

SOCIAL BACKGROUND, EDUCATION, AND PERSONAL ADVANCEMENT IN A DUALISTIC EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

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HISTORIANS HAVE marvelled at the progressive educational reforms of the Meiji oligarchs which resulted in virtually universal primary education by the turn of the twentieth century and unrestricted competition for higher educational attainments. Observing that many of the second generation leaders of modern Japan were university educated, some historians have concluded that education became the key to personal advancement. For example, Reischauer states that:

One result of this highly rational system [of education] was to change Japanese society within a generation or two from one in which prestige and function were largely determined by birth to one in which both were determined almost entirely by education. [26, p. 137]¹

We will argue that such a radical change could not have been possible “within a generation or two” and is not even the case today. Indeed family background still plays an important role in social selection, especially to positions in the traditional sector of the society and probably to many elite positions. At the same time, we will suggest that education has tended to become progressively more important as a means of social selection over the course of Japan’s modernization. Though our analysis will be focused on the Japanese case, we expect that our conclusions can be generalized to a large number of modernizing societies.

It was indeed the case that Japan’s social architects established by late Meiji a special sector of society composed of large government and business organizations. Some would call this the “modern” sector forgetting that feudal Japan had long experience with large governmental bureaucracies—we prefer the term organizational sector. It is also correct that this organizational sector relied on educational qualifications as a major criteria in recruitment, and hence to advance in the organizational sector education was a prerequisite. However, given these observations it does not follow that education replaced birth as the criterion for social selection. Rather it is possible that both education and social background increased in importance.

What needs to be recognized is that only a small proportion of all positions were in this organizational sector even as late as the 1950s—for the vast majority of jobs,

¹ Ronald Dore, more cautious, hypothesizes that “the criteria determining status in social organizations tend to change, showing less emphasis on birth and seniority and more on merit” [8, p. 4].

educational qualifications were irrelevant. Also, it needs to be understood that most of the students in the Meiji period going beyond primary school to obtain the qualifications necessary to enter the organizational sector were from privileged families, and since that time the proportion from less privileged families has only slowly increased. Thus before we can evaluate the importance of education for personal advancement, we need to determine the size of the organizational sector and the extent to which education has selected people from other than the privileged classes.

In the first sections of this essay we will attempt to answer these questions, drawing on official statistics and historical reports. Following that we will review some of the existing social science literature on the relation of education to personal advancement in Japan, and finally introduce the approach of path analysis which enables us to obtain a quantitative measure of the importance of both education and social background. With these measurements, we will show that education has indeed become more important in recent years; at the same time, we will present evidence suggesting that social background may also have become more important.

I. THE GROWING SIZE OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SECTOR

Japan's feudal order was divided into four official status categories: warriors, farmers, artisans, and merchants. In addition, the imperial aristocrats (*kuge*) and the outcastes were considered special status categories. Warriors were the ruling class and constituted about 6 per cent of the population, farmers 75–80 per cent, and merchants, artisans, aristocrats, and outcastes the remainder. Members of the respective classes tended to live in distinct areas, study at different types of schools, and engage in distinct types of work and leisure.² While there was some mobility within each of these classes, there was little mobility between them, and from the early Tokugawa period it became virtually impossible to move into the warrior class.

The effect of mobility within classes on inheritance of status is rarely appreciated. Many fathers in all four of the social strata passed their social positions onto their first sons, providing they had one. But second and third sons could not assume their fathers' positions, and more often than not were downwardly mobile. For example, the second sons of senior ranking samurai might become lower samurai.³ The second sons of landlords might remain as family workers, become tenants, or at best become managers of branch households or rural industries. Upward mobility within classes was usually only possible when a family of high status failed to reproduce an able first son, and then sought to adopt a prospect from another family usually lower in status within the same class. Thus in the feudal society, social background determined the status of first sons but fate that of additional sons. Recognizing this, we may surmise that the importance of social background in determining status was modest.

² For a neat analysis of Tokugawa class groups, see Robert J. Smith [30].

³ Two empirical studies of mobility in Tokugawa Japan are Ray A. Moore [22] and Robert J. Smith [31].

Soon after the Meiji restoration, the new oligarchs declared an end to this feudal status order and introduced reforms that opened government service to people from all the feudal classes; within the first decade universal primary education was proposed and by the turn century this reform was realized. Furthermore, access to higher levels of the educational system came to be based exclusively on performance in competitive entrance exams, eliminating the former ascriptive discrimination. In the recruitment for different positions in public service, educational attainment became the principal qualification. The highest levels of the civil service were essentially reserved for graduates of the government-sponsored Imperial University, while lesser educational attainments were a requirement for lower levels in the central and local bureaucracies, the schools, and the military.⁴ While the stress on educational qualifications was characteristic of most European civil services, it contrasted sharply with America's spoils system.

A major thrust of Japan's modernization program was the establishment of modern financial institutions and the encouragement of industry and commerce. As banks, industrial, and commercial organizations developed to a moderate scale, they formalized their recruitment criteria in imitation of the government practice. Thus by the end of the Meiji period, the majority of Japan's chief business executives were university educated whereas only two-fifths in the United States, and one-fifth in England had similar educational attainments.⁵

The larger Japanese industrial organizations from an early date also emphasized educational qualifications in their recruitment of blue-collar workers. Iwauchi shows that there was concern with educational qualifications in the heavy industries of shipbuilding and ironworks by late Meiji [12]. Taira suggests the 1890s for some textile firms [33]. This tendency was intensified from the mid-Taishō period (the twenties) as large companies faced serious competition for their skilled labor and began to develop the permanent employment system, formalizing criteria for recruitment, promotions, and rewards.⁶ A notable feature of this new employment system was the explicit preference for hiring recruits freshly graduated from the schools rather than workers seasoned in other organizations.

In view of these various strides towards the reliance on educational attainment in recruitment to the organizational sector, many have concluded that education was generally important for occupational attainment in Japan by the earlier years of the twentieth century. What they neglect is the small size of the organizational sector. We now turn to some estimates.

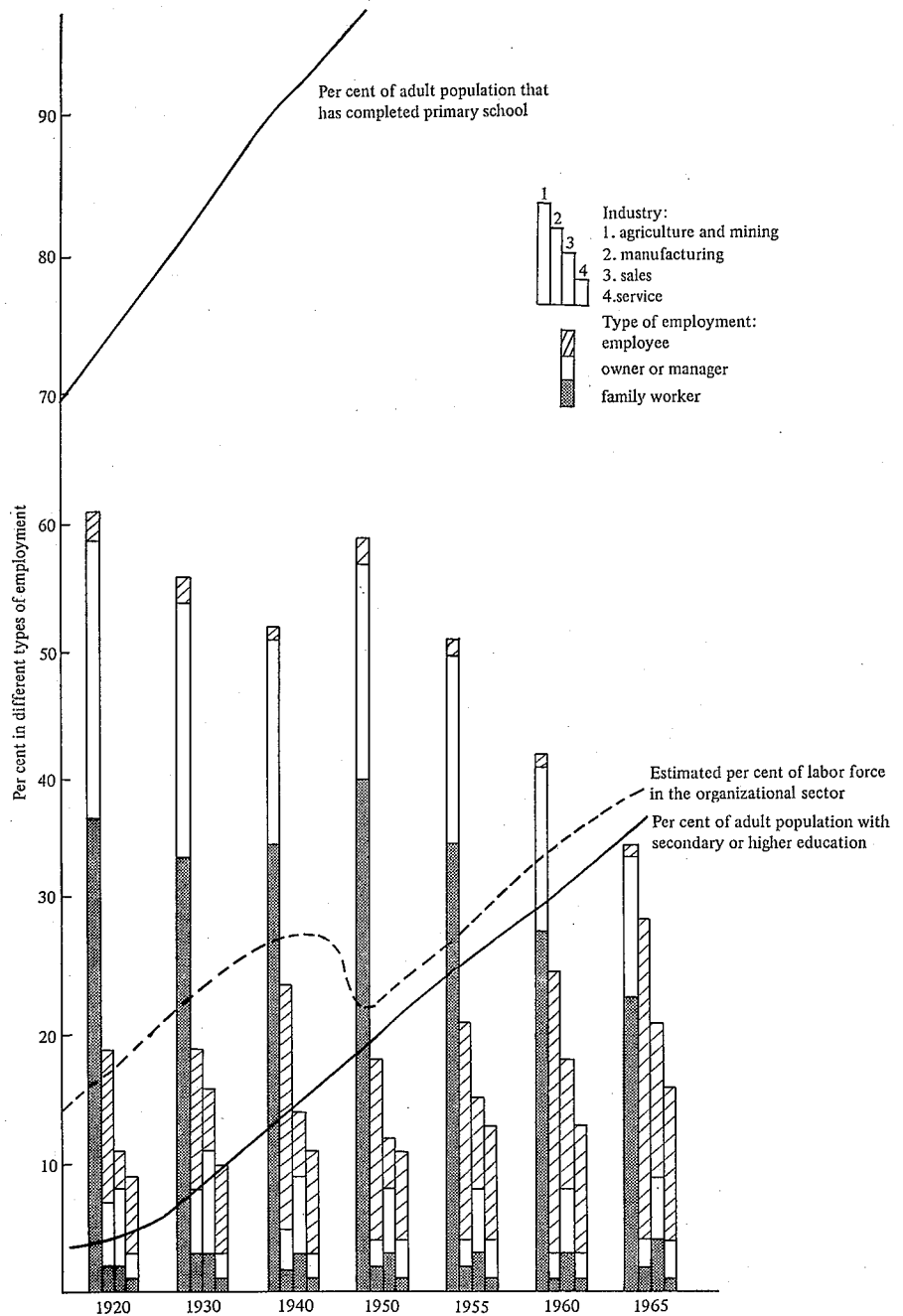
The Tokugawa economy was essentially agrarian, and despite the rapid emergence of modern industry and commerce from late Meiji the agricultural sector continued to employ a majority of the labor force until the postwar period. Trends on employment by industrial group from 1920-65 are presented in Figure 1. While a primary education was useful to many farmers in learning techniques to improve

