

Refereed article

## **Women's Careers and Cities: A Comparison of Employment Patterns in South Korea and Japan**

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### **Summary**

This study first tests whether the national and East Asian regional-based particularity of employment patterns in South Korea and Japan — the M-shaped labor force participation rate of women by age and the low labor market participation rate of educated women — is diminished in globalized cities that are closely entangled with diverse nations and cultural regions (Welsch 1999). Using the 2008 data from the Korean Labor and Income Panel Study (KLIPS) and the Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS), the estimation of weighted proportion found that the specific employment patterns in Japan remain stronger in the country's cities. The dynamics in labor force participation of educated women partially conform to the hypothesis, but do not follow the Western style in either country. Findings reveal the diversity of work–life styles in the hybridization of culture within globalization, which would be important in policymaking in the labor market for women.

**Keywords:** Global city, women's employment, transculturality, Japan, South Korea

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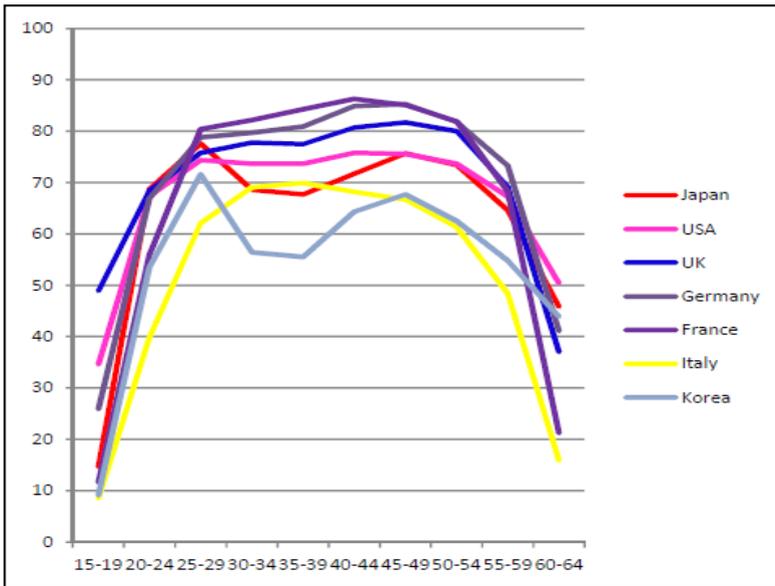
## Introduction

This study empirically tests whether the national and East Asian regional-based particularity of employment patterns in South Korea and Japan decrease in their (globalized) large cities, where cultures are closely entangled with various diverse nations and cultural regions (Welsch 1999).

To what extent can modern cities lift the workforce restraints faced by child-rearing women? Having children and nurturing them generally creates a burden in relation to a woman's employment (Mincer and Polachek 1974). Over time, women's employment differs from that of men in that there is greater career discontinuity and more part-time employment for the former. In spatial terms, women prefer shorter commutes than men do, and their job mobility is often dependent on their husband's. These factors lead to female segregation in the workplace, and create stereotypical "female jobs." However, the features of women's traditional work-life styles differ across regions, as do modern patterns of female employment.

South Korea and Japan both have low fertility rates (1.2 children per woman in South Korea and 1.5 in Japan as of 2015 [OECD 2017b]); despite this, women are particularly passive in the two countries' labor markets during both childbirth and childcare (Lee 2010; Shirakawa 2011). The M-shaped labor force participation rate of women according to age is often contrasted with the inverse U-shaped curve in Western countries (see Figure 1 below). The low participation rate of women during childbirth and childcare was also a common phenomenon in the United States and many other industrialized countries before the end of the 1970s, when the shape of women's labor force participation rate by age began shifting to the inverse U-shaped curve, similar to that of the male workforce. However women in South Korea and Japan have remained passive in labor markets during childbirth and childcare, and the M-shaped work force participation rate by age has continued. The M-shape has become a particular style of women's employment in South Korea and Japan then (Macnaughtan 2006).

**Figure 1: Female Labor Force Participation Rate by Age, Selected Countries, 2013**

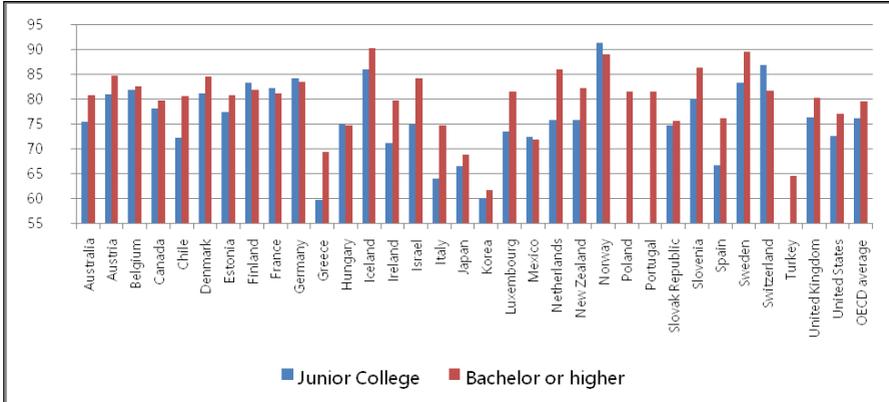


Source: Macnaughtan (2015): 5.

Furthermore the low impact that higher education has on employment for women reflects a particular trend in South Korea and Japan, one in which highly qualified women are allocated to the home rather than to paid work (Brinton and Lee 2001; Lee 2002; Raymo and Iwasawa 2005; see also, Figure 2 below). This is the opposite of Gary Becker's theory that "unemployment rates tend to be inversely related to the level of skill" (1975: 16). In developed countries, the negative correlation of educational level and employment rate could be found up until 1960. George Borjas (2007) called this the "marriage bar"; married women with higher education were excluded from several white-collar jobs in the US and Great Britain before World War II (Goldin 1990; Goldthorpe 1987; Mincer 1962; Oppenheimer 1970; Pyle 1990; Smith and Ward 1984). In case of a low demand for labor, educated women in industrialized countries, who have higher reservation wages, might ignore the less prestigious, low-paying jobs (Smock 1981; Standing 1981). The marriage bar is also regarded as a fair policy in favor of households where the majority of families suffer from hardship, and job redistribution among families was an important measure to promote social justice (Moxon 2008). Such a marriage bar was abolished in other OECD countries when such hardships were eventually overcome. In South Korea and Japan, women's educational level — meaning the percentage of women who have attained tertiary education — is

higher than the average for OECD countries; however, higher proportions of educated wives in South Korea and Japan still stay at home instead of taking a paid job. This is due either to a strong marriage bar or to having a high reservation wage (OECD 2017a).

