

WOMEN SHOULD SELL AND MEN MANAGE: JOB SEGREGATION BY GENDER IN A LARGE JAPANESE DEPARTMENT STORE*

KIMIKO KIMOTO

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to consider the situation of women workers from the viewpoint of job segregation by gender. Methodologically, I shall use the perspective developed in a number of noteworthy studies by gender approach recently been accomplished mainly in the Europe and US. I use this approach in a case study of a department store in Japan, with a view to analysing the mechanism of the formation of gender relations in the workplace.

The perspective of job segregation by gender has been a core concept for the gender approach to women's work [Hartman 1976]. So far as the UK is concerned, it has emerged as a working concept of analysis since the 1970s [Hakim 1979], through numerous demonstrative studies carried out especially since the 1980s. Job segregation by gender is brought into focus because the mechanism defining lower wages, and therefore the lower social status of women workers, seems to have originated basically from gender differences in the gender-dependent job distribution. This notion has conventionally been seen as an extension of the sexual division of labour in the family. However, this way of analysing the evidence is now under reconsideration because it is unable to provide a perspective which may change the reality of women's work. It is now required to adopt a different system of analysis to thoroughly analyse and interpret gender relations within the labour process itself [Walby 1988: 28][Beechey 1987: 12-16]. It is assumed that there are gendered-dependent job assignments associated with gender-dependent social relations that are the background to job segregation by gender. Based on this understanding, the above writers restricted their analyses to the labour process. By doing so, they analysed actual daily processes in the workplace which could strengthen gender identity and thus could be a primary determinant of the status of women in society [Collinson: 1986]

It should be noted that the recent sociological studies of labour in the UK emphasize the necessity for conducting demonstrative studies in the actual workplace in this perspective of job segregation by gender. The reason for this is that, while macro data are certainly able to

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explain long-term tendencies, they could do nothing more than that. Instead, efforts are being made to extract the mechanism of forming and reproducing the structure of job segregation by gender from a comparative study based on case studies of individual workplaces and job categories [Crompton & Sanderson 1990: 21, 26] [Walby 1988: 23], [Cockburn 1988: 32].

Now looking at the way we have conducted our research in Japan, it is difficult to say at present that this workplace approach has been well established. While gender segregation is beginning to find use in describing the problematic situation of women's work, its history is still short with no satisfactory elucidation of how the gender-dependent job segregation structure has been developed in the labour process. So far, Sumi Iwamoto [1987] and Mari Osawa [1992 a] [1992b] have published analyses of macro data. However, in order to explore the developing mechanism of job segregation by gender, it is essential to descend to the micro level, studying actual workplaces to observe the dynamics of gender relations being developed in them. This case study attempts to explore these essentials.

Kigyo Shakai and Job Segregation by Gender

(1) *Kigyo Shakai* and women's work

Being aware of the above issues, I have conducted a field case study on Department Store A. Surveying a workplace in Japan could not ignore certain aspects of *Kigyo Shakai* (Company-centered Society) in which business-oriented competitive order is prevalent throughout the entire company in line with the realities of Japan. Regular full-time workers are in theory assured of a promotion based on long-term stable employment in a particular company. It therefore basically relies on workers' own efforts to develop a work style, including overtime, that makes it worth enjoying such benefits. The full-time workforce positioned as a core of the company, is supported by a group of marginal workers as an economy adjuster. The latter is in fact an indispensable complement to *Kigyo Shakai*. A typical component of the economy-adjusting workforce is women workers who are marginalised and forced to put up with constant change in the assignment of tasks. Usually, *Kigyo Shakai* is deeply concerned with the consciousness of the problem of clarifying how workers are integrated into a company. Yukichi Takahashi identified the distinct nature of *Kigyo Shakai* that depends on the workers' total personal involvement in the company. Above all, he concentrated on the Japanese appraisal system (*Noryokushugi Kanri*) based on the *Shokuno Shikaku* system (i.e. personnel ranking system based on job skills and job experience) which has enabled such total involvement [1992]. Makoto Kumazawa also examined the problem of women workers limited to the bottom of a "pyramid-shaped job structure" encompassing multi-faceted qualifications and job categories [1986: 91].