⁴ Robert Spaulding discusses the development of the examinations in [32].

⁵ Several comparative studies of the educational attainments of business executives are summarized by Hiroshi Mannari in [20, p. 139].

⁶ The main features of the permanent employment system and the causes of its institutionalization are pretty well established; the most noted analysis is by Hiroshi Hazama in *Nihon rōmu kanri-shi kenkyū* [Research on Japanese labor management].

Fig. 1. Per Cent Distribution of Japanese Labor Force by Industry and Type of Employment, 1920-65



Source: Shōwa-dōjin-kai. *Tōkei kara mita koyō to shitsugyō* [A statistical study of employment and unemployment], pp. 40-42; and *Kokusei chōsa* [National census] for 1950-65.

their productivity, educational attainment rarely served as a qualification for acquiring a farm, becoming a tenant, or working as an agricultural laborer. As indicated in Figure 1, in any given year all but 2-4 per cent of agricultural workers were either managing their own (or a rented) farm or members of the family of the manager. In view of the large size of the agricultural sector, it is immediately apparent that educational qualifications could be important for no more than half the labor force as late as 1955.

On the manufacturing sector, we can go beyond the data in Figure 1 to additional data collected by Lockwood which allows us to make more precise estimates of the proportion of jobs that require education [19] [27]. One of the major themes of Lockwood's study as well as the subsequent work of Ohkawa and Rosovsky is that Japanese industrial firms should be divided into at least two strata: in the upper strata are the large firms which employ modern technology, are highly productive, select their employees on the basis of educational qualifications, and pay higher wages, and in the lower strata are the smaller firms staffed largely by family workers supplemented in some instances by a few employees. Lockwood observes that "after a half century of industrial development [in 1930] industrial workplaces too small to be classified as 'factories' (five operatives or more) still afforded upwards of 50 per cent of all manufacturing employment in Japan" [19, p. 203]. In 1930, only 21 per cent of those employed in manufacturing worked at establishments with one hundred or more operatives. Thus in 1920, at best only half of those in industry were selected on the basis of educational qualifications or 9.5 per cent of the total labor force. If we raise the figure for the proportion requiring educational qualifications to 60 per cent for 1940 and subsequent years, then those in manufacturing chosen on the basis of educational qualifications became 14.4 per cent of the labor force in 1940, down to 10.8 per cent in 1950, and up to 17.4 per cent by 1965.

The sales sector has had something of the same dualistic character Lockwood attributes to manufacturing. Along with the numerous small independent retail shops are a few large department stores and chains as well as large wholesalers and the famous trading companies. The lower strata is composed largely of family workers whereas the larger organizations tend to use educational qualifications in recruitment. While we have no way of determining the proportion who work in the respective strata, a rough estimate would be to consider all employees as members of the upper strata whereas shopowners and family workers could be placed in the lower strata. In 1920, the employees in sales constituted 3 per cent of the labor force and in 1940 they had risen to 5 per cent. In 1950 they were 4 per cent and by 1965 12 per cent.

The service sector primarily consists of public employees whether in government, public utilities, or teaching; though possibly one-fifth of the jobs are in the private sector (e.g., barbers, transport company workers, taxi drivers, bar hostesses). This has always been the sector with the smallest number of family workers. Assuming that all of the employees in the service sector require educational qualifications, in 1920 this would have been 6 per cent of the labor force and by 1940 it would have become 8 per cent; down to 7 per cent in 1950, and up again to 12 per cent by 1965.

Using these rough guidelines, we conclude that 18 per cent of the jobs in 1920 had been filled on the basis of educational qualifications, and the figure had risen to 27 per cent by 1940. Following the war Japan experienced a severe depression and the organizational sector actually decreased in size: in 1950 it was down to 23 per cent of all jobs. By 1955 it was back up to 29 per cent and in 1965 it had risen to 39 per cent of all jobs. These estimates are indicated by the thick doted line running through Figure 1.⁷ While there has been a steady increase in the proportion of jobs requiring educational qualifications, even as late as 1965 they were still a minority of all jobs.

II. THE INCREASING SCALE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Generally speaking the educational system expanded its output at a rate sufficient to supply the organizational sector with its need for educationally qualified workers. The ideal proof of this statement would be annual statistics indicating the number of employees at different levels of education that employers wished to hire compared with the number of school graduates. While such data is available from 1955, there are no statistics on employers' demand for the prewar period.⁸ However, it is apparent that in conjunction with the rapid growth of large-scale industry during World War I and the institutionalization of the permanent employment system, graduates rapidly increased. The number of universities increased from four to forty-five between 1918 and 1930 and the number of graduates from 1,908 to 11,110 [14, p. 162]. These increases were facilitated by a new University Law which business groups had promoted during the 1910s and which was enacted in 1918.

By ordinary "manpower" criteria, the academic specialities of many of the graduates were poorly matched to the needs of the organizational sector—most were in law and literature rather than commerce and engineering—but this created no problems; the large organizations depended on the universities to select youth who were accustomed to study and thus could profit from additional training provided on the job. The immediate post-World War I recession resulted in many of the new university graduates experiencing temporary unemployment. Nineteen thirty was the peak of the world depression and another bad year for college graduates seeking jobs: less than 50 per cent of university graduates in the humanities and only 60 per cent in engineering were able to obtain employment *soon* after graduation [7, p. 57]. But except for these two periods and the years immediately following World War II, most graduates found jobs. From 1952 to 1970, the proportion of male university graduates who have found jobs within a few months after graduation has usually been between 80–90 per cent.⁹ Prewar and wartime data of this kind are not available for the graduates of secondary schools. However, in recent

⁷ Though using a different method, Rosovsky and Ohkawa present similar figures [27, p. 481].

⁸ Some postwar series are presented by Teruhiko Wakana in [37, pp. 12–13].

⁹ Observation based on inspection of the annual surveys by the Ministry of Education called *Gakkō sotsugyōsha no jōken* [The situation of school graduates]. In 1955–56, there was actually a drop to 75 per cent employed by the survey date.

years the demand has far exceeded the supply.

