

Handout

Patterns and Changes of Educational Attainment in Korea

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Empirical Regularities

1. Class differentials in educational attainment have not decreased in almost all countries.
2. Gender differentials in educational attainment have declined.
3. The effects of family background diminished across transitions.

Research Questions

1. Have the effects of background factors on educational attainment changed or across cohorts in Korea?
2. How much are these similar to or different from the empirical regularities?
3. What are the reasons for the peculiarity of Korea, if any?

Data and Variables

Social Inequality Data and *Korean Labor Institute Panel Study* Data, both of which were collected in 1990s. Sample size is 11,709.

Dependent Variables: Educational Transitions

T1 : from primary school to lower secondary school

T2 : from lower secondary school to upper secondary school

T3-1 : from upper secondary school to junior college

T3-2 : from upper secondary school to four-year university

Independent Variables : Reference category

Father's education (4 categories): primary school or less

Father's class (EGP 5 classes) : manual working class

Gender : men

Birth Cohort (four cohorts) : the youngest cohort (born in 1966-75)

Findings in Korea

1. In the case of men, the effects of background factors in educational attainment have not decreased in all transitions.

However, in the case of women, the effects of father's education have increased in T3-2. In addition, the effects of (father's) tertiary education have increased more steeply than those of secondary upper education. As a result, the differentials in the effects have increased across cohorts.

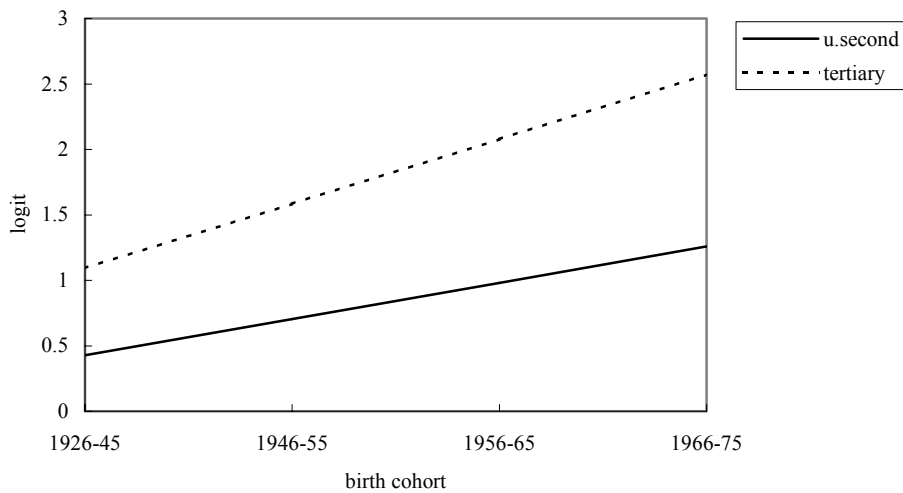


Figure 1. The trends of the effects of father's education across cohorts(Women)

2. Gender differentials have declined in all transitions. The disparities between sexes either have converged toward zero or have been reversed in favor of women in all transitions.

In T3-2, gender differentials have declined unequally depending on father's education. Women whose fathers are more educated have led the decline of gender differentials.

In the youngest cohort, gender differentials in T3-2 went so far as to be slightly reversed, even though the trends were found only in women whose fathers had tertiary qualifications.

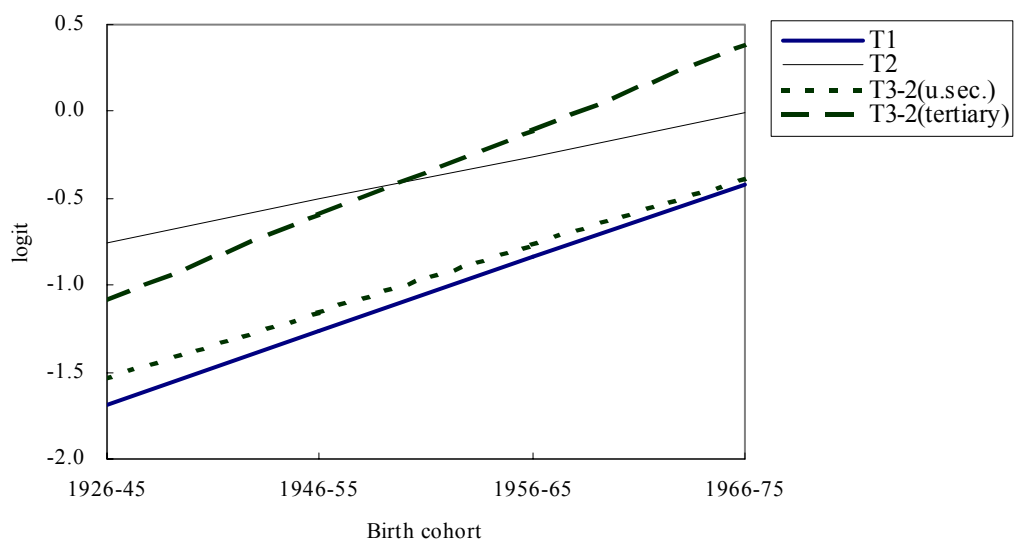


Figure 2. Trends of gender differentials in each educational level

- In the case of men, the effects of father's class did not decline across transitions, while the effects of father's education diminished consistently across transitions.

In the case of women, the effects of father's education did not decline across transitions.

