1) (Korean married women)

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Age	0.05 ***	1.06	0.05 ***	1.05
Marriage age	-0.05 **	0.95	-0.04	0.96
Education [university = 1]	0.09 ***	1.09	0.11 ***	1.12
1st occupation [upper white = 1]	-0.17	0.85	-0.34	0.71
Father education [high school = 1]			-0.51 *	0.60
Husband education [university = 1]			0.47 *	1.60
Constant	-3.42 ***	0.03	-3.73 ***	0.02
	-2 logL=996.0 Cox & Snell R <sup>2</sup> = .053 N=1005		-2 logL = 687.2 Cox & Snell R <sup>2</sup> = .034 N=795	

Table 7. Marriage-SE-Experiences and Current Occupation (married Korean samples, by age group)

	Age	Current Occupation					Total (N)
		Upper white	Sales & service	Manual	Farm	No occupation	
Marriage-SE [Male]	20-40	34.8	10.9	45.7	6.5	2.2	100.0 (46)
	41-56	12.7	20.9	35.8	27.6	3.0	100.0 (134)
	57-69	6.2	6.2	13.8	53.1	20.8	100.0 (130)
	Total	13.2	13.2	28.1	35.2	10.3	100.0 (310)
Marriage-SE [Female]	20-40	22.7	48.5	7.6	4.5	16.7	100.0 (66)
	41-56	16.7	28.5	9.0	29.2	16.7	100.0 (144)
	57-69	2.5	9.5	3.8	47.5	36.7	100.0 (158)
	Total	11.7	23.9	6.5	32.6	25.3	100.0 (368)
Partnership M-SE [Female]	20-40	27.7	46.8	6.4	0.0	19.1	100.0 (47)
	41-56	20.5	40.9	10.2	9.1	19.3	100.0 (88)
	57-69	4.7	14.1	4.7	31.8	44.7	100.0 (85)
	Total	15.9	31.8	7.3	15.9	29.1	100.0 (220)

\*) Division of age groups is for convenience to see generational change.

society with regard to the gender bias that relates women with marriage, childbirth, and housekeeping. This aspect is operationally defined for Marriage-SE. We have confirmed that this type of self-employment experience is influenced by positive but gender-biased inheritance effects and negative effects of high education and white-collar attainment. Thus, Marriage-SE implies a complex situation between gender and stratification. Moreover, "partnership" suggests a career in urban self-employment based on college-level education.

Thus, we suggest that, in Korea, participating in the labor market through self-employment is a field where gender and stratification compete with each other for their respective influences; moreover, in that case, "partnership self-employment" should be a frontier. Generally, self-employment continues to have traditional labor customs and gender bias is indifferently incorporated in them. Through our observation of the Korean society in 2005, it must be stated that the gender biased labor customs appear robust; however, a sign of change was observed even in such a traditional field.

The purpose of this study is not to explain the M-shaped pattern or anticipate its change in the future. The abovementioned three patterns that were found for Korean women with regard to the employment sequence are, through some means, related with the process of generation of the M-shaped pattern. This relationship could be direct if these patterns are distributed in the same manner in every birth cohort; however, this is not the case. In Korea, in particular, where self-employment still includes a large number of the elderly engaging in agriculture, we must pay attention to the effects of such self-employment as well as the effect of their dropping-out from such employment. This generational change within self-employment should explain the change in gender structure to certain degree; on the contrary, such a generation mixture is partially a reality. In this paper, by examining the branching employment sequence on average, we have attempted to highlight the latter aspect.

On the other hand, our discussion may be rather concentrated on self-employment. In order to capture the overall dynamics between gender and stratification, we must analyze ambitious women-already mentioned in this paper-in greater detail. In addition, we must pay more attention to the problem of non-regular work

among females when they return to the labor market after childcare, which certainly exists even in Korea. Therefore, we must adjust our framework of sequence analysis with comparative viewpoints by considering various characteristics with regard to employment and work, such as occupational prestige, size of firms, industrial category, etc.

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