The first studies into this aspect of the Japanese appraisal system coincided with the period in which the development of women's labour power was encouraged. In 1968, for instance, the *Nikkeiren* (the Japan Federation of Employers' Association) and the Kanto Employers' Association emphasized the "utilisation" of women who accounted for 40 percent of the total potential workforce in the context of a looming labour shortage. They criticized the attitude of "regarding women workers only as office flowers" and insisted on managing them "as a

professional personnel" [Takeuchi 1992: 107]. Needless to say, this strategy of "utilising and empowering" the women workforce initiated by employers coincided with the tendency toward women's extended length of service and higher education level. According to Keiko Takeuchi, such tendencies have become increasingly notable since the mid-1970s. The increasing length of service of women has made it difficult to keep them in subsidiary positions as was done before because the wage of these senior women have significantly increased under the length-of-service wage system. As a result, serious attempts have been made to change the traditional gender-dependent personnel management based on the idea of women work as "short-term workers only until marriage" [1992: 110-112]. Gender-independent personnel management has apparently thus been developed in the 1980s to "empower" women by incorporating them into the *Shokuno Shikaku* system.

Of course there has been some time lag in such processes. As is known, the different career development strategy personnel management intended to cope with the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Law is in effect considered a typical example of gender-dependent management programs. The department store to be discussed in this paper has taken a position in sharp contrast to this. As such, it has been recognized as one of the most advanced businesses that has been working on realizing the greater utilization of women workers. This was made possible because the department store industry is highly dependent on women workers and is therefore experienced in the management of a women workforce. For this reason, an early introduction of the *Shokuno Shikaku* system was accomplished, which moved away from traditional gender-dependent personnel management. The department store industry is significant in studying women's work because of its longer history in the employment of women, especially its attempts to promote women to managerial positions and hire women university graduates earlier than other industries. Despite this fact, there have been few fully-fledged research projects that have studied department stores in Japan except for the intensive survey of store B by Alice C. L. Lam [Lam 1992]. Therefore, in this paper I would like to analyse how job segregation by gender has been maintained in this industry. From my findings, I must say that women still tend to be "bound to the bottom" even in this industry. Consequently I have to discuss the mechanism by which this is happening in the actual workplace.

The analysis below is based on what I was told at the personnel departments of several department stores including Company A, and interviews with men and women workers at Company A. Department Store A is a company that has developed an advanced personnel management system not only in the department store business but all other merchandising activities. This can be endorsed by the early timing at which the company introduced some job practices favoring women. For instance, the re-entry scheme for married women employee, adopted after 1975 by most other companies, had already been established in 1965 by Company A. They have also been aggressive about job enlargement and at an earlier stage offered the position of buyer to women employees, which was then rare when compared to the West [Lam 1992: 164]. As one of the six leading department store groups, Company A had a labour force of about 6,000 (as of 1992), around 70 percent of which were women workers. Currently the average age of men employees was 39.1 and 30.3 for women; average length of service was 16 years 11 months for men and 9 years 7 months for women. These figures indicate a conspicuous increase in women's length of service, considering that in 1970 men length of service was 10 years 4 months and women was exactly 4 years. As for educational

background, because the men employees have been recruited mostly from university graduates since the late 1970s, 64 percent of them were university graduates, 2 percent junior college graduates and 34 percent high school graduates. In contrast, women university graduates were hired for the first time in 1969 and it was not until 1982 that their employment reached a meaningful number. Still, the women university graduates accounted for only 8 percent of the entire women workforce, junior college graduates 38 percent and high school graduates 54 percent at the time of this survey. Company A stands out from the other department stores in the higher proportion of women employees and their longer length of service.