**Figure 2: Employment Rate of Female 25-64 Year Olds with Tertiary Education, 2012**



Data: OECD (2014).

Has globalization weakened these particularities, and do the similarities between South Korea and Japan also apply to (globalized) large cities? Wolfgang Welsch (1999) noted that nations and regions have become increasingly entangled in migratory movement, the development of communication systems, and economic (inter)dependencies in the globalized world. Modern cultures are characterized by “transculturality”: “Cultures today are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other. Lifestyles no longer end at the borders of national cultures, but go beyond these, are found in the same way in other cultures” (Welsch 1999:197).

Concerning the city and globalization, the concept of the “global city” developed by Christof Pannreiter (2013), reflects the new organizational structure of the world economy that has emerged with globalization processes. In the 1970s and 1980s, Stephen Hymer (1972) and Robert B. Cohen (1981) had already taken interest in the strategic role of specific cities in the cross-border activities of multinational corporations. From that, the global city paradigm in the current understanding was formulated in studies by John Friedmann and Goetz Wolff (1982), Friedmann (1986), and Saskia Sassen (1988, 1991). In this paradigm, the between-city networks generate global interconnectivities, rather than the between-nation relations doing so (Abrahamson 2004:1–2). The typical role allocation of city–region–nation has changed with globalization; a city’s reproduction mechanism is now more dependent on between-city networks at a global level. At the national

level, cities were/are known as the motor of national dynamics and the center of national networks, delivering technology, humans, and culture, as well as economic opportunities and risks from other cities of various nations and continents. In the 21st century, half of the world's population lives in cities; those who live in a "world-city" often have more in common with each other than they do with their own countrymen (Acuto and Khanna 2013). The city network between and within nation forms conditions of cultural interconnection and entanglement, as argued by Welsch (1999).

The present study focuses on the variation of women's working life in (globalized) large cities. The same style is found across cultural borders due to closer entanglement between cities. The hypothesis of this study is that the national and East Asian regional-based particularity of employment patterns in South Korea and Japan — the M-shaped labor force participation rate of women and the low labor market participation rate of educated women — is diminished in globalized large cities that are closely entangled with diverse nations and cultural regions. The sub-hypotheses are as follows:

- 1) The M-shaped labor force participation rate of women becomes less severe in global/large cities in South Korea and Japan compared to national levels. The M-shaped curve converges to an inverse U-shaped one in such cities.
- 2) Educated women in global/large South Korean and Japanese cities are more active in the labor market than their counterparts at the national level. While the marriage bar strongly suppresses participation of educated women in the labor market at the national level, educated women enjoy an enhanced labor force participation rate in the two countries' cities.

The object of the study is women's data from the Korean Labor and Income Panel Study (KLIPS) and the Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS), both of which took place in 2008. In that year, I obtained comparable data and entanglement levels for the study of (globalized) cities. This study aims to demonstrate the effects of globalization on women's lifestyles regarding work — having a job or not. This is the first study to compare the dynamics of particular employment patterns in South Korea and Japan in respect to transculturality. By selecting two East Asian countries, the focus is on differences in cultural transformation between cities and nations in this key world region.

This study finds that the M-shaped labor force participation rate of women is more apparent in globalized large cities than the M-shape national one in South Korea and Japan, contrary to the original hypothesis. Among educated women, the labor force participation rate increases for those with a bachelor's degree in the cities.

However, a positive correlation of employment with education could not be found for women in either country.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: The next section introduces entanglement and its heterogeneity in globalized large cities in relation to Welsch's theory of transculturality. The following section then describes the data, variables, and methodology employed in this study. Thereafter, the empirical findings of the study are presented. Then I discuss the results of the study, while the final section concludes the paper.

## **Global cities and Welsch's theory —Entanglement and its heterogeneity**

In the globalized world, nations and regions have become increasingly entangled in migratory movement, the development of communication systems, and economic (inter)dependencies — with modern cultures being described by “transculturality,” according to Welsch (1999). How, then, is this entanglement developed in globalized cities?

Although a city's reproduction mechanisms are now closely entangled with between-city networks, the composition of each's size, location, demography, wealth, and volume of interaction between human, social, cultural, and organizational capitals differ from one to the other. The way to generate styles of life in globalized cities could differ from one another too. Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) was the first body to study the entanglement and heterogeneity of globalized cities. GaWC analyzed advanced service firms in order to categorize the world city network, computing a city's network connectivity. To provide an advanced service to clients worldwide, firms with global brands need multiple office policies across cities (Sassen 1991). The financial, professional, and creative services settled in the global cities utilize electronic communications in the management of intercity branches. For people who work for these firms, this allows for important information to flow and constructs a “world city network” (Taylor 2001, 2004).

GaWC assessed cities in terms of their advanced producer services, using the interlocking network mode. Assuming that the more important an office is the more workflows it generates, offices were scored from 0 to 5 per a given city. If a selected firm in the city had no offices, then it scored 0. If the firm was headquartered in the city, then it scored 5. The sum of all potential workflows for selected firms in a city results in the overall level of network connectivity (Taylor 2001). Since 1998, GaWC has classified world cities every two or four years. This study here accepts the aforementioned assumption of GaWC that the more important an office is the more workflows it generates, and assumes that such kinds of interconnectivity entangle lifestyle and working culture.

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Cities categorized as alpha++ stand out as clearly more integrated than all other ones, and constitute their own high level of integration. Cities categorized as alpha+ are other highly integrated ones that complement alpha++ cities, largely filling in advanced service needs for Asia-Pacific. Cities classified as alpha and alpha- are very important world ones that link major economic regions and states into the global economy. All beta-level cities are important world ones that are instrumental in linking their region or state into the global economy. All gamma-level cities can be either world ones linking smaller regions or states into the global economy, or important world cities whose major global capacity is not in advanced producer services. Cities with a sufficiency of services are not world ones as defined herein, but they still do have enough services of their own as to not be overly dependent on world cities (GaWC 2017).

