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## 《論 文》

# Women's Employment and Educational Attainment : A Cross-National Comparison

Junko Nishimura

## Abstract

This study explores the variations in the relationship between women's employment and educational attainment, as well as in women's employment status itself, in 12 industrial societies, referring to welfare regime typology. The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2012 survey on 'Family and Changing Gender Roles IV' is used for cross-national analysis. The results suggest that women's employment rate can be explained by the type of welfare regime to a certain extent. However, once we break down the employment rate into full-time and part-time components, a great variation emerges within welfare regime. With regard to the relationship between women's educational attainment and employment, welfare regime only partly explains the variation among the 12 countries. Furthermore, the relationship between women's full-time and part-time employment and their educational attainment varies within each type of welfare regime.

## Introduction

In recent years, industrial societies have seen an increase in women's participation in

both the labour force and higher education. In most Western countries, there is also a relationship between employment and educational attainment, in that better-educated women are less likely to leave paid work or if they do leave, to return to work more quickly (Brewster & Rindfuss, 2000). However, this relationship seems weaker in East Asian societies such as Japan and South Korea (Brinton & Lee, 2001); most notably, in Japan, women's educational attainment does not enhance their likelihood of employment around the time of their first child's birth or of re-entering the labour force after childbirth (Nishimura, in press).

This study explores the variations in the relationship between women's employment and educational attainment, as well as in women's employment status itself, in 12 industrial societies, taking into account the societal contexts which may affect women's labour market decisions and mediate the effect of educational attainment on their employment. To differentiate societal contexts, this study applies welfare regime typology, which has often been used to study women's employment (Gustafsson, 1994). Since countries within a given welfare regime show considerable variation in political and social

features (Van Dijk, 2001), and since there is also considerable variation in employment-related policies concerning women within each welfare regime (Gornick, Meyers, & Ross, 1997), this study seeks to explain which aspects of women's employment decisions are or are not explained by welfare regime typology.

### Women's Employment and Institutional Contexts

#### Welfare Regime Typology

This study applies a typology of welfare regimes proposed by Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999). 'Regime' refers to 'the ways in which welfare production is allocated between state, market, and households' (Esping-Andersen, 1999, p. 73). Esping-Andersen's typology differentiates between three models of welfare regimes: liberal, social-democratic and conservative.

The liberal welfare regime reflects a political commitment to minimizing the state (rather than protecting broadly against individual risk) and to promoting market solutions. It is residual, in the sense that social guarantees are typically restricted to 'bad risks' (Esping-Andersen, 1999, p. 75), and it adheres to a narrow conception of what risks should be considered society's responsibility. Anglo-Saxon states, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and the UK, fall into this typology.

The social-democratic welfare regime can be found in the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The provision

of social welfare is based on universalism. In addition, rights are attached to individuals and based on citizenship, rather than on demonstrated need or employment status. This regime is oriented towards de-commodifying welfare and minimizing market dependency.

The conservative welfare regime reflects the historical influence of monarchical statism, traditional corporatism, or Catholic social teachings, and its essence is status segmentation and familialism. Corporatist status divisions permeate social security systems. Compulsory social insurance is complemented by more or less ad hoc residual schemes for strata without a 'normal' employment relationship. Most countries of continental Europe, such as Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, as well as Japan are included in this regime. Although Japan is regarded as manifesting a mixture of liberal and conservative traits, its corporatist social insurance system and accentuated familialism cause Japan to be categorized with conservative regimes.

#### De-familialisation

Esping-Andersen (1999) furthermore indicates that welfare states vary with regard to how they absorb the burdens of family care, a factor directly related to the present study's concern for understanding how a welfare regime affects women's employment. Esping-Andersen distinguishes three forms of 'de-familialisation': through the welfare state, within households and through the market.

According to his analysis, countries with a social-democratic welfare regime displayed higher levels of de-familialisation through the welfare state than other countries. As for the extent of de-familialisation within households, countries with a social-democratic welfare regime were located at the higher end, Japan and the southern European countries were located at the opposite end, and countries with liberal welfare regimes and of continental Europe were in between. Although insufficient data are available to directly analyse de-familialisation through the market, an examination of assistance for families with children shows that the cost of childcare can be controlled through direct public provision (in Scandinavia), subsidy and public regulation (in France), or an affordable market (in the United States), but that in all other countries, the cost of child care accounted for a considerable proportion of family income.