A rough index of the supply of educated labor is the proportion of the productive age population who had received at least a primary education. In Figure 1 this proportion is plotted, and we see that it always dwarfed the proportion of jobs requiring educational qualifications. Another index is the proportion of the productive age population who have completed secondary or higher education (also plotted in Figure 1). Through World War II, this proportion was always less than the number of jobs requiring education. But by 1950 the proportions were roughly equal. And when we keep in mind that the productive age population includes many women who did not work and whose educational level has always been below men, we can conclude that the educational system has provided more than enough people to fill the organizational sector's needs since 1945, if not earlier.¹⁰ One consequence has been the organizational sector's tendency to raise the level of educational qualifications for a given job, albeit reluctantly. The rationale has been that the most able people are those who are most likely to go the furthest in the educational system, and the only way to insure that your labor force is the best is to use high standards of educational qualification.

One final note on the growing organizational sector and education's response. Not all categories of jobs within the organizational sector have grown at the same pace. While from available data, we cannot obtain precise figures, it is quite clear that the number of high prestige managerial positions has grown rather slowly whereas the number of clerical jobs has grown most rapidly.¹¹ Intermediate in speed has been the growth in professional and blue-collar jobs. While the organizational sector has grown rapidly and hence so has the demand for people with educational qualifications, the number of high status jobs requiring the highest educational qualifications has grown at a relatively moderate rate. In the postwar period, there is some evidence that the number of university graduates has grown faster than the number of jobs for which a university education is objectively required. The result has been that organizations have raised the educational requirements for some of their more routine jobs. The value of the average university diploma has become deflated. While education has become important for more people in enabling them to get into the organizational sector, advancement to the highest levels of education has become a less certain guarantee of advancing to the highest levels in the organizational sector.

¹⁰ Tsunehiko Watanabe discusses the oversupply of highly trained manpower in [38].

¹¹ Ohkawa and Rosovsky [27, p. 478] summarize one effort to compare the distribution of the labor force by occupational category for the pre- and post-war periods. The comparison is made difficult by incompatibilities in the categories used in the two periods and the absence of a category for manager. The Japanese source is Shōwa-dōjin-kai, *Waga kuni no kanzen koyō no igi to taisaku* [The significance of full employment and full employment policy in Japan] (Tokyo, 1957). Using these figures and Rosovsky-Ohkawa's estimates for the proportion of positions within each category that are non-indigenous [27, p. 479], we figure that between 1930 and 1955 non-indigenous professional positions increased from 2.6 to 3.9 per cent of the labor force, office workers increased from 4.0 to 9.9 per cent, sales workers remained at 12 per cent, and blue-collar workers increased from 10.6 to 14.5 per cent.

III. THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE EDUCATED

Among some social observers, it is common to describe the organizational sector as the modern sector. But in the Japanese case, there was little notably modern about this sector, at least in its earliest years. Feudal Japan had been divided into nearly three hundred fiefdoms, each managed by a lord (*daimyō*) and his bureaucracy of educated warrior-officials. These officials, known as samurai, lived off a stipend from their lord. The Meiji revolutionaries decided as one of the first steps in their reform program to eliminate these local fiefs and replace them with a smaller number of local governments subordinate to the national government in Tokyo. As a consequence, large numbers of samurai were deprived of their work. For a short time, the national government continued to provide the unemployed samurai with stipends, but from 1873 this practice was discontinued. These samurai who constituted approximately 5 per cent of the working age population had to find employment.

The growing number of public service positions created by the Meiji revolutionaries were an obvious possibility. While the regime was different, the content of the government jobs was much like that the samurai had been engaged in prior to the revolution. The highest positions in government payed handsome salaries: circa 1890 chief ministers received about six hundred times per capita income. Of course the salary scale went down sharply so that the salaries for the lowliest positions were quite modest—but for unemployed samurai, any job was better than none.

Initially samurai were hired by the new government with only the minimum examination of their qualifications. But as the government began to institute a civil service examination system testing skills and knowledge that could only be obtained at educational institutions, these samurai flocked to the secondary schools and universities. For example, throughout the nineteenth century, over half the graduates of the University of Tokyo were from samurai families (Table I). While the samurai

TABLE I
PER CENT OF STUDENTS GRADUATING FROM VARIOUS HIGHER EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS WHOSE PARENTS HAD BEEN SAMURAI,
1891, 1896, AND 1901

Type of Institution	1891	1896	1901
University of Tokyo	63.3	59.0	50.8
National preparatory schools	61.6	59.3	47.7
National technical colleges	48.3	42.5	38.2
Public medical colleges	72.6	13.6	24.0
Private law colleges	27.7	32.9	34.1
Private medical colleges	26.6	24.0	25.1
Other private colleges	59.8	44.1	35.3

Source: Ikuo Amano, "Kindai Nihon ni okeru kōtō kyōiku to shakai idō" [Higher education and social mobility in modern Japan], *Kyōiku shakaigaku kenkyū*, Vol. 24, pp. 82, 84.

percentage slowly declined, they were largely replaced by the children of rich landlords and merchants. It is important to note that the competition for entrance to higher education and top government offices was no longer limited to first sons as in the feudal system.

University students upon graduation had only one thing in mind, to obtain a job in government. Yukichi Fukuzawa, the founder of Keiō University and a promoter of the private sector was to condemn this tendency:

At the present time, most of the graduates of our universities enter government service. This is because they see government service as the only means to achieve their long-cherished ambitions for fame and fortune. They think that they cannot accomplish anything except through the government. . . . If a young student reads only a few books, he immediately aspires for a government post. [11, p. 24]¹²

Positions in government were attractive precisely because they were much like the positions in the feudal bureaucracies, and while some people of lower social background sought government employment, these positions were most attractive to the members of the former samurai class.

Financial, commercial, and industrial organizations had no feudal precedents and thus were not nearly as attractive to the samurai. Among other features detrimental to the image of the business organizations was their similarity in mission to the vile profit-making merchant houses of the Tokugawa cities.¹³ Many young samurai and peasants looked down upon the business organizations as profane, risky, and providing no chances for fame. The few Meiji leaders who recognized the importance of the business sector attempted to counter these negative attitudes by arguing that business provided an exceptional opportunity for service and that profit-making was consistent with Confucianism. To counter the fear of the insecurity attendant upon a business career, the permanent employment system for white-collar workers was developed, modeled after the civil service bureaus. Business organizations intentionally articulated a mission and developed a personnel system virtually indistinguishable from government. They tried to appear as unmodern as possible.

Despite the drive for respectability, business organizations continued to have problems with recruitment throughout the early decades. The larger of these organizations were dependent to a surprising degree on recruits from the old merchant class in their accounting and financial sections. However, the larger business organizations gradually proved themselves and gained respectability. Moreover, the higher offices in business tended to pay generous salaries, comparable with those of the highest government officials. Though the lesser white-collar positions were not that remunerative, they offered a future and security. And with the development of permanent employment for blue-collar workers, the wages and security in the large organizations beat most alternatives. The attractiveness of large business organizations was pretty much established by the second decade of the twentieth century.

¹² I have taken the liberty of modifying the translation relying on the original.

¹³ Byron Marshall in [21] provides a very interesting account of the effort to legitimize modern business enterprise.

While positions in the organizational sector were rising in status, it is important to recognize that the traditional sector exerted a strong pull on many in the working population. Exceptional first sons who might have been attracted to the city felt obliged to follow their father's footsteps in the family farm or enterprise. As late as the thirties, probably one-third of the labor force was either the head of or the destined head of a family enterprise. Given the officially sanctioned concept of the strong family unit, it was proper for these first sons to ignore the pull of the organizational sector.

Among others who might have found a career in the organizational sector attractive and who had ability, many had to give up due to the prohibitive costs of middle level and higher education. Following the national government's assumption in the eighties of responsibility for financing primary education, the first four years (and then six from 1908) were essentially free. Nevertheless there were the costs of small special fees as well as that of foregone labor to family enterprises. However, beyond the primary level substantial tuitions were charged, and these increased with each step that students proceeded up the educational ladder. The highest tuitions were at the universities, and amounted in 1935 to 60 yen annually at the University of Tokyo (roughly eighty dollars in 1965 prices) and around 120 yen at leading private universities [7, p. 249]. In addition, many students had expenses for room, board, and books which at least equalled their tuition. The median family income at this time was roughly 400 yen, or merely doubled the average cost for going to a university for a year [19, p. 273]. Furthermore, the universities offered almost no scholarships, and there were not many available from other sources. Children with fathers in the middle to high ranks of the organizational sector or who were rich landlords or merchants could finance a higher education, but most young Japanese could not.