Global Cities Index, another global city classification tool, was developed in 2008 by the American journal *Foreign Policy*. This index has been computed using the following five dimensions, which rank the metro areas of selected cities accordingly:

1. Business activity, which takes into consideration the value of city's capital markets, number of headquarters of Fortune Global 500 firms/major global corporations, the flow of goods through ports and airports, locations of top business service firms, and the number of international conferences held. The computed values of business activity are weighted at 30 percent to rank selected cities.
2. Human capital, evaluated by how well the city acts as a magnet for diverse groups of people and talent. References are the size of a city's immigrant population/foreign-born population, quality of universities, the number of international schools, international student population size, and the percentage/number of residents with university degrees. It also has a weight of 30 percent.
3. Information exchange, which measures how well news and information are dispersed to the rest of the world and circulated within and outside the city. It is based on accessibility to major television news channels, and internet presence capturing the robustness of results when searching for the city name in major languages. It further considers the number of international news bureaus, freedom of expression, amount of international news in the leading local papers, and number/rate of broadband subscribers. This particular dimension has a weight of 15 percent when ranking cities.
4. Cultural experience or the level of attractions available for international residents and travelers, which measures diverse types thereof. These include the number of major sporting events that a city hosts, of museums, of performing arts venues and diverse culinary establishments, of

international travelers, as well as the number of sister-city relationships. It has a weight of 15 percent.

5. Political engagement, which assesses how a city influences global policymaking and dialogue as measured by the number of embassies and consulates, major think tanks, international organizations, sister-city relationships, local institutions with an international reach that reside in the city, as well as the number of political conferences that a city hosts. It has a weight of 10 percent.

GaWC and Global City Index consider entanglements of business areas. Moreover, Global City Index utilizes human capital to measure interconnectivities of cities. Human capital investment is known to enhance participation in economic activities. Inflow of human capital and the induced social contacts therefrom entangle the styles of work life. Other factors considered by Global City Index are media and internet, cultural experiences, and political issues regarding women's rights — which drive female economic activities.

With regard to measuring the economic power of global cities, several indexes have been published to date: Global Economic Power Index, Global Power City Index, Wealth Report, and Global City Competitiveness Index. Rather than being interested in the economic power of world cities in South Korea and Japan, this study concerns itself with the global connectivity of cities and their influence on women's career styles. I employ the ranking of the GaWC's study and the Global Cities Index to classify and characterize the relevant cities of this particular study.

In 2008 GaWC Index recorded Tokyo in fourth place in the alpha+ group, ranking sixth overall. Seoul was ranked third in the alpha city group, and 13th overall. No other Japanese or Korean cities emerged in the alpha, beta, or gamma groups in the GaWC's categorization. Osaka was classified into the highly sufficient group, and Nagoya into the sufficient one — these two metropolises are not part of the world cities classified into alpha, beta, and gamma groups (GaWC 2017). The Global City Index shows us that Tokyo (ranked fourth) and Seoul (ranked ninth) were in 2008 the most closely globalized cities in Japan and Korea respectively (Sibo, 2008). Concerning heterogeneity, Tokyo was ranked second in business activity, while Seoul was ranked seventh. In information exchange, Seoul was ranked higher (fifth) than Tokyo (seventh). In cultural experience, Tokyo was seventh and Seoul tenth. The rankings reveal relative smaller disparities; however, gaps are considerably greater in the political engagement and human capital categories. In the former, Seoul was ranked 19th while Tokyo was ranked sixth. In the latter, Seoul was ranked 35th while Tokyo was ranked sixth. Seoul has a noticeably lower entanglement level regarding personal exchange when compared to Tokyo meanwhile (A.T. Kearney 2016).

**Table 1: City Rankings of Globalization according to the GaWC and the Global city Index**

GaWC	Tokyo (total ranking)	Seoul (total ranking)	Global City Index	Tokyo	Seoul
2000	Alph+ (5 <sup>th</sup> )	Beta(41 <sup>st</sup> )	2008	4 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
2004	Alph+ (5 <sup>th</sup> )	Alph- (24 <sup>th</sup> )	2010	3 <sup>rd</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
2008	Alph+ (6 <sup>th</sup> )	Alph (13 <sup>th</sup> )	2012	4 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
2010	Alph+ (6 <sup>th</sup> )	Alph (24 <sup>th</sup> )	2014	4 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
2012	Alph+ (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Alph- (24 <sup>th</sup> )	2015	4 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
2016	Alph+ (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Alph+ (22 <sup>nd</sup> )	2016	4 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) (2017); A.T. Kearney (2016).

Table 1 shows the levels of entanglement of Seoul and Tokyo by using GaWC and Global City Index classifications, from 2000 to 2016. This study identifies the closest level of global entanglement between Seoul and Tokyo in 2008. The aim here is to discover how this entanglement underpins the changes witnessed in women's work–life style in the two countries' cities. In 2008, Seoul and Tokyo had the most comparable entanglements according to the two indexes. Consequently Seoul, Tokyo, and large cities in both countries are analyzed specifically in 2008.

## Data, methodology, and variables

The empirical analysis takes the data from 2008 concerning female populations from the KLIPS and the JGSS. The KLIPS, published by the Korea Labor Institute (KLI), is the first longitudinal survey of the labor market and income activities of households and individuals in South Korea. In terms of design and management, the data can be compared to a set of successful longitudinal surveys conducted in industrialized countries, such as the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) in the US (KLI 2014). The JGSS is designed and carried out each time by the Research Center at Osaka University of Commerce, in collaboration with the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo. Nationwide, the JGSS collects data for 8,000 male and female individuals between the ages of 20 and 89 (Tanioka et al. 2012). This data is produced every two years. I use the data specifically for women aged between 20 and 65, as the JGSS does not survey individuals younger than 20. This study has another reason to utilize the 2008 data; the JGSS from that year reports detailed information concerning regional categories, enabling the identification of cities observed in this study by providing information such as the prefecture name and size of municipality where respondents live. The information is not investigated every two years in the JGSS.

To test the hypotheses, this study estimates the weighted proportion of labor force participation of women in various age groups and by educational levels. The proportions are differentiated between those in global cities, in large cities, and between national averages. Using figures of labor force participation by these sociodemographic and regional factors, this study analyzes the differences between South Korea and Japan. To do this, gender, regional variables (residence, prefecture, and city category), age, educational level, and variables concerning employment status (working in the previous week and looking for a job) are utilized.

The variable of “labor force participation rate,” which is the percentage of working-age persons in an economy who are employed or who are unemployed but looking for a job, is created using a dummy variable of “working at the moment of survey” —as well as one of “looking for a job” if they are unemployed at the moment of being surveyed.

