

論文の内容の要旨

Aiming High and Moving Forward in the Age of Globalization: Spatial and Career Mobility of the Skilled Korean Women in Japan

(国境を越える社会移動：日本で活躍する韓国人女性の社会学的分析)

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This study introduces the phenomenon of a new mobility among ‘middling’ Korean female migrants in Japan. Middling migrants are those migrants who do not qualify as high-skilled, highly paid elites, nor can they be classified as low-skilled, lowly paid workers. Hidden in the middle of the continuum of skilled workers, these migrants are difficult to identify by statistics because of the diversity of their legal status in the host country. Many of these middling Korean female migrants are highly educated and hold significant careers. It is the aim of this study to understand their spatial and career mobility.

Building on Krings et al.’s (2013) concept of “worklife pathways” that looks at the individual’s professional and personal life journeys, this study examines the lives of 105 middling Korean female migrants who moved to Japan over the last four decades from 1980s to 2010s. In-depth interviews were conducted from 2013 to 2019, with some women being interviewed more than once in order to trace their life journeys. In addition, some of their husbands, children, and parents were also interviewed to obtain a wider perspective of their lives. The women are from the middle-class in South Korea and are

mostly well-educated with work experience. They have at times experienced different forms of deskilling and downward social mobility upon migration to Japan.

The migrants' journey starts with the decision to migrate. Examining the Korean female migrants' motivations to migrate, this study found that their decisions reflect the South Korean and global economic and social changes over four decades. Those who came to Japan in the 1980s and 1990s pursued non-career related goals, such as sustaining family and friendship, although some were striving to overcome their economic refugee status during the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. On the other hand, those who arrived since the 2000s moved for purposes of personal growth and career development through study abroad and job changes.

Central to this analysis is the concept of human capital. Becker (1867, 1981) defined human capital as one of the significant criteria for evaluating labor productivity through emphasizing better income and class position in the host society's labor market. However, this research suggests that we need to consider human capital in a broader sense beyond the conventional divide between higher- and lower-skilled. Also, it is imperative to account for the transferability of skills in the spatial context with new temporalities of migration and new gendered migration trends to investigate the characteristics of the new Korean migration trend taking place currently.

The range of human capital that the women have accumulated over time and across space greatly influenced their career development. This study traced how the women's human capital gained in their home country could not be utilized or were not recognized in the host country. Nevertheless, the women were able to transform this deskilling by making efforts to reskill and thus transform their careers. Their job statuses ranged from full-time employees in corporations to entrepreneurs in a wide range of industries in Japan.

Recognizing that women who came at different times tended to exhibit different characteristics, this study categorized them into four groups according to their accumulated human capital and career orientation as indicated below:

Group I - Japan-obtained human capital, Japanese-based career orientation

Group II - Internationally-obtained human capital, Korean ethnic career orientation

Group III - Japan-obtained human capital, international career orientation

Group IV - Internationally-obtained human capital, international career orientation

There was a total of 18 women in Group I, 30 in Group II, 27 in Group III, and 30 in Group IV. Although the women were distinguished based on human capital in this research, that does not mean that the temporal element is excluded. The period of migration is loosely divided because the socio-economic conditions for migration have changed over time. Changes in social conditions (especially due to the higher educational attainment of Korean women in recent years) have influenced group categorization, such as temporal changes that have not directly distinguished groups but have become an important factor indirectly.

Detailed analysis found that human capital, social networks, and household (re)arrangement were three interconnected factors that have variedly influenced the women's career mobility.

The human capital acquired by Groups I and II, identified as *localized human capital*, was of limited use in Japan, whereas the human capital obtained by Groups III and IV showed the characteristics of *global human capital* that was transferable and skills-specific. Even though some of the women's acquired human capital could not be used in Japan, they aimed for higher education suited to the local or global market and were able to achieve higher skills to advance their careers.

The second significant factor influencing the women's career mobility was their diverse social networks, with some using bonding networks while others used bridging networks. While the women in Groups I and II relied on localized ethnic networks, women in Group III actively participated in competitive and non-ethnic-based professional networks in Japan. On the other hand, the women in Group IV engaged in transnational cooperative networks, spanning many nations.

The formation and maintenance of the women's careers were also supported by the reorganization of gender norms within the household. For women in Groups I and II, migration had not enabled them to escape completely from traditional gender norms, such as them being totally responsible for housework and child-rearing. Constrained by domestic roles to meet the traditional family expectations, these women's careers were more home- and local-oriented that accommodated flexible work schedules and short commutes between home and the workplace. Meanwhile, the women in Groups III and IV adopted a transformative process through joint economic management, shared housework, and child-rearing with their husbands. There were cases where their husbands were also

mobile, so household responsibilities were negotiated to maximize both their careers. Freed of the restrictions of gender norms, the women could focus on their career development. In addition, setting their sights beyond Japan and South Korea, the women were keen to provide a multicultural and global education for their children so that their entire family could be mobile and move together, accessing global opportunities and realizing a borderless global stage for their lives.

This research emphasizes that the migration and settlement strategies have evolved over time. The dominant migration strategy among the women has changed from simple (Groups I and II) to advanced (Groups III and IV). The simple strategy is characterized as either permanent settlement in the destination country or transnational movement between two nations. On the other hand, the advanced strategy is characterized by flexible, frequent mobility in terms of migration and relocation, which tends to be explained by existing concepts such as “footloose migrants” (Engbersen et al., 2013), “free movers” (Favell, 2008), or “flexible citizen” (Ong, 1999). However, unlike those people who have weak attachments to their origin and destination countries, the middling Korean migrant women appear to have temporarily or permanently settled in Japan, which offers better life and career opportunities, even though they are aware that they have the option of leaving one day. Thus, some of these women can be described more concretely as “tumbler migrants” or “international tumbleweeds” (Eade, 2008) that bear the characteristic of being footloose, but tend to settle in a certain destination.

To sum up, this study has shown that the middling Korean female migrants’ motivations to move could not be simply explained by a dichotomy of economic and non-economic reasons but rather by diverse reasons reflecting the economic and social environment at that time as well as their diverse personal aspirations. Furthermore, their settlement could not be understood simply as inclusion by or exclusion from the host country. While living in the host country, the women continued to develop their careers and contribute to the host country’s economy, and in many cases, they contributed to the wider global economy, including their home country.

The phrase “aiming high and moving forward” in the dissertation title explains the ongoing efforts of Korean female migrants to invest in and make progress in their personal and professional lives. Through diversity, they aimed high and continued to develop their human capital and social network to move forward with their transnational spatial, career, and social mobility.