Thus many who were able, either because of family obligations or lack of money, excluded themselves from the educational competition. Despite the small number of places relative to the age cohort in the middle schools, higher schools, and universities, the ratio of applicants to places tended to be no more than three to one at the middle schools and two to one at the higher levels—substantially below postwar rates.¹⁴ In so far as individuals selected themselves out of the educational competition, we cannot say that education as such became the basis for occupational placement.

Asō and Amano discussing the relation between background, education, and occupational attainment prior to the late-Taishō university expansion concluded there was some slippage in the system so that "people of the lower middle and upper lower classes who had high ability and a strong desire" could move up to the higher educational institutions and on to positions of high status. But basically "schools constituted a means for reproducing the respective social strata" [2, p. 30]. The sons of wealthy former samurai and landlords went to the Imperial Universities and to the elite course in the organizational sector, the sons of the poorer middle class not required to succeed their fathers in a small enterprise went to the various

¹⁴ Data on the competition rates are published annually in the yearbooks of the Ministry of Education, *Mombushō nempō*.

public and private colleges and then to white-collar jobs, and the second sons of the agricultural families went to vocational and normal schools and into the ranks of skilled labor, public school teaching, and the military.

Over the course of Japan's development, conditions gradually altered. For example, following the University Law of 1918 the numbers of secondary schools, colleges, and universities rapidly increased enabling larger numbers of youth to seek entrance into the organizational sector. A rising standard of living and weakening commitments to family enterprise enabled more to choose this alternative. By and large through the thirties and early forties, the organizational sector retained its attractiveness.

Since the early fifties, the openness of the educational system and the attractiveness of the organizational sector notably accelerated. Under the postwar economic growth first policy, large business organizations rapidly increased in number and scale, and up to 1957 or so the wages they offered tended to rise impressively relative to those in small enterprises and especially the agricultural sector.¹⁵

Concerning schools, the Japanese government with the encouragement of the American occupation extended low-cost compulsory education from the sixth to the ninth grade. And it cut the cost of tuition at national universities to approximately one-fifth of its prewar level. As a result, a substantial number of university students now come from low income families. In 1970, 31.2 per cent of the students at national universities and 16.6 per cent of all university students came from families whose income was in the bottom 40 per cent (see Table II). While the

TABLE II
INCOME CLASS OF PARENTS OF STUDENTS IN MAJOR UNIVERSITY
GROUPS AND SELECTED ELITE UNIVERSITIES, 1970

(%)

Income Classes of Adult Population		Proportion of Students in Major University Groups Whose Parents Are in the Income Classes to Left			Proportion of Students in Elite Universities Whose Parents Are in the Income Classes to Right*					Income Classes of Adult Population	
		National	Private	All Universities	Tokyo	Waseda	Keiō	Hōsei	Tokyo Rika		
Top	20%	29.9	52.5	46.9	47.2	49.4	68.0	35.4	30.8	Top	33%
Next	20%	21.2	22.3	22.0	40.4	36.8	21.2	48.7	46.6	Middle	33%
Next	20%	17.7	13.1	14.5	7.3	4.7	2.2	4.5	10.9	Bottom	33%
Bottom	20%	13.9	6.1	8.0							
		17.3	5.8	8.6							

Sources: For university groups, Japan, Ministry of Education, Daigaku-gakujutsu-gakuseika, *Shōwa-45nendo gakusei seikatsu chōsa kōhō* [Report of the conditions of student life in 1970], p. 14. For elite universities, an unpublished report supplied by the University of Tokyo student office, "Shusse katei no shokugyō to shūnyū" [The occupations and incomes of students' parents], p. 3.

* Percentages do not total 100 because unreported cases not included as a category.

¹⁵ Taira [33, p. 78] indicates that at the peak in 1957 "wages" in the modern sector were three times those in agriculture.

majority of students in all university systems around the world come from the upper income and occupational groups, comparative studies suggest that contemporary Japanese universities admit a better than average proportion from the lower income groups.¹⁶ Given the large scale of the Japanese university system, it probably gives degrees to a greater proportion of children from low income families than does any other system in the world excepting the American and Soviet systems. While satisfactory historical data is not available, there is little doubt that a youth from a lower income Japanese family has a better chance today of graduation from *some* university than he did twenty years ago.

Given the overall structure of our argument, it would thus seem to follow that education is becoming more important. But there is one further aspect, a tendency in the organizational sector to upgrade the educational requirements for many routine jobs and at the same time to preserve an elite path. In view of the growing number of universities and graduates, many of the more prestigious organizations have developed stratified career lines in their personnel systems for graduates from different classes of universities.¹⁷ Graduates of the most prestigious universities enter the elite path and if able experience rapid advancement whereas graduates from lesser universities enter other career lines that often lead nowhere. Some 36 per cent of the university educated in Japan in 1960 were employed in clerical and sales jobs, while only from 20 to 30 per cent were employed in similar occupations in the United States and Canada, and less than 20 per cent in all other advanced societies [36, p. 8]. In other words, higher educational attainment is not as certain a ticket to high personal advancement as it was in earlier years. It is possible that many from the less privileged groups who go to a university find that it does them little good in terms of advancement.

While the total university population may be more representative than in the past, it is quite evident that the most prestigious institutions have a distinct bias towards admitting children from the more privileged families. This is not because of intentional discrimination. With only a few exceptions, children are admitted to the elite institutions solely on the basis of their performance on a written examination and their willingness to pay tuition. However, as it turns out elite families have more cultural resources in their homes to stimulate their children's intellectual development and often more money to pay for special tutors and the fees at exam-oriented private schools.

Some rough comparative statistics for 1970 on the family incomes of students at several university groups and universities are presented in Table II.¹⁸ The

¹⁶ Crude comparative data supporting this claim are found in [13, p. 52].

¹⁷ Yoshihiro Shimizu in [29] outlines the differences in employment policies according to university of graduation.

¹⁸ Concerning Tables II and III, the distributions are based on student's reports of their parent's income, a fact which they may know little about. To the extent that the students do know their parent's income, they might underreport it as they more than often do when applying for scholarships and loans from the Japan Scholarship Society; the tendency to underreport would be especially strong among students at national universities, and especially those at the University of Tokyo. Also, in interpreting the statistics it is useful to keep in mind that the parents of students are typically in their forties and fifties and hence near the peak of their personal income earning potential.

categories for the breaks in the data are not identical, so exact comparisons are impossible. Our interpretation is that Keiō, among the elite institutions, is most exceptional in the proportion of students from the high income group; the other elite institutions are only slightly above the average for all universities. On the other hand, all the elite universities including the University of Tokyo, a national institution and the gateway to the civil service and many business corporation elite paths, accept fewer students from low income families than does the university system as a whole.

Once again, satisfactory historical data on trends in the income and occupational origins of students at the prestigious universities is not available. The longest series available is on the social background of students attending the University of Tokyo. Between 1959 and 1970 this data suggests very little change in the distribution by broad occupational group of fathers of the students (Table III). However, in the

TABLE III
PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE FATHERS
OF UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO STUDENTS, 1959-70

Occupations Groups	1959	1961	1962	1964	1965	1967	1970
Salaried employees in public service	24	26	28	28	22	23	22
Managers						15	15
Non-managerial						8	7
Salaried employees in private enterprise	31	34	32	31	34	35	39
Managers					19	25	26
Non-managerial					15	10	13
Small business owners, executives	18	18	15	17	18	17	14
Large and medium business executives	3	2	3	6	5	4	6
Self-employed	10	7	9	8	10	9	10
Agriculture	5	5	5	3	3	6	3
Other	9	8	8	7	8	6	6

Source: Tokyo-daigaku-kōseika, *Keizai seikatsu no ryūnen henka: 1958-1970* [Trend analysis of the economic conditions of student life: 1958-70].

late sixties there is a rise in the proportion from the managerial categories of both the government and private enterprise salaried groups.