As the Scandinavian countries have higher levels of de-familialisation in all three forms, women in these countries are more likely to be free from family care, and hence it can be predicted that more women will participate in the labour force there than in other welfare regimes. Furthermore, Japan and the southern European countries exhibit lower levels of de-familialisation, especially within households, which places greater family care burdens on women; hence, women in these countries are assumed to be less likely to participate in the labour force than those in liberal and social-democratic welfare regimes and of continental Europe. The labour force participation rate of

women in liberal regimes and in conservative regimes of continental Europe is expected to fall somewhere between that in the Scandinavian countries and that in Japan and the southern European countries, since these countries' level of de-familialisation is generally moderate.

This set of assumptions implies that women's employment is explained by the type of welfare regime to some extent. However, it might not be fully explained by the variable of welfare regime, since the levels of de-familialisation do not fully correspond with welfare regime types.

### **Relationship between Women's Employment and Educational Attainment**

According to human capital theory, human capital refers to all knowledge and skills that increase an individual's productivity in the labour market (Becker, 1975), and it is accumulated through investments such as schooling, training and health-enhancing activities. Education is a leading form of human capital investment. Women's higher educational attainment should enhance their utility in the labour market and increase their opportunity cost of non-participation in the labour force; therefore, higher educational attainment is expected to facilitate women's employment. However, the effect of women's educational attainment on their employment may be mediated by the institutional context, i.e. the welfare regime.

In countries with a conservative welfare regime, including the continental and southern European countries as well as Japan, strong

familialism would inhibit women's employment. Women in these nations are expected to engage in family care, regardless of their educational attainment; therefore, the effect of educational attainment on employment is somewhat obscured. In countries with a social-democratic welfare regime, the relationship between women's educational attainment and employment is also expected to be unclear, because the high level of de-familialisation enables women to participate in the labour market regardless of their extent of education. On the other hand, in countries with a liberal welfare regime, the effect of women's educational attainment on employment is assumed to be clear and women with higher education are more likely to hold jobs than those with less education. This is because in countries where social welfare is highly dependent on market mechanisms, highly educated women can earn higher wages in the market, giving them greater ability to purchase child care services which would permit them to stay in the labour force.

In sum, the effect of women's educational attainment on their employment is hypothesized to be more salient under liberal welfare regimes; the relationship between women's educational attainment and employment is expected to be unclear under the other two welfare regimes, but for different reasons.

### Women's Part-time Employment

Part-time employment may serve as a way to ease work-family conflicts for women. For

example, in Sweden the availability of part-time work and reduced hours has increased since the 1970s, contributing to a dramatic reduction in the number of mothers without employment. In Sweden, part-time work is not treated as marginal in character; specifically, it is not restricted to low-level, low-paid jobs, and part-time workers are entitled to full social benefits (Sundström, 1997). However, in some countries, being a part-time worker has considerable disadvantageous consequences. In Japan and the United States, non-standard workers, including part-time workers, are less likely than full-time workers to qualify for benefits such as enrolment in health insurance or a pension plan; they also receive lower wages and enjoy less job security (Houseman & Osawa, 2003). How these variations in characteristics of part-time work affect women's employment and its relationship with educational attainment is another concern of this study.

## Method

### Data and Samples

The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2012 survey on 'Family and Changing Gender Roles IV' (ISSP Research Group, 2014) is used here for cross-national analysis of women's employment and its relationship with educational attainment. The ISSP is a cross-national collaborative programme which has been continuously conducting annual surveys on diverse social science topics since 1985. Thirty-seven countries participated in the 2012 'gender-role' module. In each country,

a nationally representative sample of the adult population was selected, and all respondents were asked to answer identical questionnaires. The British English Basic Questionnaire was translated into each country's local language as equivalently as possible. The sampling procedures and mode of data collection also differed between countries.

Of the 37 countries surveyed, 12 were selected for analysis in this study. Canada, the UK and the United States were chosen as examples of liberal welfare regimes; Finland, Norway and Sweden as social-democratic welfare regimes; and Austria, France and Germany as conservative regimes. In addition, although Esping-Andersen's welfare regime typology included East Asian and southern European countries in the conservative regime, here they are treated as a fourth separate category, because they exhibit lower levels of de-familialisation in such a way as to impose family care burdens directly on women. From this group, Japan, South Korea and Spain were selected for analysis. The analysis was restricted to women with children.