(2) The situation of the *Shokuno Shikaku* system and utilisation of women employees at Company A

First of all, let us look at how the *Shokuno Shikaku* system and utilisation of women employees has progressed at Company A. The first stage of switching to the job wage system was undertaken in 1961, and the essential framework of the *Shokuno Shikaku* system completed in 1970. The gender-dependent personnel management system was then abolished and the promotion test program irrespective of gender or education was introduced instead. Personal assessment is conducted twice a year in accordance with the work evaluation table set for each job qualification grade. The results determine the wages according to the *Shokuno Shikaku* system, based on which the whole sum of pay is calculated. Taking an example of Grade 2, it is divided into 7 ranks, with a difference of around 14,400 yen per month between the top and bottom ranks. Changing to a *Shokuno Shikaku* system has been made basically to cope with shortage of positions for a larger number of ageing men employees. This had a striking impact on the men workers (especially high school graduates) because the seniority system and certain benefits had to be given up. Competitions between individual employees has become more severe because of the system of promotion and pay-raise assessment irrespective of gender and education. The *Shokuno Shikaku* system as such has potentially paved the way for "empowerment" of women employees who had been employed for a prolonged period.

With their extended length of service, more women have moved up to higher jobs. As shown in Table 1 and Fig. 1, women Grade 4 (assistant manager class) reached almost 20 percent in 1993. The women who moved beyond this level were however extremely few in number, with only 4.6 percent at Grade 5 (manager class) and 2.2 percent at Grade 6 (general manager class). There is an obvious gap between Grade 5 and Grade 4. As is apparent from Table 2 showing the number of managers by gender, the jobs of sales manager (SM) and buyer (B) chosen from Grade 4 are overwhelmingly dominated by men employees. On the other hand, the assistant sales manager (ASM) and the assistant buyer (AB) positions, chosen from Grade 3, are taken mostly by women. The number of women ASMs especially reaches 216 which vastly outnumbers their men counterpart, 40. The women ABs are 99 which approximately equals to the number of men ABs, 102. A majority of the ASMs are women junior college and high school graduates highly experienced in selling in sections. Most of them end up with the ASM position, with at present a very small number promoted to the SM and B jobs. The way they concentrate on the lower managerial positions seems closely associated with the apparent structure of job segregation by gender in their workplace.

TABLE 1. THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES BY QUALIFICATION GRADE (COMPANY A)

Year	Qualification Grade (Men)						Qualification Grade (Women)					
	G 7	G 6	G 5	G 4	G3-1	Total	G 6	G 5	G 4	G3-1	Total	Total
1970	15	94	165	450	480	1,204	—	—	29	2,658	2,687	3,891
1975	29	119	224	575	546	1,493	—	—	61	3,730	3,791	5,284
1980	43	133	327	580	457	1,540	—	4	98	2,909	3,011	4,551
1985	47	162	478	521	528	1,736	—	16	104	3,454	3,574	5,310
1990	61	216	613	433	505	1,828	4	25	125	3,209	3,363	5,191
1991	62	236	625	468	457	1,848	5	29	122	3,360	3,516	5,364
1992	62	258	633	487	448	1,888	6	31	124	3,412	3,573	5,461
1993	62	269	645	496	486	1,958	6	31	123	3,531	3,691	5,649

Note: As of the end of June each year

FIG. 1. WOMEN AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES BY GRADE

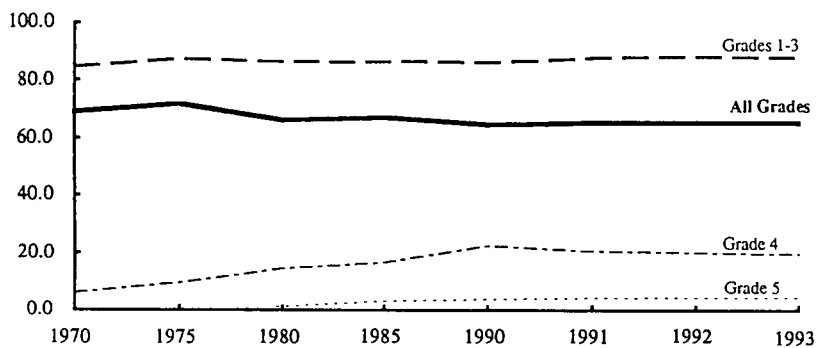


TABLE 2. THE NUMBER OF MANAGERS BY GENDER (COMPANY A)

