Defining Female Achievement:

Gender, Class, and Work in Contemporary Korea

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Abstract

Understanding how women transition to adulthood and make decisions about family, employment, and parenting have long been central questions in gender and family scholarship. Korea offers a particularly compelling context in which to study these issues: Korea has the highest female educational attainment levels in the world, yet also has a relatively low labor force participation rate among married mothers. Based on interviews with 100 mothers with young children, three empirical chapters dig into the "black box" of how culture is created and disrupted at the micro-level. Each chapter unpacks one micro-level process: developing career aspirations, making work decisions, and engaging in childrearing. Findings show that in Korean culture, regardless of their level of education, mothers are pressured to constantly provide legitimate reasons why they deserve to work and are expected to spend endless time and energy ensuring their children's well-being and academic achievement. In such a context, ideas about who should work as a mother and how a mother should approach childrearing are constantly challenged, negotiated, and reproduced. At the heart of these phenomena, I argue, families – across multiple generations – play a significant role not just in reproducing but also in challenging social norms. Especially in the lives of married mothers, intergenerational bonds – especially between women – become a critical relationship and resource. Consequently, I argue that the influence of natal families begins in the early childhood stage through divergent childrearing approaches but also continues to differentially shape adult children's aspirations and employment.

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For my mother, we did it.

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

Three Essays on Mothers in Contemporary Korea

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the twentieth century, South Korea (hereafter Korea) experienced rapid modernization, which included industrialization, democratization, urbanization, and educational expansion (Kleiner 2001; Chang and Lee 2006; Chang 2010). Women's educational attainment level, particularly the percentage of those with tertiary education, increased dramatically from eight percent for women born in the 1950s to 69 percent for women born in the 1980s (OECD 2015). Today, Korea has not only the highest level of female educational attainment in the world, but also the largest generational gap in level of educational attainment. Demographic trends also shifted rapidly during this period (Chang 2010; Raymo et al. 2015). The total fertility rate fell with unprecedented speed from 6.10 in 1960 to 1.23 in 2010 (World Bank Group 2018), the divorce rate increased (Raymo and Park 2013), and more women chose not to marry (Hwang 2016).

Despite these substantial changes in women's educational attainment and in demographic trends pertaining to women, married mothers' labor force participation has stalled. Almost 40 percent of working women leave the labor market upon giving birth to a child (Ma 2014), and labor force participation of women in their 30s has been stagnant at around 50 percent since the 1980s (Statistics Korea). Long working hours, hyper-competitive workplace culture, and lack of part-time jobs in the workforce all contribute to the sharp conflict between work and family for married mothers (Brinton 2001; Brinton and Oh 2018; Ko 2007; Ma 2014; Ochiai and Molony 2008; Tsuya and Bumpass 2004). Additionally, the distribution of paid and unpaid work amongst men and women is very unequal; social norms and traditional beliefs prioritizing women's role as mothers and negatively viewing maternal employment have proven very persistent (Ochiai and Molony 2008; OECD 2012; World Value Survey 2010; Brinton and Lee 2016). Increased

educational opportunity, persisting constraints in the labor market, and negative views of maternal employment together create challenges for married mothers in Korea in balancing work and family responsibilities.

The central aim of this dissertation is to unpack the decision-making processes that Korean mothers go through at critical stages of their lives. Developing career aspirations while transitioning into adulthood, making work decisions after motherhood and engaging in childrearing are three major transitional stages in a woman's life, and serve as the main research interests explored in this dissertation. My focus in this study is on explaining how women construct their rationale and how they make decisions, rather than making causal claims and identifying associations between various factors and women's perceptions and decisions. In independent, standalone chapters, I explore three processes: defining female achievement, seeking childcare support and making work decisions, and engaging in childrearing. Three analytic chapters investigate how women (a) develop career aspirations in a context of rapid social change, (b) make work decisions, and (c) approach childrearing.

It is worthwhile to explain the different purposes of using Korea as a research setting and the generalizability of the Korean case to develop sociological theory that can apply to other contexts. Chapter 2 focuses on Korea's unique features, mainly rapid educational expansion, and thus aims to develop a framework to understand what is going on in the minds and lives of Korean women when they are developing career aspirations in an unusual social setting where social change happened so rapidly and in a compressed way. Third and fourth chapters focus on how Korean case demonstrates generalizable patterns related to mothers' work decisions and childrearing.

1.2 DATA AND ANALYTIC STRATEGY

The data for this study are 100 in-depth interviews conducted in person over a period of roughly ten months in 2015. My sample consists of married mothers who lived in the Seoul metropolitan area and had at least one child under six years old at the time. I recruited interviewees using two sampling strategies. First, I reached out to mothers from a panel identified by Ovey, an online and smartphone-app–based survey company that provides services to merchandizers, broadcasting companies, and scholars conducting opinion surveys. Second, I recruited interviewees using personal ties. I used a restricted-snowball sampling strategy, with a limit of no more than having three referrals per interviewee. I started by interviewing six people with different occupations, ages, and incomes, and asked each of them to provide contact information for one to three people who met our criteria. My main goal was to hear as many diverse voices as possible before identifying common patterns.

I conducted structured interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire covering perceptions about work and family: daily schedules for weekdays and weekends; childrearing patterns; interactions and relationships with parents and parents-in-law; work-related issues including working hours, workplace environment, women's expectations about their work, career aspirations, work experiences and trajectories; and work–family policies such as parental leave, daycare facilities, and flexible working hours (the questionnaire is in the Appendix A). Additionally, I asked the interviewees about experiences of dating, marriage, childbearing, motherhood and mothering, and ideal womanhood. All interviews were conducted in person, and usually lasted about 90 minutes; the shortest was 60 minutes and the longest was two hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed in Korean, the native language.

Following multiple readings of the transcripts, I analyzed the interviews to inductively identify themes and narratives. For each of the three analytic chapters, I used two coding strategies. First, I used open coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990), where I organized the data under primary themes of interest that apply to each chapter. I also checked whether different patterns were contingent on respondents' background information, such as educational attainment level, household income, and the number of children. For the second round of coding, I used a focused coding strategy where I selectively coded line by line to understand respondents' views, and rationales (Lofland and Lofland 2006). At the end of this focused coding, I wrote a list of conceptual framings to capture commonalities and differences across interviewees. After these two rounds of coding, I identified the main patterns that ran through the interviews and constructed narratives.

A list of interviewees, using pseudonyms, is provided in the Appendix (Appendix B). Because Chapter 2 on career aspirations specifically explores how highly-educated mothers develop their aspirations, I only used a subset of the data (66 interviews), excluding mothers whose highest educational level was high school or two-year college graduate (34 interviews). For Chapter 3, focusing on work decisions, I used all 100 in-depth interviews, and for Chapter 4 on childrearing, I used 98 interviews, excluding two interviewees who provided insufficient information about their childrearing practices and beliefs.

1.3 AN OVERVIEW OF EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS

The three empirical chapters of this dissertation use qualitative analysis and in-depth interview data from mothers with young children to shed new light on the role of family and women's work.

Chapter 2, "From Passengers to Drivers: Women's Education, Career Aspirations, and the Role of Families in Contemporary Korea," focuses on a group of highly-educated women and explores how they construct career-oriented or work-oriented aspirations. This chapter speaks to the array of studies that have explored puzzling cases in which a high level of female educational attainment does not lead to the expected high labor force participation, mainly due to ideas about what constitutes "good" motherhood. In the context of Korea's extreme case of massive educational expansion, I analyze women's varying definitions of the meaning of life and aspirations about work and family. A powerful theme that emerged from the respondents' narratives is the idea of having to "pay back" their own mothers, who sacrificed their lives and engaged in intensive mothering on their daughters' behalf. However, although all women used a similar logic of having to pay back to their parents, the ways they imagine paying back diverged greatly: some adhere to a tradition that defines a successful life for a woman as marriage and raising children well, while others seek status in the public sphere by engaging in paid work. At the heart of such diverging views is adult daughters' degree of achievement in the public sphere – especially educational attainment level – in comparison to their own mothers and to other female siblings in a family.

Chapter 3, "Who Deserves to Work? How Women Develop Expectations of Childcare Support in Korea," extends the findings from Chapter 2 about mothers' critical influence on adult daughters. Specifically, Chapter 3 explores the processes by which women decide to ask for, and then either do or do not receive, childcare support from their mothers and mothers-in-law. While both economic constraints and cultural preferences may play a role in motivating women to seek kin-based childcare, this chapter complicates our understanding of how women ask for help with childcare by exploring how they develop their expectations of maternal

employment and how they approach negotiations about maternal employment with their families. Scholars have argued that childcare provided by grandmothers is the most important resource in helping Korean mothers continue to work (Lee and Bauer 2010, 2013; Lee 2011). However, given the persistent negative views of maternal employment when a child is young and expectations that a mother will prioritize childrearing over her job, I find that mothers feel it is critical to construct a "legitimate" reason to seek childcare help. Cultural contradictions about working mothers leave them feeling that their choices are under attack and must be justified (Luker 1984); the case of mothers asking for childcare support in order to maintain their employment status is no exception. Based on the findings in this chapter, I argue that the notion of *who deserves to work* explains why some mothers ask for childcare support and some do not. For less-educated mothers, deservingness to work—that is, the belief that motivates women to seek help and to maintain continuous employment—comes from job stability; for highly-educated mothers, it comes from occupational prestige or from the name value of the company in which they work.

In Chapter 4, "Class-based Mothering in the Land of Concerted Cultivation," I shift the focus to revisiting one of the classical topics in the literature on class and culture: the investigation of different parenting styles by family background. Studies of class-based parenting have demonstrated that among indicators of family background, maternal education has a strong association with disparities in children's learning and achievements. Recent studies have found the impact of maternal education starting from early childhood. Building on this literature, I examine whether class-based mothering exists in the Korean context, and if there are differences based on family background, how class-based mothering plays out in a culture where all mothers are expected to engage in intensive mothering and concerted cultivation. Although all are

expected to spend copious time and energy focusing on providing a set of learning programs to ensure children's educational success, I find that Korean mothers with different educational backgrounds develop different childrearing strategies and beliefs. Depending on financial constraints, mothers create different childrearing approaches, which I call *horizontal diversification* and *vertical cultivation*. In the former, highly-educated mothers approach childrearing as an opportunity to provide their children with many diverse opportunities to engage in learning starting in early childhood, whereas the latter describes less-educated mothers' approach to childrearing as an opportunity to provide focused guidance through a small number of learning programs in areas where they think their child is likely to succeed.

In sum, motherhood remains an important status and stage to explore in gender scholarship and the work-family literature because it impacts women's work and caring lives in all societies. Recent studies suggest the need for further investigation of how gender and class shape women's working and caring lives (Williams 2010; Damaske 2011). Even less attention has been paid to how gender and class shape women's lives in East Asia, where social changes, including the rising level of women's educational attainment, are taking place very rapidly.

In the context of Korea, regardless of their level of education, mothers are pressured to constantly provide legitimate reasons why they deserve to work and are expected to spend endless time and energy ensuring their children's well-being and academic achievement. In such a context, ideas about who should work as a mother and how a mother should approach childrearing are constantly challenged, negotiated, and reproduced. Particularly in the unique case of Korea – where gender role ideologies are shifting, social changes are occurring at a fast speed, and yet old traditions such as the salience of extended families and negative views of maternal employment persist – families may play a significant role not just in reproducing but

also in challenging particular social norms. However, there has been little exploration of how natal families become a source of challenges to existing definitions of a meaningful life for women in adulthood. This dissertation takes steps to address these gaps in the literature. Based on the findings, further implications – both theoretical and empirical – for the literature and for studies on Korea are discussed in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 2

From Passengers to Drivers:

Women's Education, Career Aspirations, and the Role of Families in Contemporary Korea

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Understanding how mothers make hard choices about balancing work and family has been a longstanding goal in gender scholarship (Damaske 2011; Gerson 1985). Despite increases in women's educational attainment levels in almost all post-industrial societies, some highly-educated mothers decide to adjust their employment by quitting or changing jobs (Ahn and Mira 2002; Blair-Loy 2003; Stone 2007; D'Albis et al. 2017; Ma 2014; Rindfuss and Brewster 1996). Several perspectives have been useful in understanding how and why mothers with high human capital make such work decisions. In the context of U.S., these include workplace conditions (Chermack et al. 2015; Kelly et al. 2014), spouses' working conditions (Cha 2010; Blair-Loy and Jacobs 2003), home-based support (Blair-Loy 2003; Hochschild 1989; Stone 2007), childcare support through informal and formal institutions (Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Dimova and Wolff 2008; Haan and Wrohlich 2011), and women's gender ideologies (Fan and Marini 2000; Vespa 2009). Gender role attitudes about whether and how mothers should work also play an important role in how women plan their future labor force participation and make work decisions (Abraham, Auspurg, and Hinz 2010; Bielby and Bielby 1992; Blair-Loy 2003). Building on literature that demonstrates how ideas about gender roles influences mothers' work decisions, this study asks how women evaluate who should work as a mother and develop their own career aspirations.