Possibly, relative to twenty or thirty years ago, graduates at the elite institutions are somewhat more representative of the overall population than in the past—though we have no convincing evidence. To the extent that there has been little change in the class origins of students at elite institutions, our case for the growing importance of education has to be qualified by noting that social background has remained an important factor in admission to the prestige universities and to the elite paths of organizations.

IV. EXISTING STUDIES OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

In order to determine whether education has become more important for personal advancement, several conditions need to be fulfilled:

(1) It is necessary to have an indicator of the hierarchy of social positions that working members of the population aspire to.

(2) It is necessary to have data at several points in time on the background characteristics, educational experience, and personal attainments of the working population.

(3) It is necessary to have some criteria, preferably a quantitative measure, of the importance of education for personal advancement after the importance of other contributing factors have been accounted for.

Leaving aside condition (1) for a while, our survey of available research suggests that no study has adequately fulfilled (2) or (3). The national censuses provide cross-tabulations of education and occupation, but no information on background. Some Ministry of Education surveys replicate the census information and others indicate the relation between background and education; however, none include all three variables.¹⁹ A number of scholarly studies of elites and special sub-populations analyze the relations between two and in some cases all three of these key variables over time, but it is impossible to make generalizations about the whole population from elite surveys.²⁰

The best available information for determining the importance of education are the two sample surveys of the social mobility (SSM) of the adult male population in 1955 and 1965 conducted by a group of scholars coordinated through the University of Tokyo's department of sociology. Though these surveys are done at one point in time, they contain data on the key variables for a general sample. And if analyzed with caution, differences between age groups can be studied to draw inferences about the changing importance of education. Concerning the 1955 survey, a report was published, but the importance of education was not analyzed and since then the original data has been misplaced [23]. This leaves the 1965 survey.²¹ Saburō Yasuda has used a simple technique of the ratio of the partial gamma between education and present occupational status (controlled for father's occupational status) over the gamma between father's educational status and present occupational status to conclude that "the effect of educational status is large"

¹⁹ Some of these surveys are summarized in Wakana [37]. Also see *Chūgakkō sotsugyōsha no shinro jōken* [The occupational aspirations of middle school students] and *Kōtō gakkō sotsugyōsha no shinro jōken* [The occupational aspirations of high school students].

²⁰ One of the better elite surveys is Makoto Asō [1].

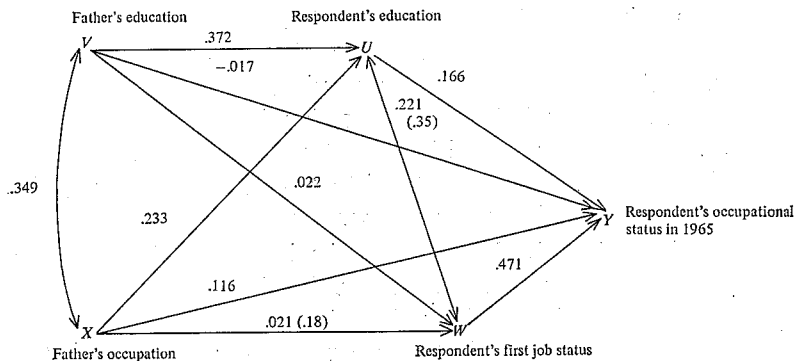
²¹ For the 1965 SSM survey 3,000 males were sampled and 2,147 were finally interviewed. Tominaga used the full sample for his analysis, whereas for the analysis reported below, we excluded those who are under twenty-four years of age, over sixty-four, unemployed, students, or who did not give sufficiently detailed responses. This left us with 1,964 cases. The exclusion of those over sixty-four was based on our knowledge that most were at least semi-retired and hence that their 1965 occupations did not reflect their highest attainment. The exclusion of those under twenty-four was intended to eliminate all students and enable some time to lapse between first and present job.

relative to father's occupational status [39, p. 290]. However, he does not consider whether it has changed over time.

Kenichi Tominaga has carried out the most detailed analysis of the 1965 data, and this was published in 1969 in the *Developing Economies* [34]. While his analysis suffers from two critical flaws, we would like to review his strategy of analysis for it will serve as a model for our work to be introduced below.

Tominaga developed indexes for father's occupational status (X), father's education (V), respondent's education (U), respondent's first occupational status (W), and respondent's present occupational status (Y). He argued, as did Duncan and others, that these variables are arranged in a time sequence. X and V are ascriptive variables at birth, U is achieved during basic socialization, W follows U as the first step into the occupational world, and Y is the final occupational status at the time of the survey.²² The direction of the relation between these variables are indicated by the arrows in Figure 2. Tominaga used the method of path analysis to analyze the relations between the variables, and the path coefficients he published are also indicated in Figure 2. Jones has since indicated that Tominaga either miscalculated

Fig. 2. Basic Path Diagram as Presented by Tominaga



Source: Kenichi Tominaga [34]. Corrections in F. Lancaster Jones [17].

or there was a misprint of two of the path coefficients; the corrected coefficients are indicated in parentheses and our subsequent discussion is based on them [17, p. 19].

Path analysis is an adaptation of multiple regression where the distributions of the values for the variables in the analysis are standardized. All antecedent variables in the analysis are used to predict subsequent variables. The partial regression coefficients linking antecedent and subsequent variables are referred to as path coefficients, and provide a quantification of the "direct effect" of the antecedent variables on the later ones. The "indirect effect" of antecedent variables on later variables is all the effects each has through the other mediating variables on the later variables, and are calculated by multiplying path coefficients back along

²² [4, pp. 166 ff.]. In a later publication [10, pp. 227-43], it is concluded that the American practice of going back to school makes it difficult to identify and American's first job. In Japan the practice of going back to school is infrequent, and hence it is reasonable to assume that educational attainment precedes first job.

the paths linking each antecedent and later variable and then adding the products. In Tominaga's path model, the direct effect of V on Y is P_{yv} and the indirect effect is $P_{yw}P_{wv} + P_{yw}P_{wu}P_{uv} + P_{yu}P_{uv}$ [9, pp. 137-38]. The total effect of an antecedent variable on a later variable is the sum of the indirect and direct effects. The gross effect is the correlation coefficient between the two variables, and should be distinguished from the total effect.

From Tominaga's analysis, we find that education has a larger direct effect than father's occupational status on first job status ($P_{vu} = .35$ versus $P_{vx} = .18$) and present job ($P_{yu} = .166$ versus $P_{yx} = .116$). But the difference is not large. In neither case, is education's direct effect twice as much as father's status. It is striking given the claims by historians such as Reischauer for the importance of education that education has such small effects on both first job and present job.

Focusing on present job where such calculations are possible, we find that the indirect effect of father's occupational status is .278 which is considerably greater than education's .165. Adding direct and indirect effects, we find that the total effect of education on present job is .330 whereas the total effect of father's occupational status on present status is .394. Moreover, as a determinant of present status education is clearly overshadowed by the status of an individual's first job ($P_{yw} = .471$ versus $P_{yu} = .166$); though education is an important determinant of first job, so are father's occupational status and other variables exogenous to the Tominaga model. Tominaga observes "although U (respondent's education) has a fairly high gross effect on Y . . . the single factor of education does not account for much of the variance which must be explained in present occupational status" [34, p. 494]. Hence, from the Tominaga study we are led to conclude that education is only of modest importance in determining personal advancement.

Tominaga's published study does present the basic data for determining the changing importance of education. However, he does not pursue this line of analysis. And because we believe his index of occupational status is inadequate, we will not report those results. Rather we will turn now to present our own approach based on a new index of occupational status.

V. NEW INDEX OF OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

Thus far in Japan there is no definitive study of the dimensions of social stratification. Two studies of occupational prestige have been conducted by Nishihira et al. [34, p. 491]. Several small studies have been conducted on attitudes to occupations and of the relations between occupations and class consciousness. Education and some income data is available for constructing objective indexes of stratification. However, up to this date no study has combined this information in a major statement on the dimensions of social stratification.