### Variables and Procedure

This study uses two questions to measure women's employment. Respondents were asked if they worked full-time, worked part-time, stayed at home or worked at home when a child was under school age and after the youngest child started school.

Women's level of educational attainment was assessed using country-specific answer categories; however, for all 12 countries

included in the present analysis, educational attainment was categorized as either 'higher education' (university or college level) and 'secondary education or less' (for details, see Appendix Table 1).

To examine the relationship between women's employment and welfare regime, the distribution of women's employment status at two life stages (when they have a child under school age and when their youngest child starts school) is presented for each country. Then, the relationship between educational attainment and employment is examined by showing each country's distribution of women's employment status by educational level at these two time points.

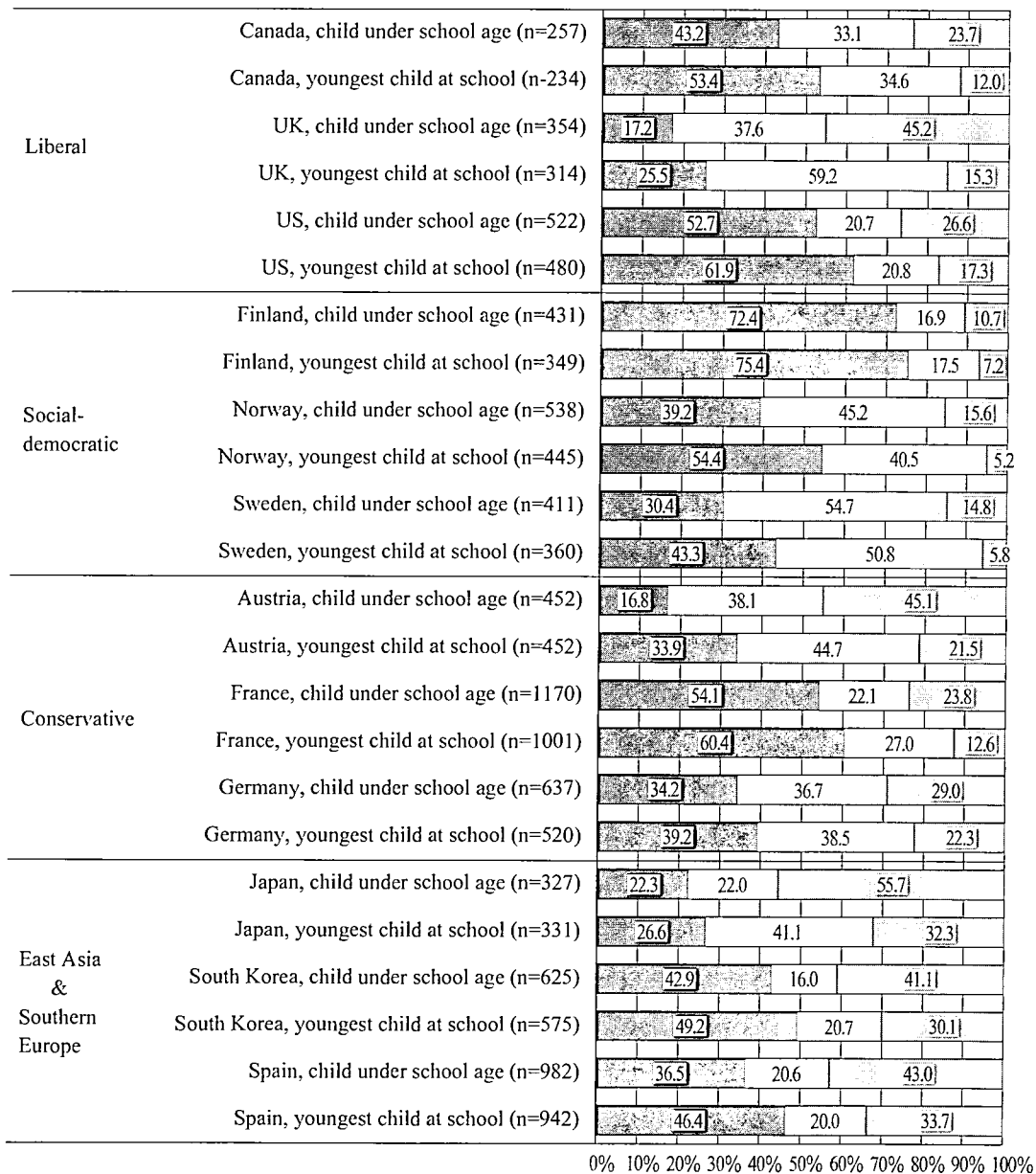
## Results

### Women's Employment Status by Life Stage

Figure 1 shows the distribution of women's employment status by life stage for the 12 countries. With regard to similarities among all countries, we find that the percentage of women who worked as full-time employees was higher when their youngest child was at school than when they had a child under school age, whereas the percentage of women who stayed at home was lower.