Research on familial influence on women's work expectations has been rich and vibrant. Women's perceptions of work develop during adolescence (Davis and Greenstein 2009; Risman 1998) and young adulthood, before they start a family (Bass 2015; Damaske 2011). Studies about childhood socialization have shown that gendered differences in how parents treat their children have consequences for the particular gender role ideas that daughters develop (Davis

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and Greenstein 2009; Risman 1998; Valian 1998). Such influence continues beyond childhood and even extends to young adulthood, when women shape and reshape their work expectations, seek higher education, and make critical decisions about family formation and motherhood (Bettie 2003; Risman, Atkinson, and Blackwelder 1999; Stickney and Konrad 2007). Along with adolescence and young adulthood, the shift to parenthood is a significant transitional period in women's work lives, during which their early ideas about working may change or be challenged. However, until now, very little attention has been paid to how families shape adult daughters' career aspirations in adulthood. One reason for this gap is the lack of studies using non-Western contexts as research settings. An often-used Western assumption is that extended families have weak influences in shaping their adult children's perceptions of work and family. Even in the literature on East Asia, where extended families have traditionally played an important role in individuals' lives beyond young adulthood (Lee, Parish, and Willis 1994; Lin and Yi 2013), few studies consider how adult women develop their perceptions of work through their natal families of origin.

The core question of this chapter is how women develop career aspirations through their families, and specifically what leads some women in South Korea (hereafter, Korea) to develop family-oriented versus work-oriented aspirations. Korea is a unique context to explore this question among postindustrial societies, because of its unusually rapid speed of social change and the continuous role that extended families play in individuals' lives, including during adulthood. The goal of this study, therefore, is to build a model of how Korean women develop career aspirations through their families, rather than to form a generalizable theory that applies to women in other social settings.

There are three important aggregate patterns that make Korea such a compelling case to study. First, the dramatic expansion of Korea's higher education system and the increase in women's enrollment rates resulted in a massive generational gap in educational attainment levels (Shavit 2007). Second, Korea and Japan are the only countries to demonstrate an M-shaped curve of female labor force participation, in which there is a drop in the labor force participation rate from age 30 to 40 (OECD 2017). Third, Korean culture exhibits the continuing influence of extended families in adult children's lives over the life course. For example, recent studies have shown that grandparents play a critical role in maintaining full-time employment (Lee 2011; Lee and Bauer 2010, 2013; Oh 2018). Among dual-earner couples in urban Korea who have children, more than half depend on childcare support from their parents on a daily basis (Korean Women's Development Institute 2015; Ministry of Health and Welfare 2009). In sum, sandwiched between increasing opportunities for educational attainment and persistent constraints in the workforce, married mothers in Korea must make hard choices about their employment (Chang et al. 2017; Park 2015).

Using data from 66 in-depth interviews with highly-educated mothers with young children living in Korea, I analyze how natal families become a critical source of perceptions for adult daughters, and why some women develop strong family-oriented aspirations while others develop strong work-oriented aspirations. Findings show that the macro context of the rapid expansion of higher education, shrinking family size, and shifting gender-role ideologies, along with the constraints that married women face in the workforce, all play an important role in making adult daughters to develop their career aspirations through their natal families of origin. The interviewed participants developed their career aspirations through their families in two divergent ways, one focusing on childrearing and the other focusing on seeking status in the

workforce. Such divergence, I argue, emerges based on the different levels of intergenerational educational mobility among women. For Korean women with college degrees, their relatively high educational attainment, especially compared to their mothers, becomes a source and rationale for developing strong career aspirations beyond adulthood.

Based on these results, this study theorizes how families shape women's career aspirations. The most important mechanism explaining the different effects of familial influence is the amount of intergenerational educational mobility between mother and daughter. Women define what it means to have a meaningful life as a person, daughter, and woman by referencing their mothers' lives. In order for adult daughters to develop strong career aspirations, they have to construct a belief that they should be different from their own mothers, who devoted their lives to the family. In the study sample, this belief arose when the adult daughters achieved much higher educational attainment than their mothers did. In the end, the unique mixture of rapid social change, the sudden increase in educational opportunities for women, and the persistent constraints that married women face in the Korean workforce result in different priorities for fulfilling their obligation to pay back their parents.

2.2 CHANGE AND CONTINUITY: MACRO-LEVEL TRENDS AND THE CONTEXT OF KOREA

Since the 1980s, women's educational attainment has increased dramatically in Korea. The speed and scope of this increase is unprecedented among other postindustrial societies. Similar to other countries, Korea's female labor force participation has increased gradually and amidst important demographic changes, but the relationship between women's education and employment, especially for women in their 30s, presents a strong contrast to other countries.

This section summarizes these macro-level trends, along with previous work that helps explain the context in which Korean mothers are making work and family decisions.

2.2.1 Macro-level Trends

Women's Education. As Figure 2.1 shows, in 1980 eight percent of the female population in Korea between the ages of 25 and 34 had tertiary education, compared to 77.7 percent of the same demographic group in 2010. Compared to the United States, where the percentages are similar across different age cohorts (ranging from 41 to 49 percent), Korea shows a larger generation gap in women's educational attainment because of its rapid and dramatic increase in educational attainment level (OECD 2015). Although men experienced a similarly fast increase, the cross-cohort difference for females is 61 percentage points vs. 45 points for males (OECD 2015).

To explain this remarkable educational expansion, previous studies emphasize changes in Korea's higher education system, governmental intervention to increase enrollment in higher education, and families' efforts to educate their children (Chang et al. 2017). From the 1950s to 1970s, family resources allocated for educating children were concentrated on sons (Chang et al. 2017). However, alongside the expansion and marketization of higher education in the late 1980s, baby boomers educated both their sons and daughters (Shin and Lee 2010), resulting in a gender-equal educational expansion for the younger cohort. Scholars have highlighted the role families played in this process, the largest expansion of education in the world within a single generation (Park 2007; Seth 2002). Korean individuals and families have taken on most of the financial responsibility for the high cost of tertiary education and have played a critical role in

encouraging the "education fever" phenomenon and propagating educational expansion (Chang 2010; Park 2007).

Figure 2.1 Percentage of Women with Tertiary Education in Korea:
Between the Ages of 25 and 29 from 1970 to 2010

(Source: Statistics Korea http://kosis.kr/statistics)
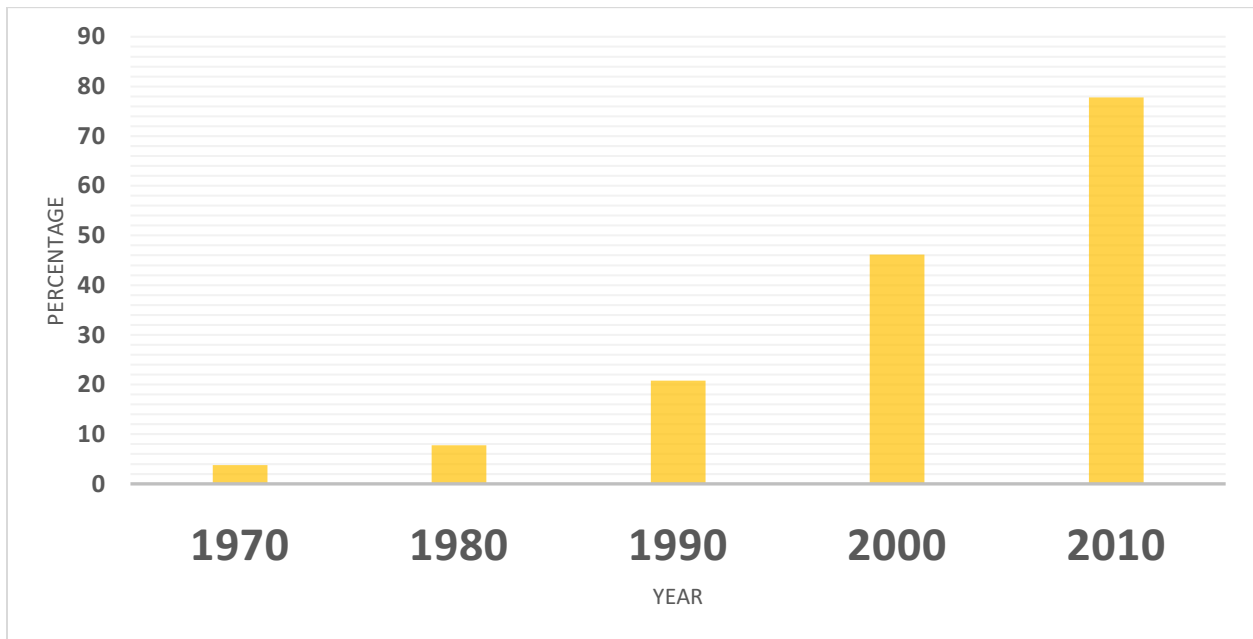
Demographic Changes. At the same time that Korea experienced greater female educational attainment and economic development, both at unprecedented speed, there were other dramatic demographic changes. From 1960 to 2015, the total fertility rate dropped from 6 to 1.2, reducing average household size: in 1970, the average Korean household had 5 members, but by 2016 that number had gone down to 2.5 (Census, Statistics Korea 2016). During the same period, the percentage of six-member households went from 43.8 percent to 9.8 percent (1990) and eventually to 1.4 percent (2016). From 1990 to 2005, a plurality of households had four members, but in 2010 most had two members and in 2015 most had only one member.

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Meanwhile, more people delayed marriage and childbirth. In 1993, the mean age at first marriage was 25.0 for women and 28.1 for men, while the mean age of women at first birth was 26.2. In 2013, the mean age at first marriage was 29.6 for women and 32.2 for men, while the mean age of women at first birth was 30.7. Finally, in terms of son preference, the percentage of women agreeing that one "must have a son" decreased from 48 percent in 1985 to 16 percent in 2003 (Korea National Fertility and Family Health Surveys).

Life-Cycle Patterns of Women's Employment. Although the tertiary education completion rate in Korea is 70 percent for both men and women, this high level of educational attainment has yet to translate into better labor market outcomes for women. Korean women's labor market participation is still characterized by the "M curve," indicating that their participation decreases upon marriage and childbirth while increasing later when their children grow up. More than 40 percent of employed women leave the labor force within one year of childbearing (Ma 2014). In 2014, 73 percent of Korean women between the ages of 25 and 29 were employed, but this dropped to 58 percent for women in their 30s. Notably, women with a university education between 30 and 35 are significantly underemployed: only 59 percent have jobs, well below the OECD average of 83 percent (OECD 2012). Figure 2.2 shows the macro-level trends in the female labor force participation rate from 1980 to 2016 for two age ranges. Within the 25-29 age group, female labor force participation increased from 32 percent in 1980 to 75 percent in 2016, but the rate for women age 35-39 has almost stalled since the 1980s, staying between 52 and 58 percent[1].

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[1] The only other country where similar trend exists is Japan.