Tominaga carried out the above analysis as one stage in a comparative study of social mobility. To achieve comparability with Western studies, he developed a simple eight category index of occupational status. The scores for each category were computed by averaging all the specific occupations within each category which were included in Nishihira's occupational prestige surveys: the result was profes-

sionals (72), managers and officials (71), clerical workers (47), sales (40), skilled blue-collar (46), semi-skilled (38), unskilled (27), and farmer (42).²³ Given the limited work on the Japanese stratification system and Tominaga's comparative objectives, this choice was reasonable. However, our review of the development of the Japanese occupational system leads us to conclude that a more complex index of occupational status is required. In particular, we feel that it is necessary to represent the important phenomena of dualism in this index.

In contemporary Japan it is recognized that two individuals who work at essentially the same manual tasks but at different workplaces, one large and the second a family enterprise, receive different incomes. Likewise a manager of a large factory receives a larger income than most manager-owners of family enterprises. Nishihira's study of occupational prestige also indicates that those in the larger enterprises are generally attributed more prestige. For example, a spinner in a large factory receives a score of 38.5 whereas one at an ordinary factory receives 37.1. A salesperson at a department store (most are quite large) receives a score of 41.0 while an ordinary salesperson receives 38.0, a foodshop salesperson 36.6, a bookstore salesperson 36.0, a notions shop salesperson 36.0, and a vegetable shop salesperson 34.4. A section head (*kachō*) in a large business firm receives 67.0, a section head in a national government bureau 64.0, and a section head in an ordinary business firm 62.5.

In view of the income and prestige differences between social positions in large organizations (making up the organizational sector) and small organizations, we decided to construct an occupational status index that would discriminate between nominally identical occupations depending upon whether they were in large or small organizations. Our first step was to identify twenty-three basic occupational groups. The occupations included in Nishihira's 1964 occupational prestige survey were listed under each of these group headings and where a group included occupations working in similar sized organizations the average were computed for the basic category. For those groups which obviously included positions in both large and small organizations, separate scores were computed relying again on the Nishihira survey when possible. For example, in the case of managers and officials, Nishihira obtained scores for six different specific occupations: large business section head (67.0), national government bureau section head (64.9), large labor union chairman (64.3), city government section head (61.2), ordinary business firm section head (62.5), and fishing boat captain (59.2). The scores of the first four were averaged to obtain a score of 64.4 for managers of large business and government bureaus, and the scores of the remaining two were averaged to obtain a score for managers of middle and small-scale business. Actually, in the survey there were no questions on managers of small businesses, but since managers of small businesses are also owners and hence in a separate occupational category we felt it would create little distortion to call the second group managers of medium as well as small businesses. Similar procedures were followed with respect to all the other basic occupational groups where we had evidence of important differences in income and prestige by

²³ A general report is Shigeki Nishihira [25]. Our scores are from [24].

scale of organization. In two instances, we had to make estimates on the differential prestige scores in that Nishihira's survey provided insufficient information. The resultant index is presented in Appendix Table I.

In that the dualistic structure was established by the second decade of the twentieth century and business organizations had gained social acceptance, we feel that our new index can be viewed as an adequate approximation of the occupational hierarchy for at least the past fifty years. Hence the new index is used to operationalize father's occupational status (X), respondent's first job (W), and respondent's present job (Y). One indicator of the validity of the new index is the mean score by age of respondent's first job. Given the growth of the organizational sector and the general process of occupational upgrading accompanying Japan's modernization, we might expect these average scores to increase in magnitude as each new cohort enters the labor force. Indeed we find that our oldest cohort (55-64 years of age and aged 20-29 in 1930) has the lowest average score for first-job status of 38.4; the 45-54 cohort has an average score of 38.5; the 35-44 age group has an average score of 39.8; and the youngest cohort (25-35 years of age and aged 20-29 in 1960) has an average score of 40.7.

TABLE IV
A COMPARISON OF THE GROSS EFFECTS, DIRECT EFFECTS, AND TOTAL EFFECTS USING THE NEW INDEXES WITH TOMINAGA'S FINDINGS

	Gross Effects		(Direct Effects Path Coefficients)		Total Effects	
	New	Tominaga	New	Tominaga	New	Tominaga
Father's education (V) and father's occupation (X)	.171	.349				
Father's education (V) on respondent's education (U)	.453	.453	.429	.372		
Father's education (V) on first job (W)	.161	.204	-.002	.022	.137	.152
Father's education (V) on occupational status (Y)	.232	.195	.049	-.017	.202	.116
Father's occupation (X) on education (U)	.213	.362	.140	.233		
Father's occupation (X) on first job (W)	.164	.299	.095	.18*	.140	.262
Father's occupation (X) on occupational status (Y)	.208	.311	.103	.116	.174	.278
Education (U) on first job (W)	.343	.412	.323	.35*		
Education (U) on occupational status (Y)	.406	.395	.287	.166	.357	.331
First job (W) on occupational status (Y)	.340	.571	.216	.471		

Sources: Computed from our analysis of the 1965 SSM and from coefficients published in Kenichi Tominaga [34].

* Corrections of Jones included.

Developing an index for father's educational attainment (V) and respondent's educational attainment (U) also faced some difficulties. We wished to have an index reflecting the level of education completed rather than the number of years completed, as the completed level is what is meaningful to Japanese employers; also at least 80 per cent of those who begin all levels beyond compulsory education complete the levels they start.²⁴ However, over the last several decades the Japanese educational system has undergone several structural reforms, the most radical occurring after World War II. As a result of these reforms, the schools at one period are not identical with those at another.²⁵ Our solution was to develop a general index of five levels and to include the schools of different periods in the common index according to the relative level they represented in their time, as indicated in Appendix Table II.

One indicator of the validity of this index is that the mean level for our sample was 2.5 or about 10.5 years which is only 0.5 years larger than the mean number of years of school attended by the adult male population in 1960. Also as a result of the steady upgrading of the educational system over the past century, we find that the mean number of levels completed by the youngest cohorts of our sample are greater than the means for the older cohorts: $U_{25-34} = 2.7$, $U_{35-44} = 2.5$, $U_{45-54} = 2.2$, $U_{55-64} = 2.1$.

VI. BASIC PATH DIAGRAM WITH THE NEW INDEXES

With our new indexes of occupational and educational status, we computed correlation coefficients and path coefficients. Beside our coefficients are those published by Tominaga (with the two Jones's corrections). Several differences are evident that indicate the usefulness of the revision:

(1) Using the new indexes, the correlation between father's education and father's occupation is weaker. A low correlation could be anticipated in that most of the fathers began working before the organizational sector was prominent and hence before education became a widespread key to occupational placement.

(2) With the revised indexes, father's occupation has a smaller direct effect on respondent's educational attainment though father's educational status has a larger direct effect.

(3) The magnitude of the direct effect of education on first job is similar regardless of the indexes, though with the new indexes the direct effect of father's occupation declines.

(4) Of greatest significance, the direct effect of education on present occupational status is much larger with new index; and the effect of first job on present status is smaller. These findings suggest that the revised indexes are better suited to the special conditions of Japanese employment than Tominaga's indexes.

The new indexes suggest that father's occupation is generally of lesser importance in determining all later variables than Tominaga's study indicated. On the other hand, the new index suggests that education is of greater importance especially in

²⁴ Data on retention rates is found in [15, p. 33].

²⁵ These changes are outlined in [16, pp. 13-15].

determining present occupational status; the effect of first job on present occupational status is somewhat less with the new index.

VII. THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

In beginning this study, we proposed that educational attainment becomes a more important determinant of occupational status as a society's workplaces increase in scale. The rationale for this proposition is that the organized workplaces use educational qualifications as a primary criteria for selecting new personnel for most positions, and as an important criteria in promotions. In addition we observed that there is no necessary reason why the importance of family background should decline. Indeed, given the graded capacity by the social position of parents to aid their children both in educational attainment and in obtaining jobs, the importance of family background might actually increase. To determine whether our basic proposition is sound, we contrast here the gross effects, direct effects, and total effects for the whole sample with those computed on the sub-sample of people actually working in the organizational sector (Table V).