Classification is of “age” and “education” — in demonstrating the M-shaped labor force participation rate by age, this study classifies it into nine groups: 20–24, 25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–44, 45–49, 50–54, 55–59, and 60–64. In estimating labor force participation rate in a global city, this study achieved only 66 observations in Tokyo. I classify these 66 observations into three age groups of 20–34, 35–44, and 45–65. This classification enables women’s employment hiatus during ages of childcare to be provided. To estimate labor force participation rate by educational level, this study primarily divides it into eight levels: no schooling; graduates from elementary school, middle school, high school, and junior college; a bachelor’s degree; a master’s degree; and, doctorates. Some differences between the KLIPS and the JGSS would be that the latter does not report doctorates separately, giving master’s degree and higher levels of education instead. In other words, the estimated results of master’s degrees in Japan include educational levels of both master’s degree and higher without specifying the latter.

Generation of “cities” and “nations”:based on the 2008 GaWC and Global City Index, this study classifies Seoul and Tokyo as global cities that are of a comparable nature. The next regional category is the two countries’ seven (metropolitan/large) cities: Tokyo, Nagoya, Sapporo, Kobe, Kyoto, Saitama, and Hiroshima in Japan; Seoul, Busan, Daegu, Daejeon, Gwangju, Incheon, and Ulsan in South Korea. The KLIPS includes regional variables of the seven cities, which are officially recognized as metropolitan cities in South Korea. JGSS includes two regional variables (prefecture name and size of municipality) to make it possible to generate city variables. Size of municipality is divided into four categories: largest cities, those with a population of 200,000 or more, those with a population of less than 200,000, and towns/villages. When utilizing both regional variables, this study identifies Tokyo, Nagoya, Sapporo, Kobe, Kyoto, Saitama, Hiroshima, Sendai, Chiba, Niigata, Hamamatsu, and Shizuoka as the largest cities. Cities such as

Osaka and Fukuoka were not identified as such, because a prefecture includes more than one largest city. From among these, I chose the seven largest cities with regard to population size: Tokyo, Nagoya, Sapporo, Kobe, Kyoto, Saitama, and Hiroshima. The seven South Korean cities have their own municipal governments as city-states. Tokyo is composed of a group of special wards, and the other six Japanese cities are government ordinance cities. The designated cities take over many functions from the prefectural government (So 2007). The large cities in South Korea and Japan had high autonomy in administration and governance, and populations of about 1.1 million or more (Korean Statistical Information Service 2010; Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan 2010).

In estimating the national average for workforce participation, this study uses observations from the whole region category; that is, seven metropolitan cities and urban areas in eight provinces in South Korea. Japanese data covers not only urban areas but also towns/villages, which the KLIPS disregards. To make the labor force participation rates of the whole Japanese nation comparable with data from South Korea, and to confirm the possible effect of towns and villages on women's participation in the labor market, this study utilizes observations from the whole regional category in Japan with and without the town/village category.

Utilizing the different variables, I investigate how Welsch's concept of transculturality explains lifestyles regarding work and its dynamics in relation specifically to globalization. Doing this, this study obtained 4,676 females from KLIPS and 1,602 from JGSS. Describing data, South Korean and Japanese samples nationwide reveal a slightly high male-to-female ratio. In Tokyo the high male-to-female ratio becomes more apparent. The male ratio is clearly higher than the female one in Tokyo, while South Korea turns it around in its cities. Japan demonstrates about 30 percent higher participation of women as part of the active labor force than in South Korea. Cities in both countries demonstrate a higher proportion of single women (about 26–27 percent) than countrywide results (about 21–22 percent) do. Concerning working arrangements, 42 percent of women are temporarily employed; 40 percent have a regular job; about 7 percent are family workers; 5 percent are self-employed; and, 3 percent are dispatched workers in Japan. In South Korea meanwhile, 52 percent of women are regular workers; self-employed and temporarily employed each account for about 17 percent; 12 percent of South Korean women are family workers; and, 2 percent are dispatched workers. About 50 percent of women in Tokyo have a regular job, while only 38 percent of women have a regular one in the seven large cities. Only 40 percent of women in Tokyo are in temporary employment, while in the largest cities about 47 percent of women are such workers. In South Korea, the cities have both more regular as well as more temporary workers than nationwide results.

Concerning higher education, this study considers those of an age between 26 and 64. About 39 percent of women in Japan have at least a junior college degree, and

15.6 percent have a university degree or higher. The results for the same categories in South Korea are about 39 percent and 25 percent respectively. In Tokyo, 65 percent of women have at least graduated from junior college, and 33 percent have at least graduated from university. In large Japanese cities, 60 percent of women have at least a junior college degree, and 30 percent have a university degree. In Seoul, about 40 percent have graduated at least from junior college and 27 percent from university. Proportions of junior college and university degrees are similar between large cities and national levels.

**Table 2: Data Description (Women aged 20-64): Differences of Women Characteristics of Different Regional Categories**

	Japan			Korea		
	All	Tokyo	Big 7 cities	All	Seoul	Big 7 cities
<b>Number of Women</b>	1602	66	184	4676	983	1640
<b>Gender ratio</b>	49.73%	45.85%	50.30%	49.82%	50.45%	50.36%
<b>Active Labor</b>	72.73%	75.81%	71.32%	43.80%	47.77%	47.89%
<b>Currently married</b>	71.62%	62.51%	63.35%	68.98%	65.06%	65.61%
<b>Never-married</b>	20.70%	26.22%	25.80%	22.44%	26.73%	26.03%
<b>Regular employee</b>	40.24%	49.89%	36.72%	51.63%	53.23%	52.92%
<b>Temporary worker</b>	42.24	39.58	46.52	16.96%	19.19%	18.77%
<b>Dispatched worker</b>	3.47%	-	5.43%	2.29%	2.22%	1.69%
<b>Self-employed</b>	4.96%	3.07%	4.82%	17.35%	17.02%	17.78%
<b>Family worker</b>	7.23%	7.45%	5.80%	11.77%	8.34%	8.85%
<b>Junior college + (Age: 26-64)</b>	39.33%	65.05%	60.14%	38.64%	44.61%	39.72%
<b>University + (Age: 26-24)</b>	15.55%	33.27%	29.92%	24.66%	30.62%	26.57%

Source: Author.