In addition to a high attrition rate among female workers, the Korean workplace features significant hierarchical gender inequality. In 2015, only 10 percent of managerial positions were occupied by women—much lower than the OECD average of 30 percent—and the gender pay gap was 37 percent, the highest among OECD countries (OECD 2017). In the 2017 Global Gender Gap Report, which ranks countries based on gender inequality in economic activity, political empowerment, education, and health, Korea ranked 118 out of 144 countries; it ranked even lower for economic participation and opportunity (World Economic Forum 2017).

Figure 2.2 Female Labor Force Participation Rate for Two Age Groups: from 1980 to 2016

(Source: Statistics Korea http://kosis.kr/statistics)
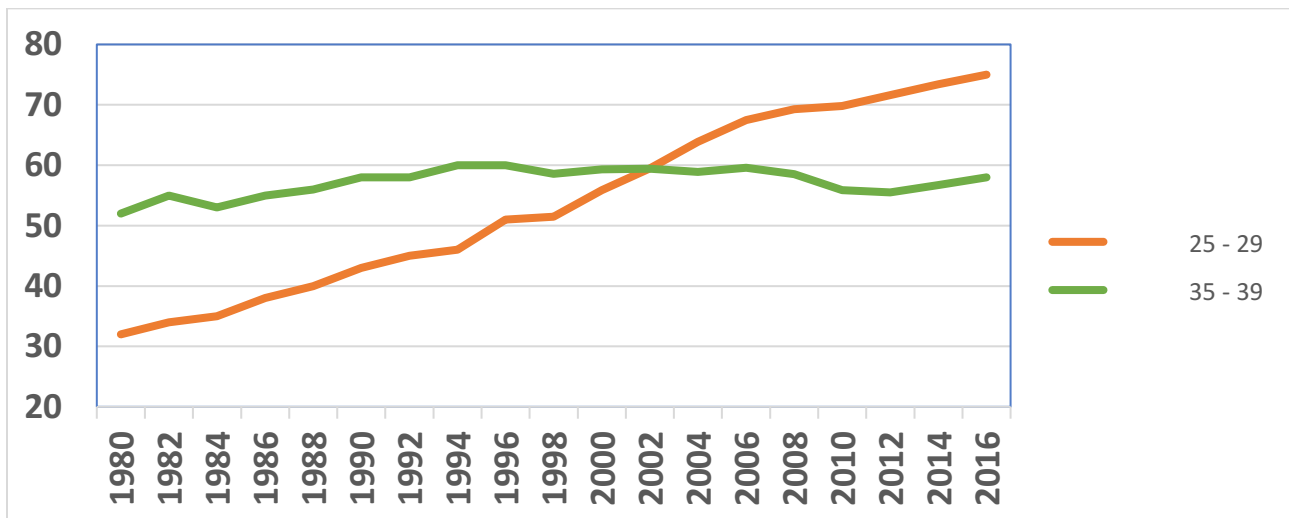
2.2.2 The Context for Korean Mothers

Several studies have explored the contexts in which married Korean mothers make work decisions. These contexts include workplace norms and labor market conditions (Brinton 2001; Ko 2007; Ma 2014; Ochiai and Molony 2008; Tsuya and Bumpass 2004), gender-role ideologies and the division of labor at home (Cho 2008; Song 2001), and the availability of childcare

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support, especially from grandmothers (Lee and Bauer 2010, 2013; Oh 2018). Because my research focuses on highly-educated married mothers, in this section I mainly engage with the conditions in which highly-educated mothers make work decisions.

Workplace norms and labor market structure. A strong ideal-worker ideology that requires employees' undivided commitment to the workplace presents a challenge to working mothers. Working extremely long working hours, in particular, is widely accepted as normal. Staying after work hours is often considered a symbol of true loyalty to the workplace and seriousness about one's career (Ko 2007). Even after the workday ends, masculine workplace cultural practices such as going out for drinks after work (Bae and Chung 1997) punish women for going home to fulfill family demands.

After the Korean War, women entered the workforce in clerical, manufacturing, and domestic service positions (Kang 2011). During the rapid industrialization stage from the 1960s to the late 1970s, textile and chemical factories expanded in urban areas and factory workers comprised a majority of the female workforce (Chang et al. 2017). As Table 2.1 shows, female workers were relatively less educated in the 1980s: 66 percent were elementary school graduates, 17 percent were middle school graduates, and 14 percent were high school graduates. Only around 2 percent had completed tertiary education. After tertiary education expanded in the 1990s, women who had graduated from two-year vocational colleges and four-year universities started to participate in the workforce, but their numbers increased slowly because of the lack of jobs for married mothers (Lee 1996). A majority of jobs in Korea are in the private sector (public-sector jobs comprise less than 10 percent of total employment; OECD 2015). Additionally, only 12 percent of total employment is part-time work (OECD 2015), leaving a

limited number of jobs that could offer flexibility for mothers of young children (Brinton 2001; Choe et al. 2004). Therefore, most highly-educated Korean mothers can only get full-time jobs with long work hours (Choe et al. 2004; Oshio et al. 2013)

Table 2.1 Composition of Total Female Workforce by Educational Attainment Level

Year	Total female workforce	Elementary	Middle school	High school	2yr college	4yr university
1980	100	66	17.1	14.5	n/a	n/a
1990	100	40.6	20.1	31.1	3	5.2
2000	100	24.8	16.3	39.7	7.9	11.3
2010	100	15.4	11.1	38.9	13	21.5

Gender-Role Ideology and the Division of Labor at Home. In contrast to similar trends elsewhere in the West, Korea's increases in female educational attainment and female labor force participation occurred *without* major changes in gender-role attitudes or increases in individualism (Chang and Song 2010; Raymo et al. 2015). Generally, traditional gender-role ideology is still very strong in Korea, especially in terms of who should manage housework and childcare and who should be the financial provider (Seong 2011). In 2016, 85 percent of Koreans supported gender equality in the labor market and viewed women's employment positively, yet 54 percent felt that mothers with young children should prioritize their role as mothers rather than focusing on work (Korean Women's Development Institute 2017).

From 2007 to 2010, a panel survey asked whether it is harmful for a mother with a preschool child to work outside the home. The percentage that agreed (portraying a traditional viewpoint) was high, increasing slightly from 61.2 to 65.0 in three years. In another national survey, 86 percent of women said that husbands and wives should divide domestic work equally,

yet only 35 percent of the same sample disagreed with the statement that it is harmful to a preschool child if the mother works (Korean Women's Development Institute 2012). Other studies also consistently showed that despite increasingly gender-equal attitudes about women's and men's roles in both the private and public spheres, negative evaluations of mothers' working full-time persist (Seong 2011). A recent analysis of gender-role attitudes reconfirmed this pattern: according to the authors, a high percentage (83%) of the Korean population believes that women's primary role is in the household, which should be supplemented by their role in the workplace (Brinton and Lee 2016). Korea showed the most conservative gender roles among all 24 countries in their analysis.

Reflecting the persisting ideology that mothers' main roles should be in the private sphere, the unequal division of labor for housework and childcare places high demands on working mothers (Fuwa and Cohen 2007; Tsuya et al. 2012). On average, Korean men in their 30s spend 58 minutes per day on housework and childcare, whereas women in their 30s spend 5 hours, 2 minutes per day (Time Use Survey, Korea Statistics 2014). In addition, mothers take primary responsibility for their children's education and are pressured to meet very high societal expectations for their children's educational success (Park and Abelmann 2004; Seth 2002). The cultural model of intensive motherhood—which Hays (1996) defined as a logically cohesive combination of beliefs dictating that a mother must be the central caregiver and devote copious time, energy, and material resources to her child—is very strong in Korea (Ochiai and Molony 2008). Additionally, since the late 1970s, the proportion of white-collar male workers whose wages could feed 3-5 family members has increased, along with the proportion of stay-at-home mothers (Chung et al. 2016). These mothers focused on ensuring the educational success of their children to ensure their survival in a globally competitive world (Cho 2008).

Childcare Support. Not all social conditions are constraints on mothers' labor force participation. As the nuclearization of the family increases, many intergenerational families no longer share a common residence (Park and Choi 2015). However, this does not mean that Korean families achieve independence from their extended kin. For mothers who must work long hours, childcare support from their children's grandmothers is a primary resource utilized to maintain full-time employment (Lee and Bauer 2013). In the Seoul metropolitan area, 53 percent of the dual-earner households with young children receive some childcare support from grandparents (Korean Women's Development Institute 2015). Notably, by asking for and receiving this support, mothers negotiate with their mothers and mothers-in-law about which jobs are worthwhile to keep (Oh 2018). Such findings imply that although childcare support from grandmothers is useful, it may be conditional on engaging extended families' ideas about who should work as a mother.

Competing Ideologies of Womanhood and the Role of Families. After the 1997 financial crisis, fundamental changes to Korean society included the execution of neoliberal economic policies and increased economic precariousness. This turning point in the Korean economy and labor market also brought dramatic changes in family formation and the lives of women (Song 2006; 2010). The ideologies of womanhood and motherhood likewise changed. At the macro-level, for highly-educated Korean women, career-oriented and family-oriented aspirations compete with each other (Cho and Shin 2000). The intensive motherhood ideology that pressures mothers to ensure their children's academic survival in hyper-competitive Korean society (Park 2006) co-exists with the ideology that married women themselves have to contribute to the family income to survive in a precarious and uncertain economy (Shin 2008).

Within the rich and vibrant literature on the structural and ideological constraints that mothers face in Korea, less attention has been paid to what shapes women's divergent career aspirations. Ma and Kim (2005) demonstrated that female college students construct their vocational consciousness in a complicated way as they consider and prepare to solve potential work and family conflicts. How women develop their career aspirations and work expectations is an underexplored question. One of the few studies is Song's (2001) study of female college students, among whom overall gender-role attitudes (especially feminist attitudes) and a close, continuous, and satisfactory mother-child relationship were associated with holding career-oriented aspirations (2001).

In sum, married Korean mothers develop their career aspirations and evaluate the meaning of being employed while facing sharp conflicts between work and family demands, due to workplace norms, labor market conditions, and unequal divisions of labor at home. Demands for women to be one of the financial pillars of their households have been gradually increasing, despite ongoing expectations for those same women to focus on their familial obligations. Within this conflict, mothers are expected to develop their own sense of what it means to be a good mother. Also, the influence of extended family continues after motherhood, particularly for mothers who rely on extended family childcare support to maintain their employment. Therefore, extended families are expected to play an important role in how mothers shape and reshape their career aspirations, at least in some families. Along with predicting that families will have a strong influence on women's perceptions of achievement and success, this study attempts to answer empirically how families shape women's perceptions differently.

2.3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: FAMILIES AND WOMEN'S CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Within a society, work and family experiences differ across families, and scholars have explored the role families play in how women construct gender ideologies about work and family. Although less attention has been paid to the relationship between natal families and women's career aspirations in adulthood, there is a stream of research tracking the role that families play in adulthood in particular religious or ethnic groups. Studies have found that within communities in which the cultural preferences are for traditional gender roles, high human capital does not necessarily lead to high employment, because of the privileging of women's obligations to the family over their economic endeavors (Bartkowski 2001; Glass and Jacobs 2005; Sherkat 2000). Read and Cohen (2007) built on this literature and found that the link between education and employment is inconsistent across groups of different ethnic groups of U.S. women. An important finding is that out of 12 different ethnic groups that they examined, there was a paradoxical combination of high education and low employment among Arab, Iranian, Korean, and Asian Indian women. Further exploring the cultural contingency linking women's education and employment, Read and Oselin (2008) conducted an ethnographic study to understand how high educational attainment paradoxically relates to a relatively low level of labor market participation after motherhood. They find that the way women define female achievement and develop their work aspirations is the product of a communal dialogue among participants who share similar ethnic or religious backgrounds. Within the Arab-American community, for example, women's education is viewed as a shared good of value, both to their own religious and ethnic group and to their families, because it helps mothers raise children to be high achievers in the public sphere. In this case, the cause and goal of aspiring to and obtaining higher education is best understood in terms of how the group in which women form their close ties defines female achievement.