TABLE V
A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTS OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, FIRST JOB, AND BACKGROUND VARIABLES ON OCCUPATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN FULL 1965 SAMPLE AND IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL SUB-SAMPLE

	Gross Effects		Direct Effects		Total Effects	
	Full	Organi- zational	Full	Organi- zational	Full	Organi- zational
Respondent's educational attainment (<i>U</i>) on respondent's occupational attainment (<i>Y</i>)	.406	.519	.287	.373	.357	.483
First job (<i>W</i>) on occupational attainment (<i>Y</i>)	.340	.456	.216	.285		
Educational attainment (<i>U</i>) on first job status (<i>W</i>)	.343	.406	.323	.385		
Father's education (<i>V</i>) on respondent's occupational attainment (<i>Y</i>)	.232	.274	.049	.010	.202	.239
Father's occupation (<i>X</i>) on respondent's occupational status (<i>Y</i>)	.208	.244	.103	.099	.174	.195

Source: The basic coefficients can be found in Appendix Table III.

As anticipated, the direct effects (as well as the gross effects) of respondent's education (*U*) on both occupational status of respondent's first job (*W*) and occupational status in 1965 (*Y*) are greater for the organizational sub-sample than for the total sample. Also the direct effect of father's education and father's occupational status in 1965 (P_{yv} and P_{yx}) are slightly lower than for the full sample. On the other hand, the total effects of both father's education and father's occupation on present occupation are slightly larger. This last set of findings is contrary to the historian's

generalization that education replaces birth; it actually appears that while father's education and father's occupation are of less direct importance for occupational attainment in the organizational sector, they are of greater overall importance for occupational attainment in this sector than for the entire occupational system.

Our comparison of the organizationally employed sub-sample with the total sample enables us to infer that both educational attainment and family background are more important in the organizational sector of the modern economy, and by implication as this sector has become more dominant the importance of both these variables has risen. However, the comparison does not allow a true historical trend inference.

VIII. CHANGING EARLY OCCUPATIONAL ATTAINMENT PROCESS

The respondents to the 1965 SSM included in our analysis were born between 1901 and 1940 and assumed their first jobs between 1916 and 1960. From this it can be seen that the dates at which different members of the sample were experiencing early family socialization, obtaining an education, and seeking their first job spread over nearly a fifty year period. Elsewhere these variables have been analyzed as the key variables in the early occupational attainment process [28]. Breaking our sample into four age groups we can make the assumption that those 25-34 years old in 1965 are a reasonable approximation to the population of Japanese males seeking their first job between 1951-60. Those 35-44 years of age represent the males seeking a first job between 1941-50, those 45-54 represent the males seeking a first job between 1931-40. Finally those 55-64 might be viewed as representing all who sought a job between 1916 and 1930, but we would prefer not to make this last assumption in that many of this population had died by the time the 1965 SSM was conducted or had retired and hence were excluded from our analysis.

If we make these assumptions, we have samples for three populations who attempted to obtain an education and seek their first job during three different historical periods.²⁶ A comparison for each of these samples of the effects of the

TABLE VI
THE EFFECTS OF FATHER'S EDUCATION, FATHER'S OCCUPATION, AND
RESPONDENT'S EDUCATION ON FIRST JOB STATUS BY AGE GROUP

Age Group	First Job Sought between	Effects of Father's Education on First Job Status			Effects of Father's Occupation on First Job Status			Effects of Respondent's Education on First Job Status	
		Gross r_{wv}	Direct P_{wv}	Total $P_{wv} + P_{wu}P_{uv}$	Gross r_{wx}	Direct P_{wx}	Total $P_{wx} + P_{wu}P_{ux}$	Gross r_{wu}	Direct P_{wu}
45-54	1931-40	.175	.091	.166	.189	.072	.125	.262	.214
35-44	1941-50	.155	-.019	.134	.274	.066	.145	.332	.326
25-34	1951-60	.203	.003	.158	.265	.163	.269	.429	.387

Source: The basic coefficients can be found in Appendix Table IV.

²⁶ See Blau and Duncan [4, pp. 177 ff.] for a review of some of the considerations involved in this kind of analysis.

first three variables of our basic model on first job status can tell us how the early occupational attainment process has changed over time.

In Table VI we present our calculations of the trends in gross effects, total effects, and direct effects of father's education, father's occupation, and respondent's education on occupational status of respondent's first job for the three samples. Once again, we find support for the thesis that educational attainment is becoming more important. The direct effects as well as the gross effects of educational attainment on status of first job increase as the period when the first job was sought nears 1965.²⁷

We also find evidence that family background is increasing in importance. The direct effects of father's occupation on first job increase as the period when the first job was sought nears 1965; also the total and gross effects of father's occupation on first job increase. Concerning father's education, the direct effects are small and if anything decrease; on the other hand the total effects remain essentially constant. Taking the previous section into account, we believe it is proper to conclude that the importance of family background is actually increasing in importance.

CONCLUSION

We have argued that education could not have been as important a determinant of occupational attainment in the early stages of Japanese history as some historians have suggested. However, as increasing proportions of the labor force began to work in large organizations and as these organizations came to select personnel on the basis of educational qualifications, it was inevitable that education would become more important. The limit on the overall importance of education has been the proportion of the labor force in the organizational sector, roughly 40 per cent in 1965 (over 60 per cent of the male labor force).

Though the expansion of the organizational sector has increased the total effect of education on occupational attainment, it does not follow that the importance of family background should decrease. It should be recalled that family background had a relatively modest effect on occupational attainment in the feudal period. Furthermore, education though it has increased in importance accounted for only one-fifth of the variance in occupational attainment in 1965. Other factors determine whether family background will diminish or increase in importance: for example, the extent to which schools provide equal opportunities for people from all social backgrounds, the extent to which people from all backgrounds make use of those opportunities, the extent to which well-bred children make use of the resources from their background, the way in which employers appraise educational and other qualifications, and differential birth rates over time and by class.

We have suggested that the Japanese schools have provided reasonably equal opportunities, but in the period up to the Taishō university reforms it was largely the sons of privileged families who capitalized on the opportunities. Since that

²⁷ Another related piece of information is that the correlations between father's education and father's occupation increase as the cohorts come closer to the present: $r_{2045-54} = .089$, $r_{2035-44} = .187$, $r_{2025-34} = .198$.

time there has been a gradual democratization of school attendance. But at the university level, it is still sharply biased to those from the upper income classes. Moreover, at the most prestigious institutions this tendency is most marked.

It used to be thought that the expansion of higher education would be accompanied by the democratization of the origins of the student population. But various reports over the last decade have challenged this view.²⁸ Children raised in privileged homes interact with more verbal adults, they have more books in their homes to read, they are more likely to be rewarded if they do well in school, and their parents are more able to hire tutors for special instruction. Finally, in some educational systems (though rarely in Japan) children from well-known families are given special consideration by university admissions organs—often because their parents present a special gift to the university or some of its members. The main result of higher educational expansion has been to allow more of the children of upper and upper middle income families to go to universities than in the past. This generalization is somewhat less true of Japan than of most of the other advanced societies. Nevertheless in Japan children from the less privileged families are less likely to go to a university than their more affluent peers, and if they go they are more likely to attend a low status institution.

Employers in the organizational sector recruit most of their new employees from the schools and increasingly the universities as growing proportions of youth go on to the universities. In the past, graduation from a university was a sure passport to the most prestigious of jobs. But with the expansion of the number of universities, employers developed an elite path: graduates of the most prestigious universities enter this path, graduates from many other universities are likely to pursue a career of routine jobs devoid of responsibility—and of prestige. Thus while educational attainment leads into the organizational sector, higher education as such no longer leads to the top. The top is reserved for those who received higher education at a prestigious institution; as we have noted these institutions are disproportionately attended by children from privileged social backgrounds. Thus social background can be expected to have a persistent indirect effect on personal advancement, even in the meritocracy (or the degreeocracy as it is called in Japan).

Background factors also play a direct role in personal advancement in the organizational sector. In the West, “who one knows” is often said to be as important as “what one knows.” In Japan, it has always been assumed that both are important. Prior to World War II, a well-bred person had to achieve the minimum distinction of graduation from a good university. After that, it was quite acceptable for him to make full use of his connections.²⁹ Marital and kinship ties within the elite class were well known and publicized. In the immediate postwar honeymoon with “democracy” these particularistic links were deemphasized. But many observers feel they carry just as much weight today.³⁰ One problem faced by the contemporary

²⁸ A useful review of much of this literature with special attention to to the United States is Mary Jean Bowman and C. Arnold Anderson [5]. Also [6].