Women's employment behaviour shows some differences in terms of welfare regime. In the social-democratic countries—Finland, Norway and Sweden—the percentage of women who stayed at home when their youngest child was in school was considerably lower than in countries with other welfare

Figure 1. Women's employment status by life stage



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Full-time    ■ Part-time    □ Stayed at home

SOURCE: ISSP, 2012

regimes, at only 7.2%, 5.2% and 5.8% in the three nations, respectively. In addition, in these three social-democratic countries, the percentage of women who stayed at home when their child was under school age was

lower than that in other countries.

In contrast, in East Asian countries and southern European countries where familialism is dominant—specifically, Japan, South Korea and Spain—the percentage of

women who stayed at home was higher at both life stages than among women under other welfare regimes. The percentages of women who stayed at home when they had children under school age and when their youngest child was in school, respectively, were 55.7% and 32.3% in Japan, 41.1% and 30.1% in South Korea, and 43.0% and 33.7% in Spain.

However, some aspects of women's employment behaviour showed considerable variations *within* each welfare regime. In Finland, a social-democratic country, 72.5% of women worked as full-time employees while they had children under school age, as opposed to only 30.4% of women in Sweden. Conversely, 54.7% of Swedish women reported having worked part-time before their youngest child started school, compared to just 16.9% in Finland. Similar variations were found among the countries with a liberal welfare regime. Only 25.5% of UK women reported having worked full-time while they had children under school age, compared to 52.7% in the United States.

It seems that the proportion of full-time and part-time employment differs considerably by country, regardless of welfare regime. The proportion of women maintaining full-time employment when their youngest child was in school was highest in the United States, Finland and France, with percentages of 61.9%, 75.4% and 60.4%, respectively. In these countries, the percentage of part-time employment was rather low at around 15% to 25%. Full-time employment was less common in the UK, Austria and Japan; the proportion

of women in these three countries who held full-time jobs while they had children under school age was 17.2%, 16.8% and 22.3%, respectively. Some countries, meanwhile, exhibited comparatively higher percentages of part-time employment; in the UK, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Germany and (only when the women's youngest child was in school) Japan, 40% to 60% of women worked part-time.

### Women's Employment Status and Educational Attainment: When Women Have Pre-school Children

Figure 2 shows the distribution of women's employment status by educational attainment when they had children under school age for all 12 countries. The percentage of women who stayed at home was higher among women who had completed no more than secondary education than for those with higher education in countries with liberal, social-democratic, and conservative welfare regimes. In the countries with a liberal regime (Canada, the UK and the United States), 25% to 50% of women without higher education stayed home with their child; among women with higher education, this percentage was 20% to 30%. The social-democratic countries had lower stay-at-home rates overall, but again, women with higher education were less likely to stay at home with their child (with percentages less than 10%) than those without higher education (10% to 25%). A similar tendency can be observed under conservative welfare regimes. In Austria, France and Germany, the percentage of