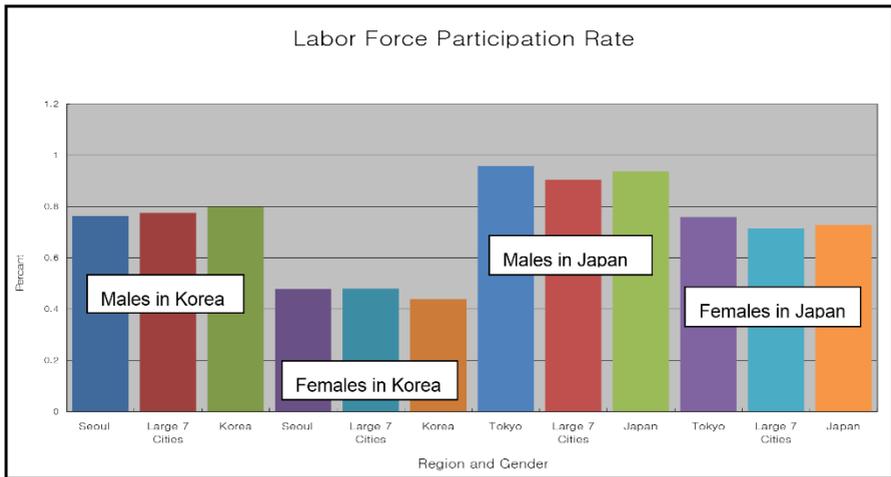
The data show us that Tokyo is comprised of a higher proportion of males and educated single women who more actively participate in the labor market as regular employees. Large cities in Japan are distinguished by a higher proportion of temporary employees in contrast to Tokyo. Compared to that city, Seoul is characterized by having fewer males, more single women, lower participation of women in the labor market, but more regular employees. Educational levels of women are higher than the national level in both countries, though the difference in South Korea is not as extreme as in the case of Japan.

## Results

### Labor force participation rate by gender

Figure 3 demonstrates the labor force participation rate of males and females aged between 20 and 64 in South Korea and Japan without any classification by age or educational level. At a glance, the low level of labor force participation rates in South Korea, in general, as compared to Japan’s is noticeable. The labor force participation rate of men in South Korea is at 80 percent or lower, while the same indicator is at 90 percent and higher in Japan. For women, the proportion is 43–47 percent in South Korea, and 71–76 percent in Japan. Gender differences are also greater in South Korea (28–36 percentage points) than in Japan (19–21 percentage points).

**Figure 3: Labor force Participation Rate by Gender**



Source: Author.

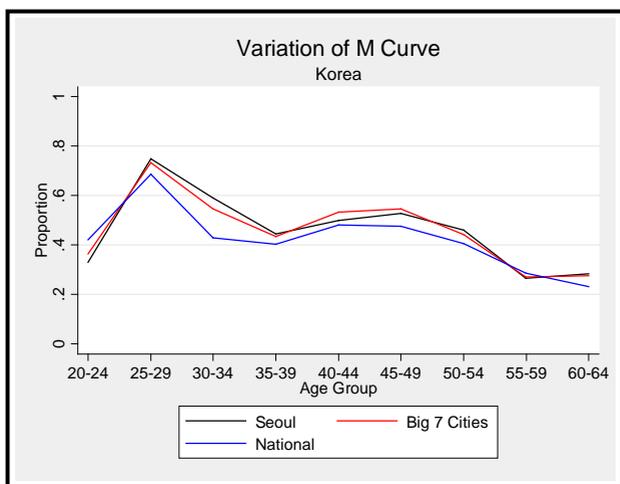
Comparing the level of labor force participation between regions, it is higher in Tokyo compared to other regional categories — both for Japanese males and females. The levels of participation for men do not increase in Seoul compared to other regional categories. For women, however, the levels increase in Seoul and in the largest cities. Women in Seoul are more actively challenged to find work opportunities than their counterparts in Tokyo.

### Labor force participation rate of females by age group

Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate the particularity concerning labor force participation by age in South Korea and Japan. The M-shaped curves in the figures demonstrate

the low participation in the labor market during childbirth and childcare in South Korea and Japan. The curves in Figure 4 demonstrate the level and change of workforce participation in different regional categories: Seoul, the seven largest cities in South Korea, and the country as a whole. From Figure 4, this study first finds the scale of women's employment hiatus at ages of childcare in South Korea. The M-curve, on national average, shows us that women between the ages of 25 and 29 are the most active in the labor market. Figures rapidly decrease for women between the ages of 30 and 39. Participation in the labor market increases for the ages between 44 and 49, and decreases again for ages 50 and over.

**Figure 4: Labor Force Participation Rate of Females by Age in Korea**

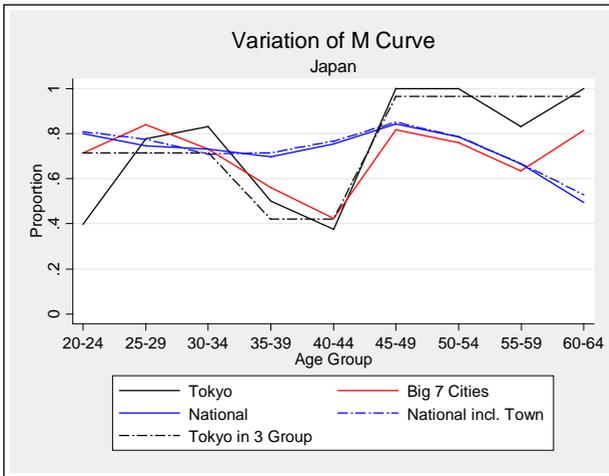


Source: Author.

In Seoul and metropolitan cities, the M-curve reveals some variations from the national average. A large number of women between the ages of 20 and 24 stay out of the labor market while attending university. Between the ages of 25 and 29, labor force participation reaches 75 and 74 percent in Seoul and in the seven cities respectively. For the age group between 30 and 34, it decreases to 44 percent in Seoul and 43 percent in the seven cities (with a national average of 40 percent). Numbers increase for the late-40s age group (53 percent in Seoul, 56 percent in the seven cities, and 47 percent national average). Between the ages of 55 and 59, women in the large cities reach the lowest levels of participation in working life; numbers increase slightly after the age of 60 in the cities, when women have probably completed their duties as mothers. But this is not the same for women when observed in the country as a whole.

How does the M-shaped curve in the cities differ from that of the national average? A decrease of participation in the labor market between the ages of 20 and 24 shows us that young women in cities might be more highereducation-oriented than the average South Korean is. After their student days, women in the cities participate more actively in the labor market. The higher level of the curve between the ages of 30 and 34 might signal women’s later marriage or motherhood in the large cities. The moderately higher levels of labor force participation between the ages of 40 and 54 in the cities form the slightly obvious shape of the M-curve in the cities. Women’s behavior regarding childcare as well as concerning education leads to a variation in the M-curve of the cities.

**Figure 5: Labor Force Participation Rate of Females by Age in Japan**



Source: Author.