Though compelling, this array of studies requires further theoretical discussion and empirical support. It views women's developing expectations about their future work as a process that involves multiple people in the group that a woman belongs to. The group not only includes family members but other people who are in their close network. However, the question remains as to how and why some family members become an important reference group for women when they construct aspirations of work and family. For instance, Risman (2004) argues that part of the structural power of gender stems from the fact that women put other women, and not men, as their reference group. Because women consider themselves differently from men, women are unlikely to wonder why their lives are not more like men's, rather they will compare themselves with other women.

Literature on the influence of families has shown that during childhood, mothers influence daughters more than their sons and fathers influence sons more than their daughters in constructing gender-role attitudes (Valian 1998). However, less is known about how this process may continue in adulthood and whether adult daughters continue to reference and learn from their mothers or change their reference group based on how they perceive who is in the similar context as themselves. Risman further states that "Norms develop when actors occupy similar network positions in the social structure and evaluate their own options vis-à-vis the alternatives of similarly situated others" (2004: 432). Such a statement does not assume the reference group to be static. Hence, the evidence on how adult daughters define their success through families, on how this process takes place, and in what ways families become the reference group in situating women's own lives is thin and inconclusive.

2.4 DATA AND METHODS

The data for this study are 66 in-depth, in-person interviews conducted over a period of eight months in 2015. My sample includes only married mothers who lived in the Seoul metropolitan area, had at least one child younger than age six, and had at least a college degree as of the interview date. I recruited interviewees through two sampling strategies. First, I reached out to mothers through an online and smartphone-app–based survey company called *Ovey,* which provides services to merchandisers, broadcasting companies, and scholars conducting opinion surveys.[2] Within *Ovey*'s pool of approximately 350,000 respondents, I randomly selected and contacted 45 women who matched the participation criteria for this study. I ended up interviewing 32 of them whose schedules worked out. Second, in order to talk to mothers with diverse backgrounds, I recruited additional interviewees using pre-existing personal ties. A restricted snowball sampling strategy was used, limiting each tie to one referral. I interviewed six people with different occupations, ages, and incomes, and asked each of them to provide contact information for one other person who met the criteria. My goal was to hear as many diverse voices as possible until I reached the stage at which I found patterns. In total, I interviewed 34 mothers using the restricted snowball sampling.

I conducted structured interviews, using questionnaires covering the women's expectations when they entered college, motivations for seeking higher education and for choosing a certain major, relationships with their parents, work experiences and trajectories, career aspirations, family aspirations, and perceptions of success and achievement. Because the purpose of this study is to uncover how women perceive and define success and achievement, I mainly focused on interviewees' experience of seeking higher education and developing work and family aspirations. To understand the role of family, I asked about how they were raised by

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[2] Most interviewees responded to the request through their phones. This is understandable because more than 80 percent of adults in Korea own a smartphone (Google Consumer Barometer 2015).

their parents and about their relationships with their parents and siblings. All interviews were conducted in person in Korean. They usually lasted 90 minutes, although they ranged from 60 minutes to two hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

My sample includes 66 college-educated women. Their average age at the time of the interview was 34. Their ages ranged from 27 to 42, a period in which mothers make key decisions about changes to work and family. All the women were married and had at least a bachelor's degree. Among the sample, forty percent had degrees from the top twelve universities in Korea (Times Higher Education 2018). The average number of children per respondent was 1.3; over two-thirds of the sample had one child. All had at least two years of work experience before having a child. Sixty percent were employed full-time at the time of the interview, and the rest were either non-employed or were employed part-time. Half of the respondents had more formal education than their mothers. This was lower than I expected. However, when I treated degrees from top universities differently from degrees from non-elite universities, roughly 80 percent of the respondents had a higher educational status than that of their mothers. 75 percent of the sample had one or more brothers, and on average they grew up in households with 2.7 children. Additionally, their monthly household income was around $7900 USD, which is in the middle- to upper-middle-class income bracket in Korea (Statistics Korea 2016).

Based on multiple readings of the transcripts, I analyzed the interviews to inductively identify themes and narratives. I used two coding strategies. First, I used open coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990), in which I organized the data under four themes of interest: definitions of success and achievement, expectations and experiences of work and family, career aspirations, and career decisions (including anticipation of future work). My analysis also accounted for the potential influence of other family members' educational attainment levels (i.e. parents and

siblings), along with the respondent's specific educational institution, employment trajectory, and occupation.

For the second round of coding, I used a focused coding strategy in which I selectively coded the interviews line by line to understand respondents' views, rationales, and behaviors concerning women's work outside the home (Lofland and Lofland 2006). Line-by-line coding was accompanied by a separate memo for each respondent, describing how she defined achievement and her role in the family and in society, and explaining why and how she developed that definition. At the end of this focused coding, I wrote a list of conceptual framings to capture the processes that respondents went through and that differentiated the definition of female achievement. After these two rounds of coding, I identified the main patterns and narratives that ran through the interviews.

2.5 HOW FAMILIES MATTER: THE "PAYING BACK" NARRATIVE

The women in this study emphasized that they had been raised since a very young age to be high achievers, so they were expected to go to college in order to be successful. As Yesol explained, "Excelling in school and going to good universities were everyone's goals until you became an adult." Respondents stressed that, regardless of their gender, they were pressured to do well in school. In fact, as girls, they were expected to do *better* than boys: Kyoungmi noted, "my mother would tell me how cruel society can be for women. So, she would always tell me to study hard and go to a good college so that I can survive." Despite their different family backgrounds, getting a college degree dominated these women's goals during childhood and adolescence. Sodam also addressed this aspect, saying, "Until you went to college, the one and only motivation was to be educated, but this was in order to do what you want to do. So, it was a

means to an end, but without this means, you have no end." Education was the strongest foundation these young women could build in order to do what they desired as adults.

All the respondents achieved a four-year university degree (some went on to obtain graduate degrees) and they expressed gratitude when they described these achievements, especially toward their mothers. Paran represents the two-thirds of my respondents who did so explicitly:

> Like other households, it was hard to see my dad because he was so busy working, and because he was just not interested in the process. Without knowing what I am going through, my dad will just ask about the end result. I think I saw him like 5 minutes a day if I was lucky, when I was in high school. But, I had my mom who saw it all. She was there waking me up in the morning, feeding me, and sometimes picking me up or staying home waiting for me to come home. Every day, she was there.

Although a majority (90 percent) of the respondents said that their mothers spent most of their lives out of the workforce after getting married, one-third of the women had mothers who were in and out of the workforce. However, these mothers were also described as "being there" for their children, especially compared to their fathers. Seonju recalled that her mother "started a saleswoman job, but she would always put rice, multiple *banchans* (small side dishes), and soup on the table. I would eat that for breakfast or for dinner." When describing how their mothers tried hard to "be there" for their children, respondents who had working mothers shared details such as communicating with their mothers through memos that were posted on the refrigerator. Their mothers also played a significant role when their adult daughters prepared for and took their college entrance exams.[3]

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[3] Some women (5 out of 66) took an extra year to study for and retake the college entrance exam, in order to apply for a better university.

When asked "how did you develop your thoughts about working and continuing to work as a mother" during the interviews, many women naturally talked about how their mothers raised them and all the critical conversations they shared about how to live a meaningful life as a woman. Jungyeon explicitly connected women's aspirations to the notion of obligation: "No matter where you are, what you accomplished, you owe so much to your parents. When I make important decisions and plan things, I always think about my mother, who sacrificed her own desires to support her husband and to educate her three children. She is a big part of my everyday decisions and thoughts."

This narrative of paying back was gendered in the sense that it was about being a good daughter, not simply a good child. Myungji, for instance, explained that her brother "does not think the way I do. He wants to make our parents proud, but not in the way I relate to my mother when I think about what kind of a person I should be." An important part of these women's feelings of obligation is that being a good daughter—even beyond young adulthood—is central to how they live. Respondents strongly showed gratitude to their mothers who devoted their energy and time to educate not only sons but also daughters. Gyuri is typical: "My mom would identify herself with me. So, when I scored very high on the college entrance exam, she felt relieved and was so happy that all of her devotion had paid off. I do feel like my life resonates with my mother's life, her whole life." Many other women explained how their lives and achievements have become part of their mothers' accomplishments because their mothers invested so much.

When explaining how their perceptions about a career have developed, the respondents repeatedly used a coherent rhetoric of "paying back" both their parents, but especially their mothers who had sacrificed their own desires for the family. Although these women felt a

mixture of support and pressure from their own mothers, most felt fortunate to have some guidelines in such a transitional stage. Hanul explained, "women in my generation are criticized for whatever we do. If you focus on childcare and on educating your children without a full-time job, you are criticized for being too obsessive. If you have a full-time job, fingers are pointed at you and people say you have abandoned your children because you are crazy about your job." Kyongha echoed this point, and further explained that "when things are just unsettled, the most meaningful and useful feedback is from one's own mother. She will say what's best for you, unlike other people who have no reason to put themselves in your shoes." In sum, families played an important role in normatively and emotionally guiding the women's perceptions of work and family.

This narrative of paying back indicates the salient role of families—especially mothers—in shaping how women view and navigate their daily lives. However, there are two important complications within the narrative. One is that determining how to pay one's parents back is not static. About half the sample, including Miae, argued that they had a "settled view on whether to work or not as a mother," but the other half stressed that their views were far from settled. Jinjoo pointed out, "my thoughts will change, and sometimes I have a mixture of feelings [of wanting to work outside the home and of wanting to stay home] and I wonder if I am making the right decision." Thus, the way women spoke of their own definition was not always settled, as there was the possibility of change.

Perhaps more importantly, payback strategies emerged in opposite directions for the participants. Their definitions of what it means to be successful as a woman, which were directly related to how women developed their career aspirations, were different. Jungyeon decided to live as a stay-at-home mother, focusing on educating her children well, whereas Chaerim took a

very different path—aspiring to start her own business quickly, earn a lot of money, and be famous. However, they both echoed the important role that their mothers play. As Jungyeon put it, "whenever I think about my mom, I burst into tears. She poured everything into me and my sister. I really want to make her happy and proud." The strong notion of having to pay mothers back was rooted in the women's accumulated interactions with their mothers. However, determining why and how women with similar educational attainment levels developed opposite career aspirations is an important analytical task, and the subject of the next section.

2.6 DIFFERENT FORMS OF PAYING BACK: DISTANCING VERSUS ASSOCIATING

The women in this study were expected from a young age to be high achievers in school, so many focused on surviving the hyper-competitive Korean educational system and had very little time to think about their futures and dreams. When they went to college, the struggle to determine what it means to be successful as a woman and as a person started. Their families influenced the process of developing career aspirations, making decisions about majors, and envisioning what kind of life they could live in the long run. Two opposite narratives—distancing and associating—emerged as rationales for how families, especially mothers, mattered in how the respondents constructed their own career aspirations.

2.6.1 The Distancing Narrative: Dahee's Story

The respondents' definitions of achievement, happiness, and success diverged based on how they viewed their societal and familial roles. Among the 66 women in the sample, 61 percent expressed a strong desire and aspiration to continuously stay in the workforce regardless of their marital and motherhood status. Many with strong career aspirations often saw their roles

in society as their reason for existence. They did not necessarily claim that marriage and children do not matter, but as one of the respondents in this group, Inseo, puts it, "you need to have your own position in the society, contributing to developing the society, and this is different from your role as a wife or a mother." Dahee was also in this group.

Having to move from Seoul to Jakarta, Dahee's parents debated whether to bring both her and her older brother, who was 7 years older than Dahee and was already attending a boarding school as a high school student. "My father insisted," Dahee explained: "He really wanted to send me to an international school in Jakarta, so that I could learn several languages. He had that idea that I have to prepare for the bigger world." She went on to explain how both of her parents, especially her father, always tried to provide the best for her education. When I asked who would have been most disappointed if she quit school, she immediately shouted "my parents!" as if the answer were obvious.

Dahee's family was upper middle-class in terms of the income that her father had provided for the family since she was young. However, her father went to a low-ranked university and her mother was only a high school graduate. Dahee stressed that her parents "had some obsession about wanting to send me to an elite university." She did well in school and went to an elite university outside of Korea. Her second language at Jakarta International School was Japanese, and she wanted to become a singer when she entered university. However, that plan did not work out, so she went to a one-year graduate program in the US, also at an elite university.