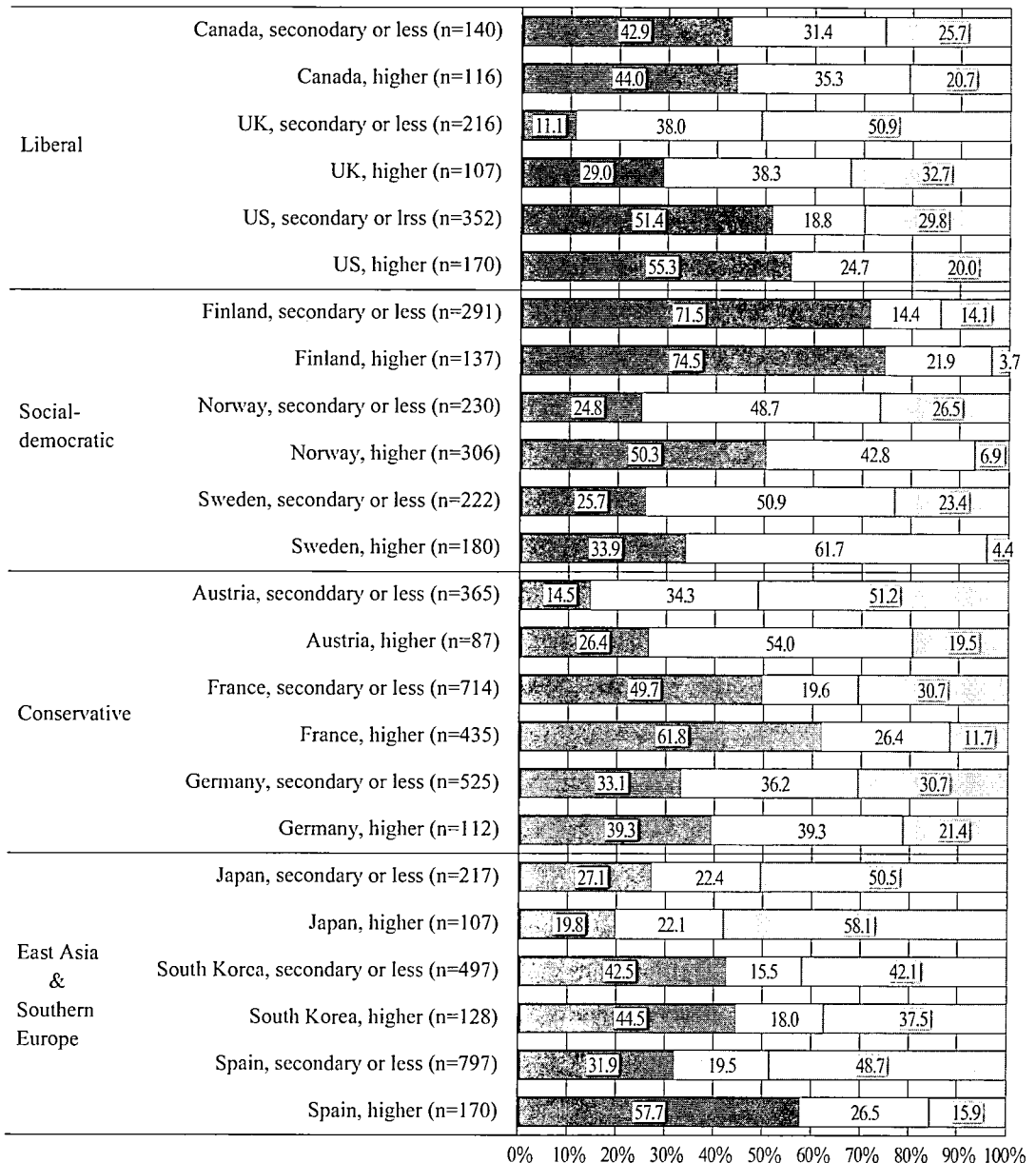


women without higher education who stayed home with their pre-school child ranged from 30% to 50%; among women with higher education, it was around 10% to 20%.

However, in East Asian countries, the

percentage of women who stayed at home did not differ much based on women's educational attainment. In Japan, the percentage of women who stayed at home was 50% to 60% for women of both educational levels; in South

Figure 2. Women's employment status by educational attainment, when a child was under school age



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Full-time    ▨ Part-time    □ Stayed at home

SOURCE: ISSP, 2012

Korea, around 40% of women of both educational levels stayed home. In these countries, the stay-at-home rate itself was higher than in other countries. For example, in Japan, 58.1% of women stayed at home even if they had attained higher education.

In some countries, it appears that women who have received higher education are more likely to be full-time employees than those who have not. These disparities in full-time employment rate by educational level were seen in several countries, regardless of the type of welfare regime, and they were widest in the UK, Norway, Austria, France and Spain. On the other hand, there was not much difference in full-time employment rate by educational levels in the United States, Finland, Germany and South Korea.

As we have already noted, the percentages of part-time as well as full-time employment vary widely across countries. In addition, part-time employment is not necessarily associated with lower educational attainment. Rather, in 10 of 12 countries, the part-time employment rate was higher among women with higher education than among those without it.