²⁹ On connections, see Kōya Azumi [3].

³⁰ While it is still not proper to discuss these particularistic ties, a few analyses are available: Kaname Iio, *Nihon no keieisha* (1962), especially pp. 265 ff.; Yoshimatsu Aonuma, *Nihon*

elites is that their children with increasing frequency fail to excel in the competition for entrance to the best universities. One interpretation of the recent pressure in Japan to allow more students from less prestigious universities into the elite paths of organizations is so that it will become more acceptable for children of elite families who fared poorly in terms of "what they knew" in university entrance exam competition to still enter a respectable organization and make full use of "who they know."

Background factors have always played an important role in the traditional sector. First sons stayed to assume their father's position, while later sons had to go outside the family enterprise. In the Meiji through early Shōwa periods (1868 to circa 1940) when the average family had three to four children, many second and third sons *could* not succeed their fathers, but rather had to seek jobs in the organizational sector where their family background was of little use. Since World War II, the average family has tended to have only two children, ideally a boy and a girl. The decreasing family size has meant that a greater proportion of the sons of families in the traditional sector have been first sons, and hence subject to the filial obligation to succeed their fathers. We can conclude that the decreased family size has contributed to increasing the importance of the background factor for the offspring of traditional sector families.

Our finding on the increasing importance of education should surprise few readers. On the other hand, our claim that family background is also increasing in importance is usual.³¹ Donald Treiman in a recent survey of propositions on the relation of industrialization to stratification argues that "the more industrialized a society, the smaller the direct influence of father's occupational status on son's occupational status" [35, p. 221]. We have suggested several reasons why the effect of father's status on son's occupational status might actually increase rather than decrease—some that generalize to all modernization processes and other that are specific to those cases with a dualistic employment system. Finally we have presented our findings which clearly suggest that background factors have become more important at least during the last several decades of Japan's modernization.

no keieizō (Tokyo: Nihon-keizai-shimbunsha, 1965), especially pp. 169 ff.; Michiya Shimbori, "Kane to meibō no shinjikēto kyōjyu habatsu," *Ryūdō*, April 1972; Richard Halloran, *Japan: Images and Realities* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1969), pp. 83 ff.; Chitoshi Yanaga, *Big Business in Japanese Politics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 15 ff. Of special interest is a recent study by Hiroshi Mannari and James C. Abegglen which indicates a sharp rise in the social origins of the Japanese business elite between 1960 and 1970: "Gendai Nihon no keieishazō" [Contemporary Japan's managerial class], *Nihon rōdō kyōkai zasshi*, August 1971.

³¹ One other paper which has advanced a similar position is Jonathan Kelley and Melvin L. Perratman [18].

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APPENDIX TABLE I
OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE SCORES FOR JAPAN

International Occupational Group	Japanese Occupational Classification	Occupational Prestige Scores—Computed from 1964 Nishihira Survey
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	02 professional, technical, and kindred workers of large business (including college professors) and government	75.9
	03 professional, technical, and kindred workers of middle and small business	65.9
	01 free lancers	63.5
	04 public school teachers	61.2
	05 teachers, other schools	61.2
Managers, officials, and proprietors excluding farm	10 highest officers of large business and government	85.4
	21 managers, officials, and proprietors of large business and government	64.4
	22 managers, officials, and proprietors of middle and small business	60.9
	15 middle business B owner	62.4
	14 middle business A owner	58.4
	13 small business owner (5-29 employ.)	53.4
	12 small business owner (1-4 employ.)	48.4
	16 family worker of small business	48.4
17 family worker of medium business	48.4	
Clerical and kindred workers	10 self-employed without employee	45.6
	31 clerical and kindred workers of large business and government	50.3
	41 clerical and kindred workers of middle business	50.0
Sales workers	43 clerical and kindred workers of small business	31.5
	32 sales workers of large business	45.3

APPENDIX TABLE I (Continued)

International Occupational Group	Japanese Occupational Classification	Occupational Prestige Scores—Computed from 1964 Nishihira Survey
	42 sales workers of middle business	39.0
	63 sales workers of small business	37.0
Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers	51 craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers of large business	43.2
	61 craftsmen, foremen, and kindred of small business	33.4
	64 craftsmen, foremen, and kindred of middle business	26.8
Operatives and kindred workers	52 operatives and kindred workers of large business	43.2
	62 operatives and kindred workers of middle business	33.4
	64 operatives and kindred workers of small business	26.8
Laborers	53 laborers of large business	33.4
	65 laborers of small business	26.8
	66 other laborers	26.8
Service workers	32 service workers of large business	45.3
	33 service workers of governments	47.7
	34 service workers of middle business	39.0
Primary industry owners and family workers	91 farmer	42.9
	92 lumberman	42.9
	93 fisherman	42.9
	94 family worker of farmer	40.5
	95 family worker of lumberman	40.5
	96 family worker of fisherman	40.5
Primary industry laborers	71 farm laborer of other's business	29.5
	72 lumberman of other's business	29.5
	73 fisherman of other's business	29.5

Note: Large business means an enterprise with 1,000 or more employees as well as government bureaus; middle B is from 300 to 999 employees; middle A is from 30 to 299 employees; and small is from 1 to 29 employees.

APPENDIX TABLE II
INDEX OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Type of School	Typical No. of Years a Student Is in School before Completing This School Level	Level
Elementary school—1970	6	1.0
Elementary school—1941	6	
Elementary school—1900	4	
Upper elementary	6	1.5
Unknown—among oldest age group	?	
Lower secondary school—1970	9	
Middle school, vocational school—1941	10-11	2.0
Middle school, vocational school—1900	11	
Upper secondary school—1970	12-13	3.0
Higher schools—1941, normal schools—1941	13	
Higher schools—1900, normal schools—1900	12-15	
Technical college—1970	14	
Junior college—1970	14-15	4.0
Colleges—1941, higher normal schools—1941	14-16	
Colleges—1900, higher normal schools—1900	14-16	
University or graduate school—1970	16+	
University—1941	16+	5.0
University	17+	

APPENDIX TABLE III

1. SIMPLE CORRELATIONS FOR FIVE STATUS VARIABLES FOR JAPANESE SUB-SAMPLE
OF RESPONDENTS WITH STATUS WITHIN AN ORGANIZATION

Variable	Y	W	U	X	V
Y		.456	.519	.244	.274
W			.406	.173	.208
U				.252	.492
X					.210

2. PARTIAL REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS IN STANDARD FORM
(PATH COEFFICIENTS) FOR SPECIFIC COMBINATIONS OF VARIABLES
FOR JAPANESE SUB-SAMPLES OF RESPONDENTS WITHIN AN ORGANIZATION

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	W	U	X	V
U				.156	.459
W			.385	.075	.003
Y		.285	.373	.099	.010

APPENDIX TABLE IV
 1. SIMPLE CORRELATIONS FOR FOUR STATUS VARIABLES FOR
 THE THREE AGE COHORTS OF THE 1965 JAPANESE SAMPLE

	<i>U</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>V</i>
First job sought between 1951-60, N=620			
<i>W</i>	.429	.260	.203
<i>U</i>		.248	.434
<i>X</i>			.198
First job sought from 1941-50, N=517			
<i>W</i>	.332	.140	.155
<i>U</i>		.239	.498
<i>X</i>			.187
First job sought from 1931-40, N=396			
<i>W</i>	.262	.123	.175
<i>U</i>		.203	.366
<i>X</i>			.089

2. PARTIAL REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS IN STANDARD FORM (PATH
 COEFFICIENTS) FOR SPECIFIED COMBINATIONS OF VARIABLES
 FOR THE THREE AGE COHORTS OF THE 1965 SAMPLE

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables		
	<i>U</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>V</i>
First job sought between 1951-60			
<i>U</i>		.168	.400
<i>W</i>	.387	.163	.003
First job sought between 1941-50			
<i>U</i>		.151	.470
<i>W</i>	.326	.066	-.019
First job sought between 1931-40			
<i>U</i>		.172	.350
<i>W</i>	.214	.072	.091