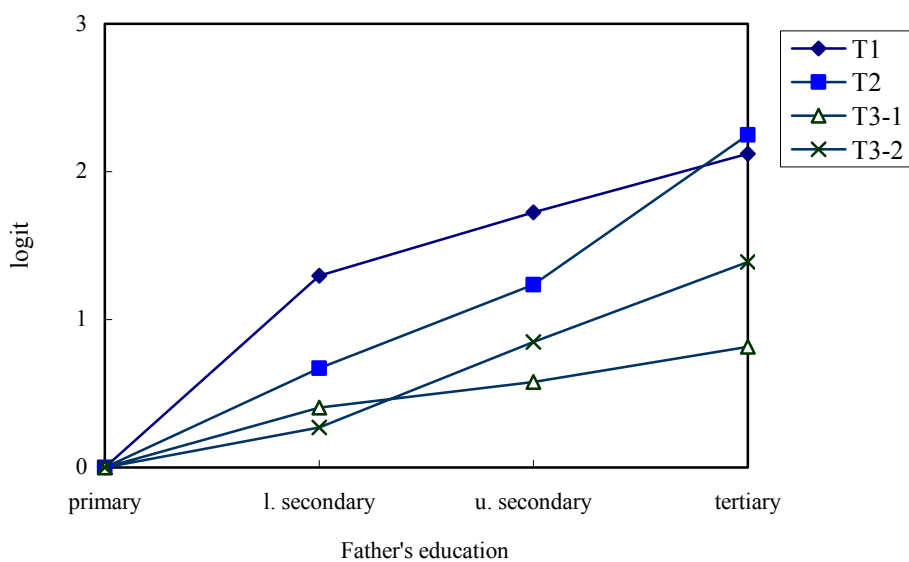


Figure 3. The effects of father's education on each transition(Men)

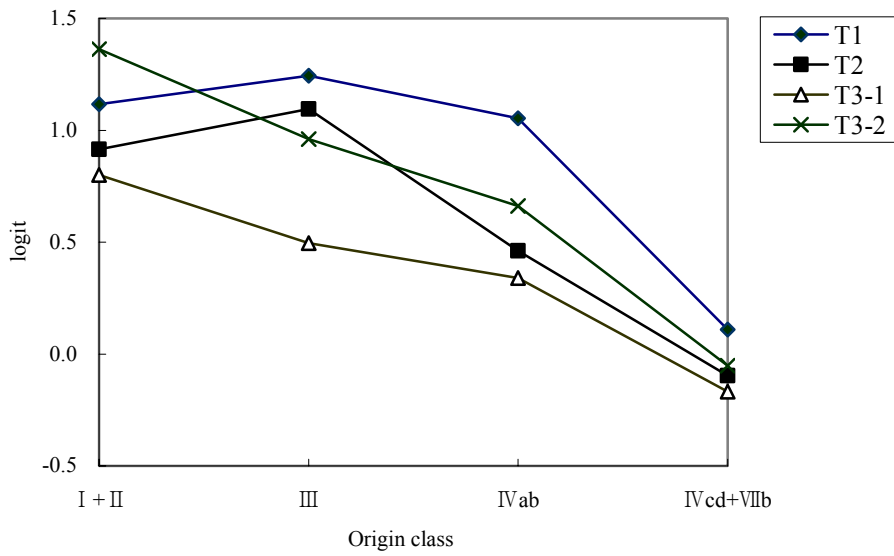


Figure 4. The effects of origin class on each transition(Men)

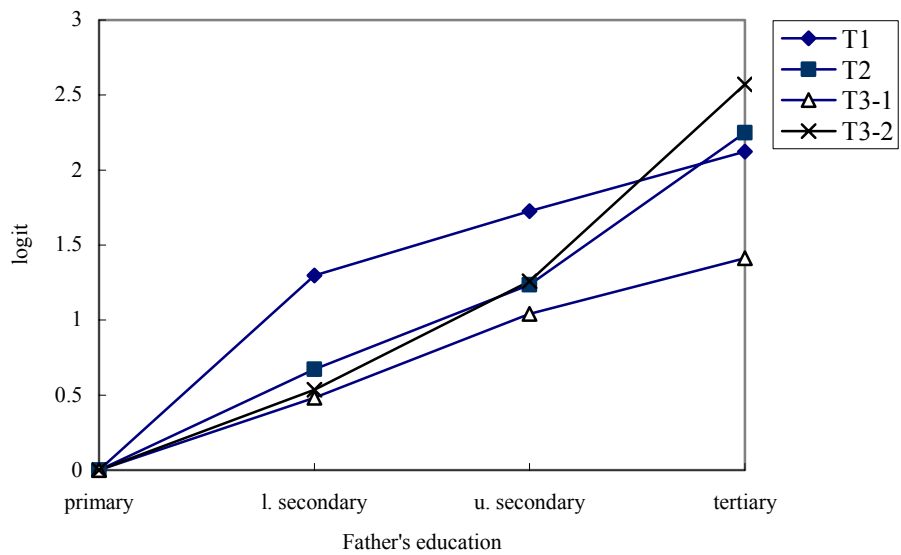


Figure 5. The effects of father's education in each transition(Women)

Discussion

1. The finding that in the case of men, class differentials have not decreased is not strange at all, because in Korea there have not been any evidences that income disparities and employment stability have improved since the early stages of industrialization.

The finding that the effects of father's education on completing four-year university have increased in the case of women is somewhat as expected, because competition over tertiary education has become stronger among women as their participation rate in labor market has been higher.

2. The fact that gender differentials have decreased during the past decades is surely as expected. It is also as expected that women from middle classes or highly educated families have led this decline.
3. However, Korea's patterns of family effects across transitions are deviant from the empirical regularity. Why is this in Korea?
 - 1) Economic returns to tertiary education are much higher in Korea compared those in other countries.
 - 2) Private expenditure of tertiary education is relatively higher, while public subsidies are much smaller than those of other countries.