### **Women's Employment Status and Educational Attainment: When Women's Youngest Child Was at School**

We will now examine the relationship between women's employment and educational attainment as their children grow older. Figure 3 shows the distribution of women's employment status by educational attainment for all 12 countries during the time when their youngest child was in school.

The percentage of women who stayed home declined in all 12 countries, compared with their previous life stage. In addition, in the liberal and the social-democratic countries, there was no longer much difference in the stay-at-home rate by educational level. However, under conservative welfare regimes (Austria, France and Germany) and in South Korea and Spain, this difference based on educational level persisted, with women who had attained higher education being less inclined to stay at home.

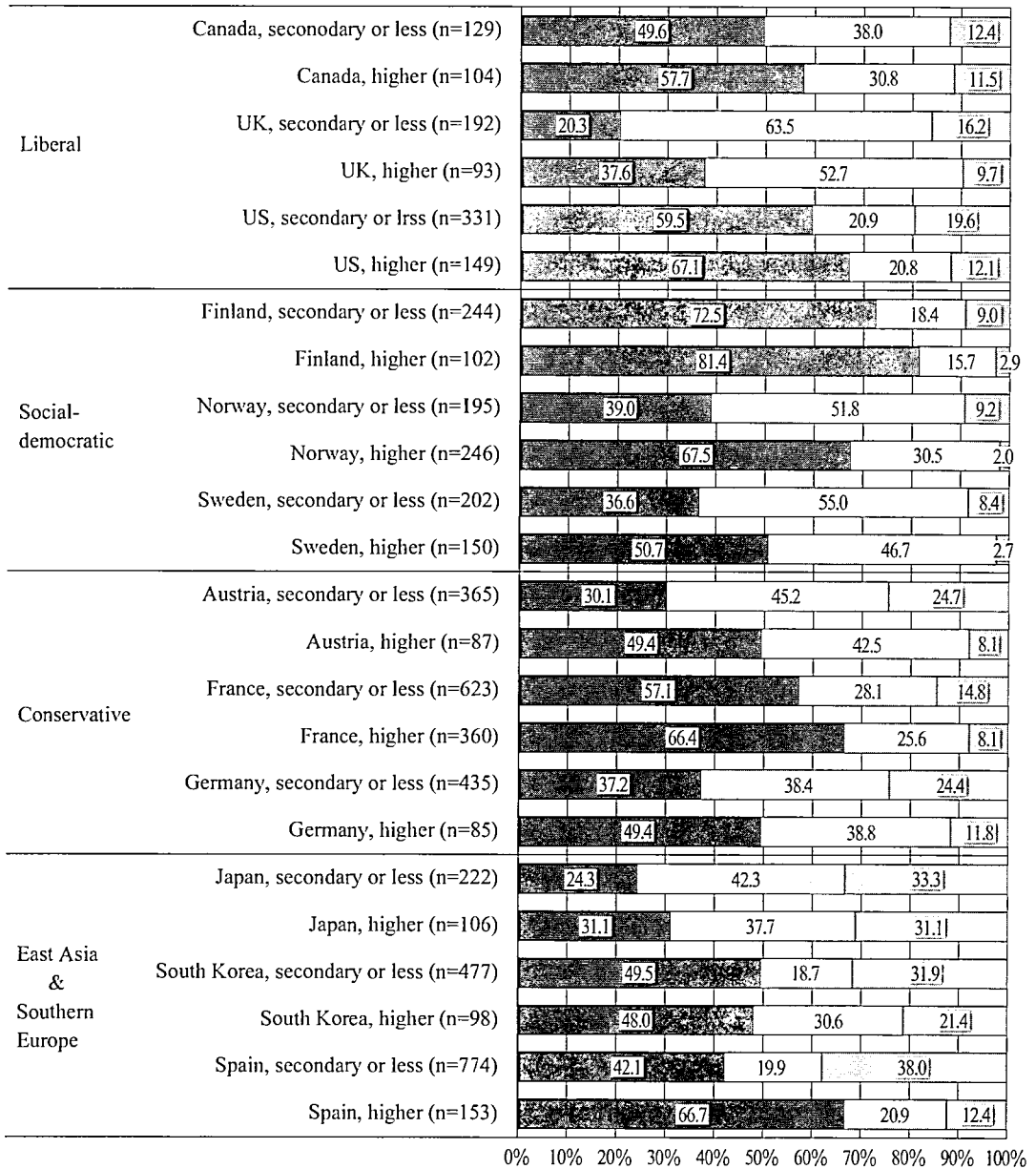
In most of the 12 countries, the full-time employment rate was higher among women with higher education than among those without it. Here South Korea was an exceptional case, showing virtually no difference between the two educational levels, with a full-time employment rate of 49.5% among women with no more than secondary education and 48.0% for more highly educated women.