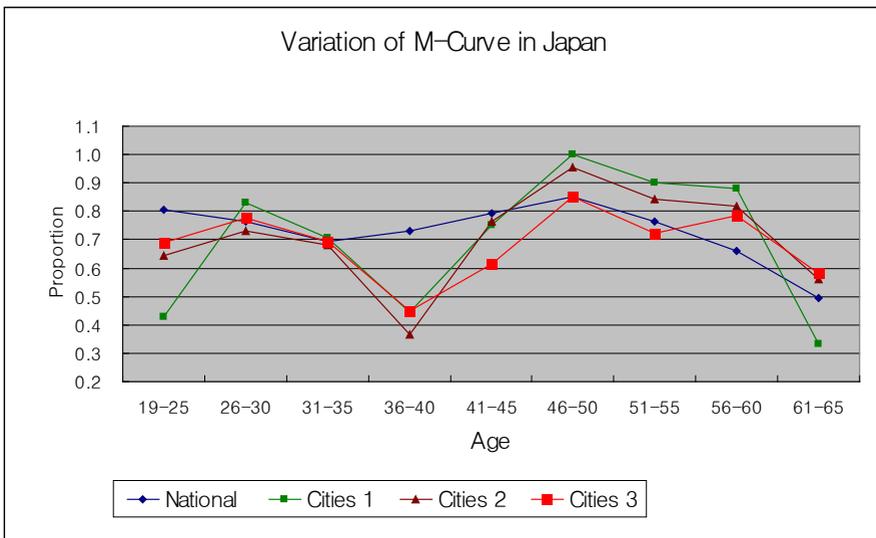
According to results, women have a higher participation rate in the global/largest cities. These cities also drive women’s employment during motherhood. However the M-shape labor force participation rate by age does not converse to the inverse U-shape like in other developed western countries, contrary to the original hypothesis of this study.

Figure 5 illustrates the M-shaped labor force participation rate by age in Japan. All curves show women’s employment hiatus at ages of childcare. At a glance, this depiction reveals the radical fluctuation of the M-curves in Japanese global/largest cities in contrast to the national average M-shape. The study illustrates two M-curves for the whole of Japan. One of them excludes data from women in villages and towns, while the other includes it. However the two curves only differ from each other slightly. Analyzing the shape of the curves, women between the ages of

20 and 24 in the cities are less active in the labor market — similar to South Korea. Figures go up between the ages of 25 and 29, and decrease between those of 30 and 34 in the largest cities. Numbers reach their lowest point between the ages of 40 and 44 meanwhile. With this age group the difference of workforce participation rates between the whole country and the largest cities is 33 percent, while the regional difference between the largest cities and the whole of Japan for all age groups (20 to 64) is 0.5 percent. In Japanese cities, this study found a severe employment hiatus for women during childcare. For women between the ages of 45 and 49, however, figures increase rapidly, becoming close to the national level. At the ages between 60 and 64, women show once again a high participation rate in the labor market in the largest cities. The difference between regions of the largest cities and the whole nation is about 32 percent.

In Tokyo, during their student days, women show a remarkably low participation in the labor market, which then increases between the ages of 25 and 29. After that, participation takes on a similar form to that of large cities, but reveals much stronger dynamics in their change. The shape of labor force participation rate by age in Tokyo seems to be reasonably interpreted; however, there are a small number of observations to be made here. Samples in Tokyo are divided into three age groups, instead of into nine. Results also demonstrate a strong employment hiatus during motherhood, between the ages of 35 and 44. The level of this is severe compared to the national level.

**Figure 6: Labor Force Participation Rate of Female by Age in Japanese Cities**



*Note:* This Figure includes Osaka and Fukuoka as a reference to confirm whether and how the two large cities change the estimation results. It demonstrates the similarity to the estimation results without Osaka and Fukuoka. "Cities 1" presents labor force participation rate of the sample taken from Tokyo, Osaka, and Sakai; "Cities 2" the sample from Tokyo, Osaka, Sakai, Nagoya, Fukuoka and Kitakyushu; and "Cities 3" the sample from Tokyo, Osaka, Sakai, Nagoya, Fukuoka, Kitakyushu, Sapporo, Kobe, and Kyoto in Japan. "National" is that of observations in all urban areas and town/village in Japan.

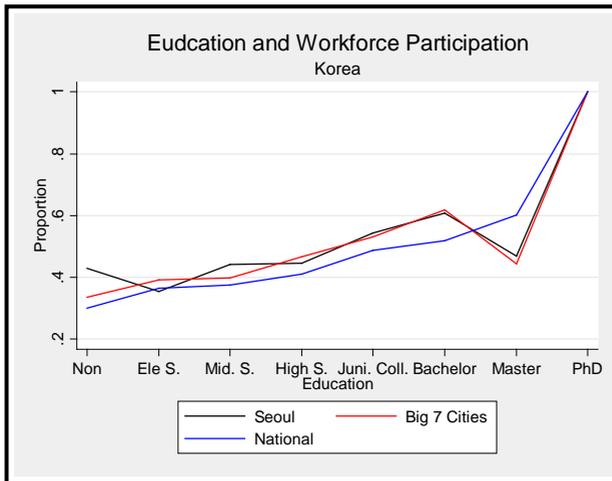
Concerning the hypothesis of this study, the M-shaped curve of labor force participation is much more apparent in the large cities, mainly due to the stark employment hiatus by women aged 35 to 44. The close entanglement of large cities to the West might lead to the more extreme M-curve in Japan. The labor force participation rate in the cities is smaller than the level of the whole nation, on average, in Japan. The closer entanglement of women with the developed Western countries neither encourages their general participation in the labor market nor promotes their employment during motherhood. The entanglement may have an effect on late motherhood in the largest cities, as this study shows. In the largest cities, one in two mothers quit their jobs during motherhood; this trend is more severe in Japan than in South Korea. However, figures recover to nearly the same level at the ages between 25 and 34, although mothers in Japan are characterized as part-time employees in the labor market. The curve does not converse to the inverse U-shape of developed Western countries; women in large Japanese cities seem to form a unique M-shaped labor force participation rate by age, in an unparalleled hybridizing process of cultures and powers within globalization (see also Figure 6).

### **Educational level and labor force participation rates of women**

Figures 7 and 8 (see below) illustrate the correlations of educational levels to labor force participation rates of women in South Korea and Japan using data from women aged between 26 and 65. This study excludes the sample for women below the age of 26, who could still be pursuing a university education. Graduation from junior college, women with bachelor's and master's degrees, and doctorates are considered as higher educational levels here.

Figure 7 shows the labor force participation rates by educational level in three regional categories in South Korea. On the national average, labor force participation is, in general, positively correlated with educational level. However, the correlation is not always positive in the largest cities in South Korea: an incremental increase of educational level from no schooling to graduation from elementary school does not augment labor force participation in Seoul. A negative correlation is found between women with a bachelor's degree and with a master's degree meanwhile, both in Seoul and in the largest cities.