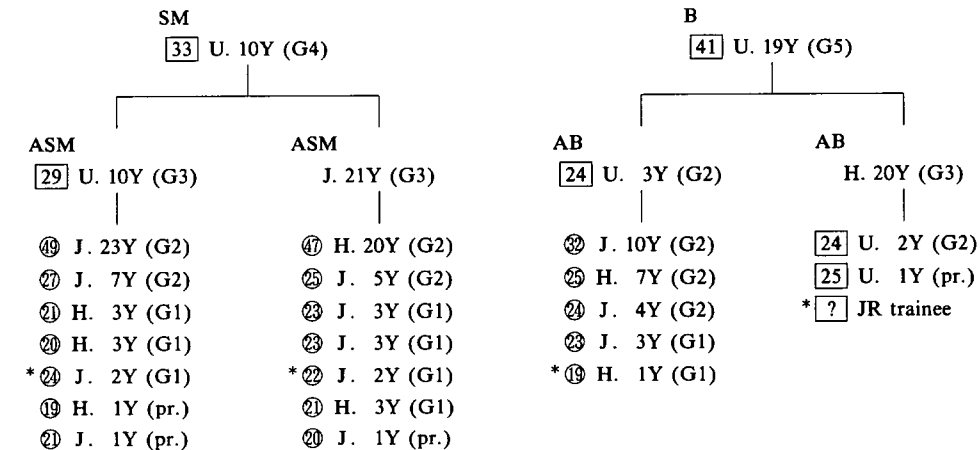
	Year	SM	ASM	B	AB
Women	1970	7	119	4	15
	1975	11	73	1	9
	1980	9	102	2	15
	1985	26	149	9	30
	1991	20	204	6	58
	1992	24	205	7	80
	1993	28	214	8	90
	1994	22	216	9	93
Men	1994	169	40	92	102

(3) The in-section status of job segregation by gender

Now let us look at the status of job segregation by gender at the “micro” level in the section. The subject here is an average section C of Company A’s store B located in the center of metropolitan Tokyo. The section is part of the women’s wear department and deals with more substantial items such as dresses, suits and coats. Serving each customer takes between 30 and 60 minutes. The section is staffed by 27 regular employees, 6 men and 21 women as indicated in Fig. 2. As for their educational backgrounds, the men employees are all university graduates, while of the women workers, 8 are high school graduates and 13 junior college graduates (including some who graduated from professional schools).

The first point to be noted is how the educational background affects the timing of promotion and other changes in position. High school graduates move up to Grade 3 after 12 years at work and to Grade 4 in another 6 or 7 years, junior college graduates rise to Grade 3 in 10 years and Grade 4 in another 6 or 7 years, while university graduates take only 3.5 years to rise to Grade 3 and 8 years from joining the company (about at age 30) to get to Grade 4. After approximately 13 years at work, they become managers (Grade 5) and 20 years general managers. In short, the time taken to get Grade 4 are 18–19 years for high school graduates, 16–17 years for junior college graduates and only 8 years for university graduates. This means that the university graduates move up to higher positions twice as fast as junior college

FIG. 2. PERSONNEL ALLOCATIONS ON THE SUBJECT SECTION



Notes: □ = man ○ = woman Numerals inside denote age and length of service
 U = university graduate
 J = junior college graduate
 H = high school graduate
 Professional school graduates treated as junior college graduates.
 pr. = probation
 *Not surveyed

For example : 33 U. 10Y (G4) = 33 years old man, university graduate, length of service is 10 years, qualification grade is G4.

graduates. Since most university graduates recruited have been men since the late 1970s, this educational difference has directly overlapped the gender difference. This had been so before the expanded hiring of women university graduates began in 1982 but I will discuss later, women university graduates disturbed this equilibrium.

Now let us examine role separation based on the particular way jobs are assigned in the section. Job separation as expressed by the words, 'Women should sell and men manage' is quite obvious even within the same sales job. There is a great difference in job assignment between men who are expected to rise to managerial positions on the grounds of prolonged employment and women who are not.