Reflecting on the ups and downs of determining what she wanted to do, Dahee recalled that whenever she was feeling low, her parents would tell her that she "could do anything well. I think my parents had high expectations because whenever I faced hardship, I survived. More

than just surviving, I did pretty good in fulfilling their expectations. My dad would always brag

about me to his friends, ever since I was young." In explaining her current job situation—she is a

full-time employee at a start-up company—Dahee talked about the support-like pressure her dad

offered when she was non-employed, for three months:

> At first, he would say, you need to get some rest, you have been working too hard.
> But after one month, he was like, "So… when are you starting to work again?"
> So, I told him that I am trying to get pregnant and when I get pregnant, I will look
> for jobs slowly. But he was so surprised that I said that. He said it is not too late to
> get pregnant after getting a new job and that it is really bad to have an interruption
> in my career.

When she was at home, Dahee stated, she felt like she was stuck between her mother's

life as a stay-at-home mother and her father's expectations of incremental professional progress.

Recalling a conversation with her mother, Dahee said, "My mother seemed to be torn as well,

because she could not say that she regretted not working outside the home. She said that was

what women did back then. However, I always hear from her that things have changed, so it is

okay for me to see the wider world, outside home." Based on the increased opportunities for

education and more women in the workforce compared to previous decades, Dahee argued that

compared to her mother's generation, her generation benefited a lot from social change in Korea.

Asking for confirmation, she remarked, "You agree that we [i.e., women her age] need to live

differently compared to our mothers, right?"

Dahee's rationale was echoed by several other participants, who argued that their strong

career aspirations have been greatly influenced by their families. An example is Hyori, who

explained that potential working conditions were one of the most important criteria by which

female college students choose majors and jobs:

> I went to a leadership forum for women and to several job fairs, beginning in my freshman year. Men and women who were actively working seemed to have a fantastic life, but their working lives seemed really competitive and busy. Some explicitly said that you cannot take care of your family, which made me think pretty hard about what I would like to do when I graduate and what kind of family I would like to form.

Many of the women started sensing how harsh the reality might be after graduation. Especially due to the long working hours and hyper-competitive atmosphere in the workplace, women expected hardship in combining work and caring for a family. But those with strong career aspirations claimed that giving up the goal of getting a good job just because it is hard to balance work and family just did not make sense. Hyori continued, "Of course, I did not dream of being a stay-at-home mother. It might happen, but that was not my plan because that would be a waste of all the education I received and waste of my parents' energy, time, and money."

Although few participants referenced their mothers-in-law, many referenced their own mothers when explaining their own career aspirations. Inseo explained how her mother and mother-in-law debated about her full-time employment:

> My husband and I have both been the good kids. We were the proud ones in the family. When I got pregnant, my mother-in-law expected that I would stay home instead of working full-time. My mom, on the other hand, said the last thing she wants to see is me staying home with the kids. It was a hard moment for me. I did not want to upset my mother-in-law, but at the same time, I knew what my mother wanted. For all her life, I was her everything. People say I am ambitious, but that is because I was raised to be ambitious by my mother. I am my mother's daughter, and no one has more influence than her.

Mirroring Inseo, although many respondents with strong career aspirations talked about both parents as a source of pressure and encouragement to plan to stay in the workforce, when using the narrative of having to live differently from the previous generation, almost all of them were referring to their mothers.

2.6.2 The Associating Narrative: Hyuna's Story

Another group of women—26 out of the 66 respondents—interpreted their educational and interpersonal achievements as foundations for finding a good husband and raising their children well. Similar to the women who developed strong career aspirations, these women perceived that their own mothers' views influenced them powerfully, even when their mothers-in-law disagreed. For example, Jinjoo's mother strongly wanted her to stay home while her mother-in-law indirectly implied that dual-earner couples are ideal. As Jinjoo put it, "my mother is a strong advocate of mothers staying home when there are young children, whereas my mother-in-law felt like things have been changing and it is ideal for both partners to earn money. I debated a bit about what to do, but eventually followed what my mother suggested."

Hyuna is one of the women who held strong aspirations to be a stay-at-home mother and to focus on childrearing. She explained her goals rather strongly: "I was always called a genius and I went to one of the top universities. However, the meaning of life is really dependent on how you form and maintain your own family as a wife and a mother." In several follow-up responses about how she arrived at that perception, she frequently talked about her mother. Her mother was extremely smart and had work experience at a bank. As soon as she got married, she quit her job and has been a stay-at-home mother ever since. Hyuna described how "most married women were expected to quit unless they were doctors or pharmacists who could own their own hospital or pharmacy," and explained that when her mother got married, no women in the banking industry kept working after getting married. Her mother's philosophy also played a big role in the decision-making process: "She knew how things worked. She went to this elite women's university and she was an outstanding student. Also, she had a chance to experience the workplace. However, she *chose* to stay home with her kids. Because she knew that that will be

more rewarding." Admiring her mother's decision and even calling it wise, Hyuna repeatedly stressed how much she respects her mother and how she wants to follow her path.

Hyuna has a younger sister who went to a university outside Korea and who is currently a PhD student. When I asked her what she thinks her sister should do, Hyuna replied:

> I think, basically, mothers have to take care of the children. Period. So, my sister should have a job where she could use her working hours flexibly. But, it is hard to compare her with me because she has a doctoral degree. We are not in the same situation. She has done a lot of studying and a lot of really hard work. So, I think it would be, for her, a waste of her ability and knowledge if she just stays home with the kids. I think my mom will also think that way and understand.

Interestingly, Hyuna frequently referenced her mother's own achievements as well. Even when she contended that her sister should work at least some hours, she stressed that her mother would understand her sister's choice to go to work.

Hyuna especially compared herself to her mother more explicitly, to explain why it is more meaningful to focus on childrearing. She said, "Even my mother, who went to a top school, focused on raising her two daughters and supporting her husband. I am not that great, in terms of what I have done so far. So, it was relatively easy for me to accept the fact that choosing this way [i.e., focusing on family] worked better for me." Later, Hyuna shared a conversation with her mother on the issue of being employed with young children. Her mother was also explicit that Hyuna's achievements were great, but she insisted that staying home with her kids would be more rewarding. In Hyuna's summary, "My mom said—and I was kind of shocked when I first heard this—that she also went to a good college and also had employment experience and competed with other smart people. But unless you are uber successful, she said, it is a wise decision to focus on supporting your husband and on raising children well." Throughout the

interview, Hyuna kept associating her own actions with her mother's life. When explaining how she cooks for her children, for instance, she would talk about how her mother cooked for her and her sister. When describing how she plays with her children, she would likewise give examples of how her own mother played with her in order to help her develop her math and reading skills.

Several other respondents, including Yoosun, shared a similar rationale. Both of Yoosun's parents have four-year university degrees. She often under-evaluated her achievement by saying that she went to an unknown university in the Seoul suburbs. She recounted the moment when she received the admission letter from her school: "My parents were happy that the school was in Seoul, but obviously, like all other Korean parents, they were really disappointed. They both went to high-ranked universities, so I think they were expecting that I would bring them an admission letter from a much better school." Laughing out loud, Yoosun further described how her mother told her directly that starting freshman year, she should focus on finding a guy who had the potential to become a lawyer or a doctor. Most of the respondents described their own perceptions of how their parents would feel or evaluate. Therefore, it would be too much of a stretch to argue that Yoosun's parents consistently told her to become a family-oriented person rather than a career-oriented person. However, comments and feedback like this have stayed with some of the respondents, even before they entered the workforce.

Hyuna and Yoosun represent cases where adult daughters' lack of educational mobility became an important factor, whether implicitly or explicitly, in leading them to aspire to follow the road that their mothers took. However, not all the women who had weak career aspirations cited the same rationale. Some other respondents used the logic of "I have not achieved a lot, unlike my own mother," especially if their work pathways had not been smooth. The lack of opportunities that they had in the workforce also played a role in dampening their career

aspiration. A representative case is Hanul, who achieved much more than her mother, a high school graduate, by going to a top university. Hanul explained that at first she had relatively strong career aspirations, but when she failed to get a job at a big company that had name value, her aspirations slowly weakened. She ended up taking a job at a marketing company, but most of her female colleagues were young, unmarried women who shared the company-wide expectation that, as she put it, "you cannot continue working at this company as a mother." In sum, two different processes—a lack of educational mobility and of opportunities in the workforce— influenced women in this study to develop weak career aspirations. Although their modest intergenerational educational mobility led these women to develop weaker career aspiration, this trend did not apply to all the participants.

2.7 INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY, WOMEN'S CAREER ASPIRATIONS, AND FUTURE WORK DECISIONS

Although a complicated set of factors prompted some of the respondents to develop weak career aspirations, including the lack of opportunities in the workforce and of intergenerational educational mobility, those women who developed strong career aspirations mainly cited their higher educational achievement in comparison to their mothers as the main rationale for their career-oriented desires and ambitions. Families became, for this group, the gate-breakers: they taught them to challenge traditional ideas that mothers should stay home, and to seek status in the public sphere regardless of marriage and motherhood.

The main logic that respondents with greater intergenerational mobility used is that their progress was significant enough to challenge the traditional gender norms. Inseo, who has a graduate degree and whose mother is a high school graduate, explained it this way:

I was watching this drama with my mom where one of the main characters was a young woman searching for a marriageable guy who is rich and has a good job. My mom turned to me and said, "Don't try to marry a guy who buys you a Mercedes-Benz. You just buy your own Benz." She would always tell me to have my own job and work [outside the home] because I am an educated woman.

Such a socialization process involves the respondents detaching and distancing themselves from the paths their mothers took, situating families as gatekeepers who led the respondents to envision lives different from those of their own mothers. In contemporary Korea, as noted in the context section, strong traditional ideas about mothers' primary role in childrearing persist, as do negative views of maternal employment. Within this context, different visions and pressures to live differently from their mothers become a powerful narrative with which individual daughters can refute traditional ideas.

The comparable educational levels and the paying back narrative were combined for adult daughters, such that they felt encouraged to maintain strong career aspirations but also pressured to seek and maintain status in the public sphere. Kiseon, who has a graduate degree and whose mother is a high school graduate, was not employed at the time of the interview. She expressed her frustration at being a stay-at-home mother despite her advanced degree: "I feel so sorry for my mother. I think about all those days when she got up at 5 a.m. to wake me up and all the *dosirak* [lunch] boxes that she prepared. I had lots of them during my graduate school years as well. I really want to start working again." Kiseon's strong career aspiration is a function of multiple emotions, including desire, obligation, and pressure. Because most mothers with strong career aspirations feel obligations and pressure, it was more than being able to justify the desire to stay in the workforce and continuously seek professional opportunities. The aspiration was, in part, a motivation to actively try to stay in the workforce. However, when adult daughters had similar skills as their mothers, such a justification and motivation was much less common.

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Rather, most of the adult daughters who had a strong family orientation perceived their mothers' paths as legitimate ones to follow, and almost all of them chose the traditional path of staying home until their children grew older.

Analysis of the role siblings play reveals that having brothers and the number of siblings have weak influence in how women construct their career aspirations. In contrast, there was a moderate influence of having sisters, throughout the process of being compared in accessing how "successful" the respondent is. Although women in this study felt that they were not treated differently than their brothers, they perceived that their status is compared to that of their sisters' instead. Parents' evaluations of who was the most successful daughter were often cited. For example, Jiyoo stated that she "felt pressured by my parents to stay in the crazy consulting world because it is not the kind of job that they had a chance to get." However, Jiyoo noted, because her sister "went to a less-famous college and had an okay job," her parents have always told her sister to get married fast and have children. Jiyoo expressed that she feels pressured to be the star of her family. However, she also feels thankful that within the Korean context, where mothers are often criticized for whatever they are doing, that she at least has her family on her side. To demonstrate this support, Jiyoo told the story of getting an offer from a top consulting firm:

> My mother was really happy. Although she had no idea what consulting is, she knew it was a famous company and highly prestigious. She told me to stick to that company forever—to be the president of that company. I told her that I will try to reach the top, but my working hours will be crazy. But she said she will do everything to support me because I am meant to be successful. My mother said she could take care of my child, unlike the way she pushed my sister to quit working and stay home.