**Figure 7: Labor Force Participation Rate of Female by Educational Level in Korea**

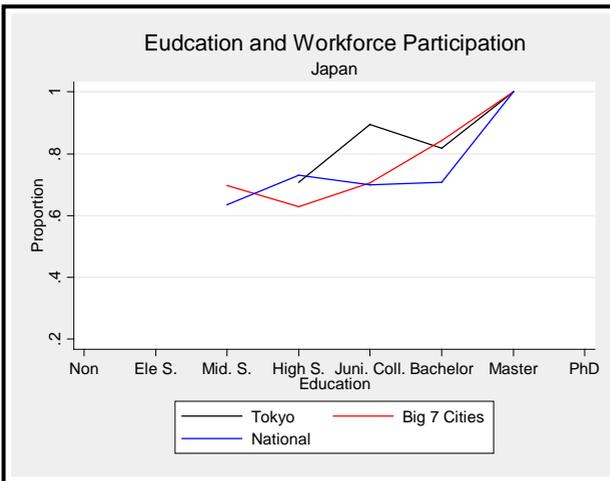


Source: Author.

Could a higher education level enhance women's careers in the cities? The level of labor force participation increases in Seoul and in the largest cities for women with a junior college degree and a bachelor's degree, as assumed in the original hypothesis of this study. However, the labor force participation of women with a master's degree is noticeably lower in Seoul and in large cities than the national average levels. The differences between the cities and the national average are 14 percent in Seoul and 17 percent in the largest cities.

According to the results, Becker's (1975) theory — which argues a positive correlation of labor force participation with educational level — is not supported in Seoul and in the large cities, while it is supported by the national average. A strong entanglement with globalization in Seoul and the largest cities in South Korea seems to stray the curve of labor force participation by education out of the Western pattern theorized by Becker. The especially lower level of labor market participation of those with a master's degree might be a reaction of urban women to competing with the strong marriage bar: they continue to study at a higher level of education, perhaps as a form of "high-class leisure," completing a bachelor's degree at university if they do not find a satisfying job due to discrimination and not urgently needing to earn a living. A master's degree in this case would be a way of sending a stronger indicator of their intelligence and academic preference to be competitive outside of the labor market. This phenomenon, if true, would be stronger in Seoul and in large cities than in the nation as a whole. Cities also offer, of course, greater opportunities to obtain a higher education.

**Figure 8: Labor Force Participation Rate of Females by Educational Levels in Japan**



Source: Author.

Figure 8 illustrates the correlation of labor force participation rates of women with different educational levels (middle school to master's degree and higher) in Japan. The figure does not show the positive correlation of labor force participation with educational level for all three regional categories (Tokyo, the largest cities, and the nation as a whole) in Japan, contrary to Becker's theory. At the national level, an incremental increase from high school graduation to a bachelor's degree does not lead to a rise in the participation rates in the labor market, with numbers showing 73 percent at high school level, 70 percent at junior college level, and 71 percent at bachelor's degree level. For a master's degree and higher, the sample has only 13 observations which all participate in the labor market. This also leads to a 100 percent participation rate of women with a master's degree in all observed cities.

The number of Tokyo female middle-school graduates observed was only three, among 150 such graduates nationwide; thus, this study excludes this group. A positive correlation was demonstrated between the educational levels of high school and junior college. However, women with a bachelor's degree in Tokyo show lower rates of labor force participation as compared to the junior college educational level. In the large cities, educational levels from middle school to high school reveal a negative correlation and those from high school to a master's degree show a positive one with workforce participation rate.

In Japan, the results only partially support Becker's theory in the three regional categories. In general, the curves do not converge to the Western style in the cities. Related to the levels of labor force participation, women who graduated from

junior college and those with a bachelor's degree are more active in the labor market in Tokyo compared to the national average. In the largest cities, figures are higher for women with a bachelor's degree — but an education in junior college does not enhance their labor force participation. In the case of a bachelor's degree, the original hypothesis is supported: the close entanglement of global/largest cities with globalization promotes women's careers.

The analysis of labor force participation in relation to age and education demonstrates that, in major cities, the entanglement with globalization does significantly change women's behavior in the labor market, but the direction of these dynamics does not ultimately lead to a convergence of different lifestyles in South Korea and Japan with the Western mode.

## **Discussion**

This study introduced the M-shaped labor force participation rate of women and the low labor market participation of educated ones as the common particularities in South Korea and Japan related to female employment patterns. Do today's educated women in South Korea and/or Japan still stick to these particular career styles? The hypothesis advanced was in line with Welsch's (1999) theory of transculturality: the national and East Asian regional-based particularity of employment patterns in South Korea and Japan decrease in the global/largest cities, which are more closely entangled with diverse nations and cultural regions.

This study first demonstrated the differences in labor force participation rates by gender in regional categories in South Korea and Japan. Results showed that the labor force participation rate is generally lower in South Korea than in Japan; the gender gaps of labor force participation rates are also greater in South Korea than in Japan. However, in South Korea, women in the cities become more active in the labor market than men, while the same trend was not detected in Japan. Women in South Korean cities might make more effort to obtain a job in a more difficult labor market situation than women in Japanese cities do.

Second, this study proved that women's particular employment patterns of labor force participation by age in South Korea and Japan change in global/largest cities. The results significantly demonstrate variations of the labor force participation between the observed cities and nations as a whole, both in South Korea and Japan. Women in the cities show around 4 percent higher labor force participation rates than the national average in South Korea. The M-shape of labor force participation rate of women becomes slightly more apparent in the cities. In Japan, the levels of labor force participation change in each regional category: 76 percent in Tokyo, 71 percent in largest cities, and 73 percent for the whole of Japan. The M-shapes also differ between the regions, with the largest cities revealing a radical fluctuation of M-shaped labor force participation at different ages.

This study also found deviations in labor force participation rates vis-à-vis educational levels between the observed cities and the nations as a whole. In South Korea, graduates from junior college and women with bachelor's degrees show a higher participation rate in the labor market in the cities than the national average. However, women with master's degrees become unexpectedly passive in the labor market in the cities. In Japan, the curves of labor force participation by educational level mostly run in a zigzag shape. Women of each educational level behave differently toward the labor market. The zigzag shape of the curve also differs in each regional group too.