For women, while there is one case of a woman with long working experience (age 47) who is dedicated solely to selling, the younger women aged from their late 20s to their 30s assist the ASMs by training all the juniors and handling complaints from customers. Those in the youngest group do a number of tasks incidental to selling (cashier, chores, packing, filing sales notes and cleaning) "under senior women's thumb". Although a certain job segregation thus exists among women which is related to length of service, they are collectively more or less directly responsible for sales tasks. Things are considerably different for men. The general practice is that three men juniors team together, with only one of them serving customers. The other two are assigned to various other jobs such as replacing merchandise, delivery and return tasks, arranging the tag slips of discount items, preparing and carrying out temporary discount and assisting the AB's tasks, though at busy times the younger men (in their second year at the company) may take extra time to serve customers. Men's jobs as such partially relate to selling but are primarily separate from women's. A man in his second year at the company says, 'Because there are a lot of incidental jobs, I must move very quickly'. While a limited amount of product knowledge may be enough for the women with a lower degree of education, men 'have to be familiar with all the merchandise and everything about the section', men emphasize the differences of their job from women's. A young man in his first year claims: 'I am kept busy running up to storeroom on the fifth floor many times a day to refill items. It's not because I am on probation but every guy does the same thing. Men work in teams and take charge of merchandise displays and sales calculations after we are closed. We often have to work overtime to calculate the day's sales figures'. What makes their jobs different from women's is the physical nature of the work, the amount of knowledge that has to be acquired and the responsibility for work after store hours.

A men SM senior to them claims: 'Men are expected to grow into managerial positions while handling such daily chores. They have to do lots of behind-the-scenes work during their one-year probation period so that they become familiar with everything. Since they will take a position supervising women senior in length of service to themselves, they must be "big" enough to assume leadership.' According to a woman with 4 years experience, the way men do their jobs is highly evaluated in general. She says, 'The section's responsibilities fall on their shoulders. They are shouted at when they make a mistake and work much longer than women'. A woman in her third year also sees that men are doing a creditable job. 'It's as if they have an almost endless amount of work. No wonder they receive greater benefits than women because they do extra work before and after store hours'.

What our interview survey reveals is, therefore, a very peculiar way that regular men employees establish themselves in the section. It is not as if gender roles unknowingly permeate the section because of a "hidden curriculum". Instead, a rather explicit gender-separated

regime is imposed on the employees already at the probation stage. The actual form of this regime is the job segregation structure which seems supported by the men workers' mutual comradeship. While comradeship may easily be converted to mutual competitiveness under the *Shokuno Shikaku* system, the dominant climate to which employees are exposed from the beginning, is strongly oriented to gender, keeping them conscious of their roles, 'Men are naturally different from women'. Women do not team up in the same fashion. As indicated in Fig. 2, the women's group is formed mostly to encourage senior women to be aware of and play the role of tutors to their juniors. On the contrary, as the section's minority group, men are organised into an anticipated "elite" taskforce as soon as they start at the company.

Women have their own problems in such a job structure. A woman with 23 years experience complained: 'I feel happy when my choice satisfies customers, but it's not very often. More often than not, I feel dull when I find myself only selling what others produced. I wonder ... if it's a satisfying, rewarding job, if anyone else can do it as well as I do'. At the same time, she admitted: 'Although I am no decision maker, I become aware that I am "taking part" when I happen to select colours and shapes of the merchandise with our AB. It seems important to take pleasure in selling the items we have developed together'.

However, the occasions when they can feel as if they are "taking part" are rather rare. A deputy chief in her seventh year at work conceded that she could not do anything without consulting her supervisor. To the question of what she could do on her own initiative, she thought for a while and answered that it was only to add an extra paper bag for shoppers on a rainy day! The answer of a senior woman with 20 years experience, was that sales clerks could go slow if they liked because there was no sales quota assigned to them.

Unlike men's job, women's jobs seem inseparably tied to "getting bored". Besides, they involve a very limited scope for decision making and discretion or the difficulties in looking over the whole working process and consciously participating in it. As seen above, the way jobs are allocated is clearly split between men and women: while men are trained to think what they will be ten years in the future, women are confined to the routine work that tends to make them bored, preventing them from feeling as if they are really "taking part".