During the interview, Jiyoo likewise said that her mother is the biggest factor behind her feeling encouraged to devote her energy and time to reaching the top.

Quantifying the patterns that emerged in this study will help us to have a bigger picture. Table 2.2 shows the two groups of women with different career aspirations. For the group of women who developed strong work-oriented aspirations, 75 percent of women had mothers who had no opportunities to receive higher education. However, all in this group subjectively evaluated that they have achieved more compared to their mothers. This includes the 25 percent of women who had mothers who had college degree. A further exploration about the ranking and name value of the specific universities that the respondents and their mothers obtained their degrees from shows that almost all of them (nine out of ten) went to a higher ranked university than their mothers. Such relative achievement relates to how women evaluated that there was a jump from what their mothers achieved to what they achieved. Such an incremental position, objectively and subjectively, was a source of career aspirations for the women in this study, who developed strong ambitions to stay in the workforce. In terms of the household income, there was no difference for the two groups of women with diverging career aspirations.

Table 2.2 Characteristics of the Two Groups

	Career-oriented aspirations	Family-oriented aspirations
Number	40	26
Percentages		
Educational attainment level: Higher than that of mother's	75	11
Educational attainment level: Same as that of mother's	25	89
Perceived achievement: Higher than my own mother	100	15
Respondents whose household income is in the upper middle bracket	70	73

Although diverse factors influence actual work decisions and career trajectories, career aspirations influenced how women planned their future work when they were in college. Throughout the process of developing ambitions either to form a "satisfying family," as Dajung put it, or to seek a "higher position in society," as Inseo put it, they thought hard about how to use the skills and knowledge they had obtained in college and at work, which influenced the kinds of jobs they targeted.

From early on, many respondents who had a college degree and who envisioned forming a happy family, thus prioritizing the traditional role of devotion to family, expected that they would either have to quit their jobs, change jobs, or shift from full-time work to part-time work. Solbee explained the logic behind her work trajectory after graduating from college:

> I picked business as my major because I thought it would be the best for getting a job. I thought working at a firm for 2-3 years and getting married and staying home would be a good plan. However, I might need money, so I wanted to prepare for the case where I had to work. This is how I picked the local bank as my first job, because it was known to be a family-friendly workplace with long [maternity] leave.

Like other respondents who had planned their work to adjust their obligations for the family during their college years, Solbee listed several courses that helped her to prepare to raise a family: "There were interesting courses, including Psychology 101 and Introduction to Child Development Theories, that I took and that really helped me learn more about how to raise children well."

In contrast, the women whose ambitions were to keep working and to contribute to society through their own careers chose courses that prepared them to excel in a world full of competitive people— and full of patriarchal networks. Yena is an example: "I took a Women's

Leadership course and, starting freshman year, participated in a mentoring program that connects female students with female leaders in the business world."

2.8 CONCLUSION

Korea is an exceptional case: educational attainment for women in their 30s is the highest in the world, yet labor force participation for that group continues to trail other postindustrial countries. Although more Korean women participate in the workforce today than a generation ago, more than half of them are absent from the labor force when they have young children. Prior studies have identified the structural constraints that married mothers face in the workforce as one driver of this paradoxical pattern of high human capital and massive exodus from the workforce. This study extends our understanding of that paradox by exploring how highly-educated women develop their career aspirations. I build on a cultural argument that the motivation for women to use their college-gained skills and knowledge, whether in the private or public sphere, is shaped by how families define female achievement. Specifically, I argue that in the context of shifting gender-role ideologies, families play an important role in shaping how demographically similar women develop greatly divergent career aspirations. In particular, intergenerational educational mobility becomes a critical source for those adult daughters who construct strong aspirations to stay in the workforce.

Findings based on the analysis of 66 in-depth interviews with highly educated married women demonstrate the salient role that parents—especially mothers—play throughout the process by which a woman develops her work ambitions. Despite their contrasting work and family ambitions, all the respondents in this study used the rhetoric of having to pay back their mothers who sacrificed their lives for their children. In particular, the fact that mothers educated

their daughters equally to their sons pressured adult daughters to be more sensitive and less resistant to their mothers' comments about how to live a meaningful life. However, after entering college, depending on their achievement and their intergenerational mobility, respondents' career aspirations diverged greatly, and such divergence continued to play a role in adulthood. Despite the fact that all of the respondents were married mothers, some developed aspirations to focus on raising children well in order to have a successful life; others prioritized having a long-term career and developed strong work ambitions as mothers. The latter group valued the intergenerational educational mobility that they had achieved.

This study makes three main contributions. First, I demonstrate that a woman's family plays a major role in her adherence to a particular career- or family-orientated aspiration, either by reinforcing that aspiration or by challenging it. The salience of familial influence on women's work expectations can extend to adulthood and motherhood. In this particular case, findings complicate our understanding from Risman (2004) that women evaluate their experiences by situating their own lives in the context of women who are in a similar position in society rather than men. Women in this study reference other women, but the way they do so diverges based on the achievement gap between mother and daughter.

Second, the analysis in this chapter teaches us that one of the ways in which Korean women develop career aspirations is through intergenerational educational mobility. Although Korea represents an unusual case and findings may not be applicable to other post-industrial societies, future studies on rapidly changing societies and on countries where higher education expanded for women can build on this case study. In particular, the socialization process that is unconventional – do not live like your mother - and the distancing narrative can provide a

framework in understanding how adult daughters who went over the threshold of a certain level of achievement (compared to their parents) develop career aspirations.

Third, one of the main implications is that the intergenerational bonds – especially between women – become a critical relationship when women develop career aspirations. It is important to note this theme sheds a new light on existing work on Korean families and women's interactions with natal family members: only recently did literature on Korean society start addressing that changes in the level of intergenerational contact and increase in residing near daughters' houses represent bi-lateralization, a more balanced set of relationships with parents and parents-in-law, of kinship ties in Korean families (Cho 1997; Han and Yoon 2004). Lee and Bauer (2013) were the first, to my knowledge, to argue that the bi-lateralization childcare support emerged with the specific purpose and motivation of keeping mothers in the workforce. This is a change from the past, when most childcare support was provided by children's father's families: mothers supporting their own daughters is a recent phenomenon that open the empirical question of what this change looks like on the ground. Related to such finding in the recent literature, this study argues that mothers influence their own daughters' career aspirations even in adulthood.

There are some limitations of this study. By focusing solely on married mothers with young children, it excludes women who opted out from family norms by not getting married and/or by not having children. Although the population of women who make such choices is small in Korea, it is growing, and future studies should investigate diverging definitions of what it means to be successful among those who challenge familial norms. An important question is whether family is as important for those navigating other cultural meanings of success as it is for the respondents in this study. This study also lacks the voices of men. Although my respondents explained that their fathers and husbands have relatively little influence on how they develop

work ambitions and make decisions, this may change over the life course. In any case, we can expect women's definitions of their own success to be influenced by how men, especially husbands, define their own and women's success, so a complementary study of how men view the world and how they interact with their wives and daughter can extend our understanding of the gendered process of defining female achievement.

Despite these limitations, I highlight the role of families in women's assertions of aspiration and ambition. With its focus on the cultural context in which women seek higher education and construct career aspirations, this study also suggests why, in some countries with expanding female educational attainment, women's work ambitions are nevertheless slow to change. Claims that structural constraints in the workforce keep women from continuously participating in the labor market do not adequately explain how women define their own success and strategize their work and family lives. Also, assertions that women in a given community are all embedded in the same cultural ideologies underestimate the role of families in challenging existing norms surrounding motherhood and womanhood. Lastly, by exploring how women develop aspirations in a culture where significant social change happened in an unusually compressed manner (Chang 2010), this study sheds light on the persisting salience of adult children's perceived obligations to pay back to their parents, changing definitions of female achievement, and the status-seeking process of families through their daughters' positions.

Chapter 3

Who Deserves to Work?

How Women Develop Expectations of Childcare Support in Korea

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Motherhood affects women's paid work (Abendroth, Huffman, and Treas 2014; Cohen and Bianchi 1999) in all post-industrial societies. Explanations include work expectations developed prior to motherhood (Damaske 2011; Davis and Greenstein 2009), workforce opportunities and constraints (Gerson 1985; Stone 2007), the amount of support from domestic partners (Hochschild 2012), and the lack of availability of formal and informal childcare (Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Dimova and Wolff 2008; Haan and Wrohlich 2011; Leibowitz, Klerman, and Waite 1992). Grandmothers' help is one of the main forms of informal childcare and, particularly in East Asia, is seen as the most important resource enabling mothers to keep working (Fu 2008; Lee 2011; Oishi and Oshio 2006). However, because studies have predominantly focused on the static relationship between childcare support and women's employment status, the *process* by which mothers negotiate this key support has been a black box.

In this study, I explore the social processes by which women decide to ask for and receive childcare support. Motivations behind the decision to seek kin help with childcare are often assumed to be either economic or cultural: the inability to afford daycare increases the need for kin-based childcare, or mothers culturally prefer it. While both factors may play a role, I argue that expectations about motherhood are negotiated with families and shape the process of seeking and receiving help. Kin-based childcare support is often positively related to mothers' full-time employment (Leibowitz, Klerman, and Waite 1992; Oishi and Oshio 2006). How do women develop their expectations and negotiate for this support?

South Korea (hereafter Korea) is a compelling case for this study. Studies about Korea have argued that childcare provided by grandmothers is one of the most important resource in

helping mothers to continue working (Lee and Bauer 2010, 2013; Lee 2011). Based on 100 in-depth interviews with married mothers, I show that regardless of family background and educational attainment, most women who sought childcare support did receive it, and explained that it enabled them to remain in the hypercompetitive Korean labor market. An important part of the process is constructing a legitimate reason to seek childcare help. I argue that the notion of *deservingness* can explain why some mothers ask for childcare support and some do not, even when they have comparable resources (since a majority of grandmothers are non-employed) and value that care similarly. The concept of deservingness identifies one way in which mothers' work decisions are strongly shaped by persistent negative views of maternal employment and by intensive motherhood ideologies.

3.2 CHILDCARE SUPPORT AND MOTHERS' WORK

Childcare provided by grandparents is often an important resource for employed mothers. It is common in East Asian countries (Chu, Xie, and Yu 2011; Lee, Parish, and Willis 1994), some European countries (Geurts, Poortman, and Tilburg 2012; Jappens and Van Bavel 2012), and for some groups in the United States (Sarkisian and Gerstel 2004; Vandell et al. 2003). Because grandmothers are more involved in childcare than grandfathers across cultures (Dimova and Wolff 2008), several studies of childcare support have focused solely on grandmothers (Bowers and Myers 1999; Lee and Bauer 2013). However, the process of how mothers come to the decision to seek childcare support from their kin has been under-examined.

3.2.1 Motherhood Ideologies and Women's Work

The problems that women face surrounding motherhood are often specific to their work and their identity as mothers (O'Reilly 2016). The process by which women decide to seek childcare support is likely to overlap with the process of making work decisions as a mother. Thus, an array of studies on how mothers make employment decisions (Blair-Loy 2003; Damaske 2011; Gerson 1985; Stone 2007) helps us understand how mothers might arrive at their decisions to seek childcare support.

The view that women should not work when their children are young remains one of the most unbending gender norms in postindustrial societies (for the United States, see Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2011; Jacobs and Gerson 2016; for East Asian countries, see Ochiai and Molony 2008; Raymo et al. 2015). Scholars argue that behind the persisting negative views lie stereotypes about the different impacts of mothers and fathers on their children (Haines, Deaux, and Lofaro 2016); gender-essentialism—the notion that men and women have innately and fundamentally different interests and skills (England 2010); and the intensive motherhood ideology, which Hays (1996) defines as a logically cohesive combination of beliefs dictating that a mother must be the central caregiver who devotes copious time, energy, and material resources to her child. Building on Hays's concept of intensive motherhood as an ideological force that "value[s] mothering methods that are child-centered and create[s] expectations that mothers should engage in childrearing without questioning the issues of efficiency or financial profitability because children are sacred and innocent beings" (1996, 54), gender scholars have been exploring how motherhood ideologies shape people's definitions of what work is worthy and meaningful for a mother.