The part-time employment rate was higher in some countries (including the UK, Norway and Sweden) among women without higher education, whereas in other countries, there was little difference between the two groups. The evidence suggests that the relationship between part-time employment and women's educational attainment is not consistent within each type of welfare regime.

### **Discussion**

This study has examined how the distribution of women's employment status as well as the relationship between women's educational attainment and employment

Figure 3. Women's employment and educational attainment, after the youngest child started school



SOURCE: ISSP, 2012

■ Full-time    □ Part-time    □ Stayed at home

differs based on the type of welfare regime.

First, we examined the distribution of women's employment status in each country by life stage. We found some differences between welfare regimes, as well as within

each type of welfare regime. On one hand, the percentage of women staying at home was lower in the social-democratic countries of Finland, Norway and Sweden at both life stages. On the other hand, East Asian and

southern European countries, such as Japan, South Korea and Spain, had higher percentages of women who stayed at home both when they had children under school age and when their children were in school.

However, full-time and part-time employment rates showed a considerable difference within each welfare regime, and no consistent tendency was observed with respect to each type of welfare regime. Higher full-time employment rates were seen in the United States, Finland and France; the full-time employment rate was low in the UK, Austria and Japan. As for part-time employment, higher rates were found in the UK, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Germany and Japan, a set of countries that spanned all four welfare regime groups.

Next, this paper examined differences in the distribution of women's employment status at the two life stages by educational attainment for the 12 countries. When women had children under school age, the percentage of women who stayed at home was higher among women with no more than secondary education than among those with higher education in countries with a liberal, social-democratic or conservative regime. However, in East Asian countries, the percentage of women who stayed at home was high regardless of women's educational attainment. Furthermore, disparities in the full-time employment rate by educational level were seen in several countries, again seemingly unrelated to the type of welfare regime. Higher-educated women were more likely to be employed full-time than those with less education in the UK,

Norway, Austria, France and Spain. On the other hand, there was not much difference in the full-time employment rate between educational levels in the United States, Finland, Germany and South Korea. In addition, in 10 of the 12 countries, the part-time employment rate was higher for better-educated than for less-educated women.

Once women's youngest child has entered school, in liberal and social-democratic countries, there was no longer much difference in the stay-at-home rate by educational level. However, under conservative welfare regimes and in South Korea and Spain, the stay-at-home rate continued to vary depending on women's extent of education. The full-time employment rate was higher for better-educated women than for those with less education in most of the 12 countries studied. The part-time employment rate was higher for less educated women than for those with higher education in the UK, Norway and Sweden. However, in other countries, there was not much difference in the part-time employment rate by educational level.

The evidence suggests that women's employment rate can be explained by the type of welfare regime to a certain extent. It is high under social-democratic regimes where all aspects of de-familialisation are high. In contrast, women's employment rate is rather low in East Asian and southern European countries where the level of de-familialisation, especially within households, is low. Women's employment rates in countries with liberal and conservative welfare regimes exhibit trends somewhere between these two

extremes.

However, once we break down the employment rate into full-time and part-time components, a great variation emerges within welfare regimes. For example, among the social-democratic countries, the full-time employment rate was much higher in Finland than in Norway or Sweden; similarly, among the three countries with conservative regimes, it was higher in France than in Austria or Germany. This might be because the proportion of full-time and part-time work differs by country, reflecting country-specific labour market structure.

When we focus on the relationship between women's educational attainment and employment, we see that the type of welfare regime only partly explains the variation among the 12 countries. The comparatively smaller differences in women's employment rate by educational level in East Asian countries can be explained by their strong familialism, according to which women are expected to engage in family care regardless of their extent of educational attainment. However, in continental and southern European countries, highly educated women are more likely to be in the labour force than those with less education, suggesting that the explanation of familialism is not applicable there. In the countries with a social-democratic welfare regime, most women are employed regardless of their educational attainment, in line with the explanation of high levels of defamilialisation in these countries; however, countries with a liberal welfare regime exhibit a similar tendency of minimal difference in

women's employment rate based on educational attainment, especially at the life stage when their children have begun school. This finding is contrary to the hypothesis that highly educated women have greater ability to participate in the labour market (due to their greater resources to afford child care) in countries with a liberal welfare regime.