Here it is necessary to highlight the problem of working hours as one of the actual conditions which leads to such differences in occupational attitudes between men and women. Working hours, especially the overtime hours of the men who are trained differently from women, are very long. They work 1 to 3 hours overtime every day and frequently take work home with them. According to one AB in his third year at work, he has worked more than 30 hours overtime per month, and worked at home as well every day for the last two years. He said: 'I can't help it because there are so many chores to be done in addition to a good deal of work that is my responsibility. Even when you are on probation, men are strongly encouraged to take charge. Actually, I don't feel at home even on my days off thinking about how my job is going while I am away from it. I steel myself by saying that this job is challenging enough for me. Now I need time more than anything else'. Men generally work with little regard to the shift hours (early: 9:45–18:40 and late: 10:35–19:10). They always come to work at, or earlier than, the early shift start time and leave work later than the late shift end time, or often work overtime till very late, depending on their positions and proficiency.

On the other hand, women usually work 2 or 3 hours overtime a month, by and large observing the set shift hours. This however changes once they move up to higher positions. A women ASM with 21 years of service works 20 hours overtime a month, which is a substantial

difference from the way most women employees work. A woman AB with 20 years of service works 2 or 3 hours overtime every day. She comes to work at the start of the early shift and goes home at the end of the late shift. She also admitted that she finishes the work she takes home in the evenings and on her days off. It is clearly evident that men overtime as much as their seniors almost as soon as they start work. By so doing, they observe and learn how the senior men do their work. In the case of women, they enjoy a liberal amount of free time whilst they are not in a management position. As soon as they move up to ABs or ASMs, however, they are incorporated into the long-time labour force like their men co-workers. A young woman watching the way their women seniors work therefore cannot help feeling, 'I cannot work like a man'. 'I want to retire when I get married', a view partly related to the existing job while distribution which makes them so bored.

(4) The dilemma created by job segregation by gender

These observations may be summarised as follows. An informal training program has been established within the in-section culture carrying the mid and long-term expectation that men employees would become a qualified human resource. As a result, the men become such aggressive workers that they work as a matter of course as hard as their managing seniors at an early stage of their apprenticeship. In contrast, it is not until women are promoted to specific posts that they feel deprived of their free time. Women with no managerial position (so-called "unranked working girls") are hardly expected to enter the higher level labour force and are treated less seriously in job assignments. Obviously, this is adversely affecting women's enthusiasm about working. The daily job allocation in the section is strictly separated between the two genders, resulting in women's growing desire for "marriage retirement".

It is irrefutable that this system defines women's occupational attitude in complete contrast to men's enthusiasm toward moving up the career ladder. Among the 13 women junior college and high school graduates from their teens to their 20s, only two answered that they wanted to move up to or above the AB and ASM level. A majority of the responses were 'I don't want a position higher than AB or AS because I'd rather not be so busy', 'It looks so tough to work like that', and 'I want to marry and retire by the age of thirty'. An ASM in her forties conceded too, 'I don't feel like an SM because I find myself most happy serving customers'. A marked feature about women is that even those with many years of service are less aggressive about promotion in contrast to men who while still young aspire to a position one level or several levels above where they are. Even in 1994, there are very few women who reached higher posts such as SM and B. It is most probably because women, bound up in sales start in a climate separate from men co-workers that they feel reluctant to adopt the same working time and responsibilities as men, no matter how many years they have worked.

However, this entire scenario seems to be colliding with the intended "empowerment" of women as well as the efficient "utilisation" of the labourpower at work. Faced with the longer years of service as over 25 percent of high school and junior college graduates remain at work after the age of 30, it is becoming critical to seriously consider how to make the best of this segment of workforce. In fact, the personnel department of Company A is conscious of the problem of women aged 30 to 40 with no management position appearing to lack aggressiveness and tending to cut corners in their work. However, their tendency to cut corners is somehow unavoidable in view of the way they are currently treated. According to in-house

data, the yearly income of high school and junior college graduates falls further behind that of the university graduates year by year and reaches about half the income of graduates in their 20th year. When their income hits a ceiling in this way, their limited incentive, responsibility and empowerment at work, makes it unlikely that they will be enthusiastic about doing a better job. It will be crucial for the solution of this problem that due attention is paid to these women with more years of service and improve their working conditions and job allocations.