Empirical trends show increasing intra-cohort variation in women's labor market participation (Cheng 2014; Damaske and Frech 2016). Although working-class white women

who are mothers in the United States were historically more likely to work than middle-class white women who are mothers (Garey 1999), this trend has changed in recent years (England, Ross, and Garcia-Beaulieu 2004). Damaske (2011) argues that both family background and current social class matter because they influence mothers' expectations about future workforce participation, the available opportunities, and the available family support. One of her central ideas is that regardless of class or racial background, mothers consider their work paths as adapted for the family, but factors such as financial resources and job traits such as opportunities for promotion and schedule autonomy, make it easier for some mothers to keep working.

3.2.2 Motivation to Ask for Childcare Support

Mothers often have multiple options for childcare. One frequent assumption is that structural factors, especially economic standing, shape people's need and willingness to depend on grandmothers for childcare. However, the empirical evidence is tenuous. Some studies find that higher household income increases the likelihood of kin support being sought and of it being provided (Lee and Aytac 1998; Silverstein and Waite 1993), whereas others find the opposite (Benin and Keith 1995). Other studies show no significant influence of maternal education, single parenthood, or family income on receiving grandparent care (Kim et al. 2015; Leibowitz, Klerman, and Waite 1992; Vandell et al. 2003).

The other assumption in explaining intergenerational childcare support is cultural heritage or shared understanding (Chin et al. 2012; Ko and Hank 2013). Lee and Bauer (2013) interviewed 21 matched pairs of caregiving grandmothers and employed mothers currently receiving childcare support in Korea. The authors argued that employed mothers chose grandmother childcare (or childcare by grandmothers) because they had prior expectations that they could rely

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on such care, because they perceived that they would receive considerable benefits from it, and because they trusted the care provided by family. But we know little about the process of developing expectations of childcare support; the study included only mothers already receiving it, not those who did not seek help in the first place or who tried but gave up. In sum, because the literature has generally treated intergenerational childcare support as a resource-pooling strategy or as culturally expected behavior, it is not well understood how the process of seeking childcare support shapes or is shaped by mothers' expectations and decisions to work.

3.3 CONTEMPORARY KOREA

Korea is a postindustrial society in which family and work sharply conflict for mothers due to an intensive motherhood ideology (Ochiai and Molony 2008) and competitive workplace norms (Brinton 2001). Despite having the highest level of educational attainment among member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Korea lags behind on several indicators of gender equality, especially regarding the motherhood wage penalty (OECD 2012) and unequal division of labor at home. Regarding workplace conditions, Korea's average weekly working hours are the highest in the OECD (OECD 2017) and overwork (working over 50 hours a week; according to Cha 2013) is common (Bae and Chung 1997). Of Koreans in their 30s, men spend an average of 58 minutes a day on housework and childcare, while women spend five hours and two minutes (Statistics Korea 2015). Additionally, despite having free daycare for children age two or younger, only about 35 percent of children of that age range are enrolled in formal childcare in Korea (OECD 2016a). This is due to both widely shared distrust of formal daycare facilities and to short hours of daycare, which do not accommodate Korea's long working hours (Lee and Bauer 2013).

In addition to the workplace culture, the traditional gender-role ideology is still very strong in Korea, mainly concerning who should conduct housework and childcare and who should be the financial provider (Brinton and Lee 2016; Raymo et al. 2015; Seong 2011). Based on a nationally representative survey on gender role attitudes, 42 percent of respondents who are older than 13 years old at the time of the survey agreed that a mother should either focus solely on taking care of the family or adjust her employment to focus on childrearing. The rest was composed of 8 percent with no opinion and 50 percent stating that a mother should make her employment decision regardless of the family demands (Social Indicators in Korea 2011). Additionally, studies also consistently show that despite increasingly gender-equal attitudes about women's and men's roles in both private and public spheres, negative evaluations of mothers working full-time persist (Seong 2011). In 2016, 85 percent of Koreans supported gender equality in the labor market and viewed women's employment positively, yet 54 percent felt that mothers with young children should prioritize their role as mothers rather than focusing on work (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family 2017). In another national survey (Korean Women's Development Institute 2012), 86 percent of women said that husbands and wives should divide domestic work equally, yet only 35 percent of the same sample disagreed with the statement that it is harmful to a preschool child if the mother works.

Within this context, we see two important trends. First, Korean women show relatively low labor force participation when they are of childrearing age compared to women in other postindustrial societies. In 2014, 58 percent of Korean women in their 30s were working, compared to 92 percent of Korean men and 69 percent of U.S. women (OECD 2014). Second, of dual-earner households with young children, 43 percent receive some childcare support from

grandparents (Ministry of Health and Welfare 2009); the figure is 53 percent in the Seoul

metropolitan area (Korean Women's Development Institute 2015).

3.4 METHODS

The data for this study are 100 in-depth, in-person interviews conducted in 2015. My

sample includes married mothers who lived in the Seoul metropolitan area, had at least one child

younger than six, had at least a high school degree, and had some working experience since

graduating from school. Because the research goal was to investigate the general pattern of using

childcare support, my standard for the number of interviewees was to recruit until I had sufficient

sample diversity[4]. I purposefully recruited mothers with different amounts of education: one-

third of the sample, whom I refer to as *less-educated*, had completed high school or some form

of two-year college; one-third (the *well-educated*) had a bachelor's degree from a university

other than the top three Korean universities; and one-third (the *elite-educated*) had a bachelor's

or advanced degree from one of the top three Korean universities. The reason for having a

separate elite-educated group is, as Lee and Brinton (1996) showed, the prestige of a particular

degree and university explains variation in labor market experiences among well-educated

Koreans. I refer to the well-educated and elite-educated collectively as *better-educated* in

contrast with the *less-educated*. Also, I aimed to meet respondents with diverse employment

trajectories and current employment status to see how mothers' work (past and present) shapes

the process of seeking childcare support.

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[4] The main criteria to determine whether I had sufficient sample diversity was the repetitiveness of themes
that emerged. This methodology is found in Mario Small's work "How many cases do I need?" (2009).
Specifically, the method that I used was as follows: After the first round of interviews, I came back from
my fieldwork and analyzed emerging themes. Then, after the second round of interviews, I repeated this
process. Questions that were asked were identical. When similar themes emerged from the interviews
from my third round of interviews, I stopped interviewing mothers.

I used two sampling strategies. First, I recruited 50 mothers through a panel from Ovey, an online and smartphone application–based survey company whose clients include merchandisers, broadcasting companies, and scholars. Of the approximately 10,000 respondents that met the criteria for my study, I randomly selected 60 and ended up meeting 50 for an interview. Second, because respondents to online or app-based surveys might share unobservable characteristics I recruited the other 50 interviewees through restricted snowball sampling from my personal networks, allowing no more than three referrals from each tie. Educational attainment level (by degree and university ranking) was the main difference in the samples from these two recruiting strategies; the Ovey sample had a greater proportion of less-educated mothers while the snowball sample had more elite-educated mothers who graduated from top-ranked universities.

Interviews lasted from 50 minutes to two hours; most took about 90 minutes. All interviews were structured with roughly 40 open-ended questions starting with questions about a typical day, continuing with work- and family-related questions (chronologically from high school graduation), and ending with anticipated work trajectory and plans for more children. I explicitly asked questions about childcare plans and about processes my interviewees took when arranging childcare for their children. Work-related questions covered expectations, aspirations, trajectories, and experiences. Family-related topics included relationships with parents since adolescence and with parents-in-law after getting married. To understand perceptions, I asked the interviewees' thoughts on marriage, childbearing, motherhood, and mothering, and their definitions of happiness and success.

My analytic sample of 100 mothers was diverse, with different family backgrounds, occupational trajectories, and educational backgrounds. The respondents' mean age was 35,

ranging from 25 to 42. The average age at first birth was 30 years old. Roughly two-thirds had

one child, and on average the age of the youngest child was 2.5 years old. My sample is on

average highly educated compared to the population, largely because 38 percent of the sample

are in the elite-educated group, having graduated from one of the top three universities in Korea.

The less-educated third of my sample included 29 high school graduates and 5 with two-year

vocational college degrees, and the well-educated third included 28 with bachelor's degrees from

non-elite universities.

All had at least two years' work experience, and they had changed jobs on average twice.

Women in the less-educated group typically worked as assistants or secretaries, in factories, or in

the service sector. Well-educated women had diverse jobs, including flight attendant, teacher,

music instructor, assistant at a law firm, and manager at a local bank. Elite-educated women had

jobs such as lawyer, consultant, CEO of a start-up, and manager at a large company. Among

employed mothers, including part-time and self-employed, the median monthly wage was

US$3,100 and the median percentage of the contribution that women were making to the

household was 40 percent. If we consider the median income by women's educational attainment

level, it was US$2,085 for the less-educated group, US$ 3,250 for the well-educated group, and

US$5,091 for the elite-educated group. Regarding the division of childcare, as expected from

Korean time-use survey data, husbands' participation in childcare was reported to be low: on

average, 30 minutes per day during weekdays.

Korea is a small country: the median drive to grandparents' homes was one hour, the

average being one hour and 15 minutes. Eighteen respondents lived with their parents or in-laws

and 30 lived within a 10-minute drive. In three cases, the grandchildren lived with their

grandparents and the respondents visited on weekends. Two-thirds of the grandmothers had been

stay-at-home mothers, their cohort having had very low labor force participation after marriage and motherhood (Statistics Korea 2014). The other one-third of the grandmothers had gone in and out of the workforce, but most were not working at the time of the interview.

Following multiple readings of the transcripts, my inductive analysis identified themes and narratives. Using Dedoose, a software for qualitative analysis, I used two stages of coding to determine which mothers had sought childcare support and why and how they had decided to do so. First, I used open coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990) to organize the data into four themes: work pathways and the rationale behind work decisions; childcare arrangement (from birth to the present); motivations to seek childcare support; and the process of negotiating and maintaining that support. When important patterns emerged, I conducted a second round of coding with a focused coding strategy (Lofland and Lofland 2006, 202). Emergent themes included the importance of educational accomplishments and job quality and prestige; the meaning of employment, often shaped through ongoing interactions with family members (including grandparents); and thinking about deservingness that strongly related to seeking and negotiating childcare.

3.5 CHILDCARE SUPPORT AND MOTHERS' CONTINUOUS EMPLOYMENT

The mothers in my sample pursued two distinct work pathways. Half had continuous work pathways: since finishing school, they had never been out of the workforce longer than three months. The other half had discontinuous work pathways: they had worked during young adulthood but left or greatly reduced their paid work after having children. Few in the discontinuous pathway had returned to the workforce for part-time or irregular (contract-based) full-time jobs. Women with more education were slightly more likely to have continuous work

pathways: 44 percent of the less-educated, 50 percent of the well-educated, and 58 percent of the elite-educated had experienced continuous employment.

Mothers who had discontinuous employment gave numerous reasons for leaving the workforce around childbearing age: long working hours, short-term contract positions, low pay, health concerns, housework burden, or little desire to keep working. Mothers who had continuous employment similarly had various explanations for it, but commonly they argued that childcare help from grandmothers was critical. As Table 3.1 shows, 88 percent of women with continuous work pathways were either receiving or had received family childcare support when their children were under three. A majority were receiving more than 7 hours a day, ranging from 1 to 12 hours per day. Some combined grandmothers' childcare with other forms such as daycare or a nanny, while others depended solely on grandmothers.