Furthermore, the relationship between women's full-time or part-time employment and their educational attainment varies within each type of welfare regime, as well as by life stage. The finding that part-time employment rate is higher among better-educated women than those with less education, and stay-at-home rate is lower among better-educated than those with less education suggests that in many countries, part-time employment is offered as a way to keep well-educated mothers in the labour force; but again, this phenomenon does not appear to be strongly associated with the type of welfare regime.

Further analysis is needed to explain the variations in the distribution of women's employment status as well as the relationship between women's employment and their educational attainment between and within welfare regimes. In particular, analyses focusing on the rates of full-time and part-time employment and how they differ based on educational attainment—factors that do not seem to be determined by the type of welfare regime—would be helpful. It may be necessary to take into account the nature of each country's labour market structure—for example, to what extent it is male-dominated. It may also be important to consider the

arrangements available to support women's employment in each nation. Investigating the context of women's employment from a framework that considers the interaction

between the type of welfare regime and other social factors will produce a clearer understanding of the primary determinants of women's employment decisions.

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Appendix Table 1. Categorisations of respondent's educational attainment.

	Secondary education or less	Higher education
Canada	No formal education Primary school Some high school Finished high school College/ CEGEP/ Technical	Some university Completed university Graduate studies
UK	No secondary qualifications CSE, GCSE or equivalent, certificate of secondary qualification A-level or equivalent	Higher below degree level Degree, university of CNAA or diploma
US	Less than high school High school	Junior college Bachelor degree Graduate school
Finland	Primary education Comprehensive, primary and lower secondary Post-comprehensive, vocational school or course General upper secondary education or certificate Vocational post-secondary non-tertiary education	Polytechnics University, lower academic degree, BA University, higher academic degree, MA
Norway	Primary completed Secondary, vocational incomplete Secondary, academic incomplete Secondary, vocational completed Secondary, academic completed	University, college, less than 1 year University, college, 1-2 years University, college, 3-4 years University, college, 5 years or more
Sweden	Incomplete primary/ comprehensive school Primary/ comprehensive school pre 1962 (6-8 years) Primary/ comprehensive school post 1962 (9 years) Lower secondary school Vocational school (1963-70) Vocational school (2 years) 3 or 4 years gymnasium, academic track Vocational school post 1992 Gymnasium, academic track post 1992	University studies without degree University degree, less than 3 years University degree, 3 years or more Doctors degree
Austria	Primary completed, Hauptschule Apprenticeship completed Middle school, vocational Secondary completed, Matura	Higher professional school, BHS University completed
France	Primary incomplete Primary completed General secondary level 1 Vocational secondary level 1 Vocational secondary level 2 Incomplete general secondary level 2 General secondary level 2	College University
Germany	Still at school; 7 years of schooling and more School left without certificate Lower secondary (Hauptschule) Middle school (Mittlere Reife) Secondary, technical (Fachhochschulreife) Higher secondary (Abitur) Vocational training, degree from German dual system Vocational training, master craftsmen (Meister)	University of applied sciences (Fachhochschule): bachelor University: bachelor University of applied sciences (Fachhochschule): master or other degree University: master or other degree University: doctorate

Japan	Junior high school completed Still at high school High school completed	Still at junior college or university Junior college completed Still at graduate school Finished university or graduate
South Korea	Elementary incomplete Elementary completed Middle school incomplete Middle school completed High school incomplete High school completed	Junior college incomplete Junior college completed University incomplete University completed Master degree incomplete Master degree completed Doctoral degree incomplete Doctoral degree completed
Spain	No formal schooling, did not go to school Less than 5 years of formal schooling Primary school completed Low secondary school, junior high Vocational training, medium level professional training High secondary school completed Vocational training, high level professional training Technical architecture, technical engineering, 3 years technical school	3 years completed non-technical university Architecture and engineering, technical schools College degree, 4 years Official graduate school, PhD, master

SOURCE: ISSP, 2012

(にしむら じゅんこ、本学科准教授)