Another point very likely to be the focus of interest is the behaviour of the women university graduates who have been increasingly hired since 1982. Because there were no women university graduates in our case study section, we interviewed eleven such women working in the ladies' wear department of the same stores. Referring to a conclusion derived from that research, we could say that women university graduates are in a "grey zone". As university graduates, they are promoted almost as fast as their men co-workers, and are clearly distinguished from women junior college and high school graduates in that respect. As women, however, their roles are still determined by the set idea that women must be able to sell. They have to handle all the selling and incidental jobs just like employees with less education, while being required to develop familiarity with product control and other management-related tasks in the same way as their men peers. They are pulled toward "women's jobs" despite their educational background, but stand in an intermediate position between men university graduates and women with junior college and high school education. This refers to what I call the "grey zone". The dilemma encountered by them is that while they are promoted like men jumping over older women hired as junior college and high school graduates and are required to be as able as men with the same degree of education, they still have to concentrate on sales just because of their gender. It also happens that in the critical eyes of other women, university graduates are assigned to a sales job or given a task almost like the men's but are more dependent on their particular supervisors way of thinking. This means that their working conditions and promotion patterns are mostly decided by trial-and-error, with no stable programs and courses as there are for men university graduates. The working hours of women university graduates are rather close to those of junior college and high school graduates largely adhering to the normal shift pattern with just a few hours overtime.

Let us now discuss how such women in the "grey zone" evaluate their men peers and how they perceive gender differences. In this aspect, it may be noted that they are somewhat critical of the way the men work and overtime working. A women university graduate in her 3rd year expressed her opinion: 'Each man handles the workload for two or three people. Most of them are quite keen on their work, so they tend to hate leaving their job half-finished. I have been bothered by differences in my philosophy of work from that of my men co-workers. They have built up the section in their way. It may be OK with those women who can fit themselves to this way, but I think it is also important for women to work in-keeping with our own physical conditions'. As an intermediate between the university graduates' status and women's status, they are forced into an experience different from those of both men university graduates and women with less education. It seems that in such a corporate culture, they have been developing a specific value system as they work for a prolonged period. An ASM in her 8th year says: 'We are bunched together in the section as women rather than as university graduates. The way we are trained is entirely different from that of men. Many of us complain about it but to survive, we must be patient enough to wait for an opportunity'. She failed in her assistant manager promotion test twice. This experience has made her think that something

other than proficiency had some part in her failure: her gender. She has also begun to feel because of this: 'A supervising job is not necessarily all I should do'. Another woman in B position with 9 year experience argues: 'The educational gap determines more than the gender difference. We university graduates are paid more, so we have to work harder. I understand the feelings of those women hired as junior college and high school graduates that they want neither to be responsible nor to work more than they are paid. I am in a management position, so I must show a different attitude. I'd never wanted to move up before, but I changed my mind when I failed in the sub-section chief test once, probably because I became more conscious about my job. I wonder why men are so aggressive about promotion from the start. Women are more inclined to work steadily in the same position for a long time.'

Here we can see unique aspects of the women university graduates' experience, which contrasts to that of men who are organised into the taskforce as soon as they start and allowed to climb directly up the career ladder following their seniors. Women university graduates are trying to develop some occupational goal other than just "moving up" and "being big", while learning how to be able to "tenacious". In doing so, they have developed a certain critical view of the way men work. A university graduate SM in her 10th year pointed out: 'Men are more company-oriented. There seems to be a hidden educational effect that convinces men workers to work till ten or eleven at night as a matter of course. I think we women university graduates have to clear a way different from that of the men and the rest of the women. A women with more experience than me told me that we were looking for the way in which we would not be the same SM as my men counterpart.' According to B in her 9th year that I referred to before: 'Women above the section chief post mostly keep on their own way of working. On the other hand, men are very conscious of the organization, with a literally vertical way of communications.'