Contrary to the original hypothesis, the M-shaped labor force participation rate by age becomes apparent in South Korea, and is considerably more extreme in Japan's largest cities. The findings may not support the hypothesis. What leads to the strong employment hiatus during childbirth and childrearing periods in South Korea and in Japan, and why is it more serious in the (global) cities? South Korea and Japan have the longest working hours among OECD countries, which seriously burdens work-life balance. The gender wage gaps are also very high, which strengthens dependency of families on the husband's income. The two indexes together reach the worst level in South Korea and the second-worst one in Japan among OECD countries (Go 2014). The care by the community for mothers — measured by social network, whether mothers have someone to support them in caring for their children and in doing housework, and women's poverty — is also the worst among all OECD countries in South Korea. The care by families for mothers — measured by the husband's amount of parental leave — is also at the worst level among all OECD countries in Japan (Go 2014). In particular, the problems caused by a lack of a social network and support by families for mothers could be serious in (global) cities where more nuclear families exist. What motivates women to return to work after childrearing in South Korea and Japan? Considering women's job arrangements — such as regular, temporary, self-employed, family worker, and other types besides — the left peak of the M-curve is led by a high proportion of regular employees in both countries. After childrearing, women aged 45–49 participate in the labor market as temporary and self-employed workers in Seoul (temporary: 28 percent; self-employed: 27 percent) as well as in metropolitan cities (temporary: 23 percent; self-employed: 29 percent) in South Korea. In Japan meanwhile, the right peak of the M-curve is related to a high proportion of temporary employment (61–65 percent) and to family workers (6–17 percent) in the cities as well as in Tokyo. This reflects the effect of the spouse deduction of tax that actually promotes the part-time employment of women in Japan (Cooke and Jiang 2017; Ikeda 2014; Yu 2005). Cities do more business, and thus women easily find these kinds of job opportunity there. What makes women and families still socially accepting of such

institutions and systems that limit mothers' participation in the labor market? This kind of acceptance is often understood as the Confucian tradition of East Asia.

The participation rate of educated women in the labor market decreases in the largest cities when observing female graduates from junior colleges and women with a bachelor's degree in South Korea, and graduates from junior colleges in Japan. However, the participation of women with a master's degree in the global/largest cities in South Korea is lower than the national average. Concerning educational levels and job arrangements, (globalized) cities are associated with higher proportion of regular jobs for the highest educational levels (master's or doctoral degree), while this relationship is ambiguous for other educational levels. Women with a high educational level may choose either a well-paying, regular job or to stay out of the labor market entirely, while those less qualified are not so prone to selectively engage when it comes to finding employment: not only regular but also temporary, dispatched, family, or self-employed work positions are all considered. This phenomenon is strong in the cities, where there are more job opportunities. In Japan, women working on an irregular basis earned 47.5 percent of the salary of men with a regular job in 2006. Since 2004, in South Korea, women have earned about 36–37 percent of the salary of men with a regular job (Kim 2015; Oh 2008). They receive not only low wages, but their social benefits coverage — such as unemployment insurance, medical insurance, and pension schemes — are also low, at only 50–60 percent; such coverage is at 90 percent for regular employees in Japan meanwhile. In South Korea, the social benefits coverage is at 30–40 percent, while it is 95 percent and higher for regular employees as of 2014 (Kim 2015; Oh 2016).

In such labor markets, educated women with high reservation wages (such as those with master's degrees in Korea) and who are not financially responsible for the family might choose education as a form of leisure rather than as a means to improve their eventual chance of employment. Cities also offer more chances to enjoy higher education. Women might first try to find a professional job on a regular basis, and, if not possible, they are more willing to pursue family care and enjoy a life of leisure instead of taking a paid job with poor working conditions. In this case, some space would be created for a “power game” of cultures in consciously selecting one's lifestyle: either pursuing (high-class) culture according to tradition, or becoming a westernized “career women.” This would lead to the inconformity of the results of the study with the hypothesis that educated women in global/large cities are more active in the labor market.

Further, this study found similarities and differences between the two countries regarding female workforce participation dynamics. In the M-shaped workforce participation curve, the strength and direction of deviation from the national M-curves are quite different in South Korea and Japan — as has been shown. However in South Korea and Japan women in the cities do commonly demonstrate

a strong passivity in the labor market during the age of childcare. In this regard, the difference lies in for which age group the most severe employment hiatus occurs: in South Korea it is for those between the ages of 35 and 39, while in Japan it is for those between the ages of 40 and 44. With regard to education-related dynamics, educated women in the cities are commonly more active in the labor market both in South Korea and Japan. Moreover, they commonly demonstrate a degree of negative correlation between university education and labor force participation. Differences between the two countries are that the decrease of female labor force participation occurs at the master's degree level in South Korean cities and at the bachelor's degree one in Japanese cities. Another difference is the effect of master's studies on the labor market in the two countries: while the effect is quite weak on labor force participation in South Korean cities, it is significantly strong nationwide in Japan. Such differences, despite the similarities otherwise of their dynamics, may be caused by the two countries' varying historical experiences during westernization, industrialization, and globalization.

In light of these findings, the original hypothesis of this study could not be validated for the M-shaped employment patterns of women in South Korean and Japan. Concerning the low labor force participation of educated women, the results may partially — in the case of a bachelor's degree — conform to the hypothesis, but the shape of change does not uphold it. This dissonance seems to be more severe in Japan compared to in South Korea. In the former, the specific employment patterns of women remain stronger within globalization, even though Japanese cities have a stronger connection with the West/globalized world. This asymmetry may be caused by a relationship of power particular to cities, whereby they are more male- or tradition-dominated; this would again depend on historical background and the ways in which power develops in given societies/families.

## Conclusion

This study is the first to compare the dynamics of female employment patterns in South Korea and Japan with respect to globalization. Elucidating the diversities as well as mutually shared features of each country is the novel contribution of this study. How far does Welsch's (1999) theory of transculturality explain the lifestyle dynamics regarding women's employment under globalization? All findings significantly reveal the dynamics in the employment patterns in large cities compared to those of nations, and what may occur via globalization. However the directions of such dynamics may not create similarity between nations and cultures: families, employers, and governments might be tolerant of a different style or easily share the Western one of employment for certain ages and educational levels. At different stages of life, though, the traditional lifestyle is still predominant, and small changes seem to be difficult to enact. When do those involved in these dynamics find it easy to be tolerant, and when do they not? What

makes one liberal or conservative? What are the social and historical determinants causing differences in lifestyle in South Korea and Japan within globalization? Finding the hybridization mechanisms of cultures would be interesting to advance our knowledge in these matters. Moreover, they could play an important role in policymaking in the era of globalization, when institutions, organizations, and governments actively share political measures against common problems within very different worlds.

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