While three of the five women university graduates with no special position want to move up to AB or above, the six women who do have positions have no particular desire to go beyond their present positions. Obviously, they have an occupational attitude different from men's and are looking for a more relaxed way of working. A crucial point which makes these women distinct from their men co-workers is that they were more experienced in actual sales. In the training process they also formed various human relations with other women who are junior college and high school graduates. Taking advantage of such experience they are trying to do a good job as SMs or are attached to post B which has a certain decision-making power. The women university graduates' attitude is thus clearly distinguished from men employees' with a rather cool regard for the men's unthinking pursuit of higher positions.

Conclusion

Let me conclude this article by summarizing the problems revealed and suggest some future issues to be studied.

It has been made clear that a "women's dependent" section like Department Store A is actually dominated by a "men's oriented management" system, with numerous working practices firmly established by the men workers within their traditional control style, historically accumulated. Women promoted to higher positions are also pulled toward this tradition. Despite a larger number of women now reaching lower managerial jobs the fundamental

structure has by no means changed with women junior college and high school graduates stuck at lower levels in the structure. The point noted here is that working practices developed by men-dominated way determine the job segregation by gender in the section. Such a section situation can be called an “excessively gendered job structure”, because all the job-related factors including job assignment, informal job training and working hours, are distinctly and excessively separated by gender with little room for role exchanges by mutual co-operation.

What we see first of all in such a structure is men’s own excessive adaptation and integration into labour and into the company. The men themselves, even the new employees, take part in such a system requiring such long hours of work with the attitude of “bearing the fate of the section on their shoulders”. In the background, there seems to be the Japanese appraisal system based on the *Shokuno Shikaku* system introduced when the company began recruiting men employees only from university graduates, instead of high school graduates, in the late 1970s. This has presumably been a good justification for men’s own support for job segregation. The men have thus driven themselves to the competitive attitude and segregated themselves from men high school graduates as well as women. Their role model is the men senior to them. “Stepping up” and “being big” are set as their goals. On the other hand, the young junior college and high school graduates are in the mood of “getting bored”, “giving up” and “being disappointed” with the inconsiderate job assignment system. This “reminds” them that they never wanted to work for a long time as marriage was their goal in life, which then leads to their early retirement. Certainly, we cannot deny that their gender identity is printed on their minds before starting at this company was brought into the section. However it is also certain that the gender relations reproduced by daily job assignments looms in front of these women at work. Despite this as more and more women in the younger generation remain unmarried in major cities, the “staying” women with more years of service are reluctantly taking the lower managerial positions. In this way they are unwillingly drawn into the men’s condition of working which involves inordinate amounts of overtime. The “unranked women” with no specific position aged 30 to 40 are able to give up hard work and enjoy a substantial amount of free time though they are paid less. It is no wonder that they are much less enthusiastic about their work.

As seen, although the *Shokuno Shikaku* system has certainly broken new ground through measures taken to support women entering Company A, it is in practice dependent on how the daily jobs are distributed and performed and how the labour force is actually developed in the workplace. The “excessively gendered job structure” in the workplace reinforces the cultural gender norms outside the workplace and crucially determines women’s value system. In such circumstances, a future step that must be taken is the reorganization of the excessively gendered job structure itself. With numerous working practices daily reproducing the gender-oriented job segregation remaining untouched, it is undoubtedly difficult to successfully encourage women to join the Japanese appraisal system based on the *Shokuno Shikaku* system. In other words, it will be vitally important to introduce a new gender-neutral job structure to replace the existing structure.

It is evident from this research that the “empowerment” of women has not really succeeded even in a company highly dependent on its women labour force and theoretically most advanced in supporting women. The major cause of this failure is the company has attempted to choose capable women with greater seniority for promotion while making no change to gendered-dependent job practices that have existed for very many years. Neverthe-

less, those women university graduates who become professional workers are developing a philosophy of work that is different from that of men employees. It is obvious that as such they are exposing the problematic nature of an excessively gender-dependent job assignment system.

In my subsequent research, I would like to compare workplaces that has introduced *Shokuno Shikaku* system and workplaces that has introduced gender-separated career development strategy to cope with the EEO Law. If we accumulate the intensive case studies like this paper, we would be able to eventually uncover the factors that contribute to and maintain a gendered labour process.

HITOTSUBASHI UNIVERSITY

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