Table 3.1: Daily Childcare Hours Provided by Grandmothers:

Mothers Continuously Employed with At Least One Child Under 3

	Mothers with Continuous Employment (Total = 50)
Not receiving any support for childcare	12%
1-3 hrs. of childcare support daily	10%
4 - 6 hrs. of childcare support daily	12%
7 - 9 hrs. of childcare support daily	36%
9 + hrs. of childcare support daily	30%

Instrumentally and emotionally, grandmothers' childcare support enabled mothers to stay in the workforce. Childcare support was important instrumentally because overwork was the norm and daycare hours were shorter than average working hours. As Ari[5] (age 34, high school-educated) explained, "Owners of daycares in my neighborhood want mothers to drop their kids off around 10 and pick them up around 4 pm. It's hard to find a job that fits the daycare hours, so if you are a working mom, you need someone for the morning and afternoon time." Generally, long work hours for both the respondents and their husbands created an environment in which childcare support was critical. As Haein (age 38, well-educated) explained, "I usually work from 7 to 7 on weekdays, so I have to totally depend on multiple heroes. My mother, mother-in-law, and one home-care worker. Without them, you cannot work, period." Her husband was not one of the heroes. In fact, most of the women in the sample emphasized that their husbands came home later than themselves. Continuously employed mothers also emphasized that childcare support helped them emotionally, given their anxiety and guilt concerning formal daycare. As Jiyoo (age 35, elite-educated) explained, "All the news about nannies and teachers at the daycare hitting children really made me anxious, so I only considered my mother or mother-in-law for childcare." Among those who ended up asking for support, 90 percent received it. However, as useful as childcare support from grandmothers is to women trying to stay in the workforce, only about half of the sample sought it.

3.5.1 Who Deserves to Work? The Process of Asking for Help

The analysis of which, why, and how women asked for support revealed that, before asking for help and throughout the process of seeking it, women went through emotional and

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[5] I changed respondents' names and several identifying characteristics to protect confidentiality.

mental processes to find a reason to receive it. At the center of this process was how a mother and her family members—mainly grandmothers—evaluated the meaning of the mother's occupation by asking who *deserves* to work as a mother.

3.5.2 Mothers Who Did Not Seek Help: Failing to Find a Motivation

Those who decided not to seek childcare support shared a framework of making the decision based on whether they considered their jobs worth keeping. This was a critical aspect because if a job was not good enough, mothers did not feel they deserved to ask for childcare help. Because jobs that mothers had in the past and at the timing of having their children differed, concrete traits of specific jobs that women used to evaluate the worthiness of their jobs differed for the less-educated group and the better-educated group.

For less-educated mothers, having a 'good' job was considered fortunate. When mothers described the characteristics of a good job, they referred to having a long-term contract, a job where they can get promoted, a job that is not too boring, and a job that has financial stability. Haru (age 34, high school-educated) described how she had a job that was not satisfying in terms of learning experience and a job where she could not get promoted: "Before quitting, I was a secretary at three firms. I was not accumulating skills or professional knowledge because I was conducting simple tasks that anyone could do. My wage did not increase, it was stalled. I had to change my job every two years to increase the wage little bit by little bit. My fourth job was likely to be a secretary at another firm."

As mentioned in the methods section, less-educated mothers lacked financial resources compared to the better-education group, but their household income was above the median income level in Korea. The rationale that less-educated mothers used in explaining how they

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decided to work was less about economic need ("I need to work because my husband and I need more money") but more about their positive evaluation of their current job ("I have a good job, so I thought I should keep this job"). Similar to Haru, Insuh (age 32, high school-educated) emphasized the meaning of having a good job by saying, "a lot of jobs are short-term or non-promotional. If you have a good job, then you should keep it. [Interviewer: Could you give examples?] Like jobs at companies that do not disappear suddenly and jobs where you can stay for a long time and grow." A majority of less-educated mothers who started staying home when they got pregnant and did not ask for childcare support had short-term contract jobs (on average 1 year), jobs at company that had a good likelihood of going bankrupt, or jobs that were not rewarding.

For better-educated mothers, good jobs that were worth keeping were mainly prestigious occupations such as lawyers, consultants, or doctors or the jobs at companies that were broadly recognized. Kyongha (age 32, elite-educated) represents a case where the company's name recognition played a major role in her decision to quit and not ask her mother for childcare help: "I started working at this mid-size company that no one around me had heard of. I was a bit embarrassed, but I was happy because I had a job. But when I got married, it felt meaningless to stay in this company that nobody ever heard of. It was simply not worth staying." Shinhye (age 36, well-educated) echoed the importance of job status: "There are women who deserve to work, especially those who are lawyers or doctors. The successful ones."

This way of thinking about whether a job was worth keeping after becoming a mother spilled over into my interviewees' definitions of who *deserves* to work as a mother and to receive childcare. The aforementioned Shinhye (age 36, well-educated) explains this by saying, "It is really hard to work as a mother in this country and you need a lot of help from grandmothers. For

me, there was no reason to embrace every step of persuading my mother-in-law or my mother to provide childcare just to keep working at a company that isn't even well known." Song (age 40, high school-educated) made much the same point by describing, "I would ask, 'Should I tell my mom that I need her help?' Then I asked myself whether I deserve to keep working."

Since grandmothers played a salient role because they were the ones providing the childcare the process that the interviewees went through, of assessing whether they deserved to work involved interactions with grandmothers. Jungyeon (age 32, elite-educated) recalled how it was initially hard to expect any support because, even before her pregnancy, her mother had consistently told her that her job was too ordinary to keep after becoming a mother. Other women who were not sure about their work pathways also found out, either directly or else indirectly through their husbands, that their parents or parents-in-law saw no value in their maintaining their jobs after motherhood. The accumulation of such comments was sufficiently discouraging that they did not plan to stay in the workforce. In these cases, women often identified themselves with the kinds of jobs they had held and their specific work trajectories. Only a few who stopped working stressed desire rather than lack of deservingness as their main motivation to exit the labor force. One of these was Noeul (age 34, high school-educated), who quit working when she married: "I was really tired of working for 10 years, so when I was getting married, I felt like marriage was an exit from my boring life."

In sum, one of the main mechanisms for not choosing a continuous work pathway was the combination of becoming a mother and failing to find worth in one's job. Because most mothers thought receiving childcare support was extremely important in order to maintain their employment, the process of finding worth in one's job involved not only making a determination

on their own but also interacting with grandmothers. Mothers in the sample often explained this process in terms of *who deserves to work.*

3.5.3 Mothers Who Sought Help: The Notion of Who Deserves to Work

Mothers who asked for childcare support spent significant time reflecting on their career aspirations and talking with grandmothers about working full-time as a mother. Although mothers provided a complex narrative about childcare availability, time and energy, life satisfaction, and identity in explaining their decisions to work and to depend on grandmothers' childcare, beliefs about who deserves to work and to have childcare support were critical in motivating them to ask for that support. The evaluation of one's own work happened before or while seeking help. Yoonji (age 30, elite-educated) was going through such a process. She explains, "I have been thinking about how to arrange things when I return to work [after maternal leave]. I questioned my job a lot: Is it worth keeping? Is my job that important to me and to my family? Am I being greedy wanting to work? I would need to ask my mother-in-law for help. But before all that, I keep questioning about my job." Mothers spent much time thinking about worthiness and deservingness instead of feeling entitled to work and to receive childcare support. As Sodam (age 30, well-educated) illustrates, one of the reasons was because taking care of an infant is extremely demanding, especially for grandmothers:

> Taking care of an infant is hard. When I just had my baby, my mother came to my house to help me out, but she would have a wrist ache after holding my daughter all day. So when I was about to return to work, I had to think hard about what to do about my job and about childcare. I felt like I was being selfish by depending on my aging mother, so it was really, really hard for me to ask for her support.

Both less-educated and better-educated mothers in my sample explained how money is not necessarily the main reason for seeking childcare help. This might be impacted by the fact that all of mothers in my sample were in households where the survival of the family did not depend on the earning that women were bringing to the family. Those who decided to continue working felt that their income would be useful to the family, but they explained how their decisions were rooted in more than just money. Sia (age 36, high school-educated) explained, "I earn around 2K a month and this is not a lot. However, I play an important role in my company and it is unlikely that I will get fired. These factors encouraged me to continue working." In a different context, women with higher wages similarly indicated that money does not play an important role behind their rationale to continuously work. This was mainly because their husbands' incomes were often considered sufficient for the family. Jooyoung (age 35, elite-educated), who earned around US$7,000 a month, explained, "I have a high-paying job, but so does my husband. Money was not an issue. Every mother feels pressure to quit unless she has a really good reason why her job is worth keeping."

In the end, mothers felt that they needed a good reason to expect childcare support before they would seek it. They held themselves to a high standard in evaluating their own work and constantly asked themselves whether they deserved to work, though the specific values and logics that structured this deservingness narrative diverged based on their level of education. Furthermore, the process of negotiating childcare support took different forms—smooth for some and difficult for others.

Symbolic Logic of Deserving to Work: Better-Educated Mothers. For the better-educated group, status—which university the woman had graduated from, what company she worked for,

and what specific job she held—was important in finding it worthwhile (or not) to keep working

after transitioning to motherhood. Because elite-educated mothers saw the symbolic meaning of

maintaining status as important in defining who deserves to work, they experienced a rather

smooth process of childcare negotiations. Well-educated mothers, on the other hand, had more

persuading to do.

Elite-educated mothers who mobilized childcare support reported that they chose to work

continuously for the happiness of the whole family, including their family of origin. More

women who had achieved high status—who had graduated from prestigious universities and/or

were doctors or lawyers—expected that their parents would resent them staying home. When I

asked Dahee (age 27, elite-educated) about the process of leaving and reentering the workforce

and her ideas about childcare arrangements, she frequently mentioned what her parents would

think or feel about her employment status. She said, "One of my main motivators to be a mother

who works and to ask my mother for [childcare] help was my parents' expectations about my

accomplishments." When asked who would be most disappointed if she stayed home, Dahee

said, "My dad will be so disappointed, almost furious. I was part of his dignity, his pride. Now he

is retiring and all he talks about with his friends is where my husband and I work." These elite-

educated women were those who had excelled in school, defeated boys in competitions, attended

prestigious universities, and worked at well-regarded firms. They took their parents' and parents-

in-law's high expectations as a sign of love and support and thus tried to predict how their

parents would think about their work decisions. Saerom (age 31, elite-educated), also echoed this

point:

> My parents, who run a restaurant, would be extremely upset and disappointed if
> I quit. Both my parents and my husband's parents are happy with me working. It
> is not just [my parents]. My mother-in-law has always been so proud of me. I
> once thought about staying home when I was pregnant, but when I told my

mother-in-law that I might quit, she was shocked and thought in the long term I would regret all the opportunities that I had given up.

Frequent conversations with parents about whether work and educational background made it "worthwhile" to stay in the labor market provoked respondents to reassess their own success and to strive to maintain their status.

For a few, a relatively smooth process of receiving childcare support was made possible by their own mothers but not their mothers-in-law. As Hyojoo (age 37, elite-educated) recalled, "My mother-in-law told me from the moment I got pregnant to stay home and focus on educating my children. My mom, on the other hand, strongly encouraged me to maintain my job. She explicitly said that she would be sad and resentful if I just stayed home and did housework after all those years of accomplishments from hard work." Hyojoo ended up depending on her mother for childcare and continued to work as an analyst in the banking industry. This shows how arranging childcare sometimes involved conflict of interests and logics. In Hyojoo's case, her mother-in-law stressed that mothers need to stay home whereas her mother argued that it will be pity if Hyojoo stays home because she accomplished too much to stay home, not working at her current job. It is difficult to analyze how grandmothers' rationales are constructed. However, from the view point of Hyojoo, interactions with her mother and mother-in-law led her to take one of the two views, in this case, her mother's view. She further explains this by saying: "My mother is right that I did work hard and achieved something that not everyone had a chance to do. I did go to a good university[6] and I am at this nationally known company which was competitive to get a job in." Especially among the elite-educated women, the prestige attached to the specific job and the name value of the company repetitively came out as they described

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[6] She went to the top university in Seoul.

rationale behind their decisions to continuously work and to ask for childcare support.

For women with degrees from non-elite universities, securing agreement that they deserved to work and to receive childcare was harder. Analysis of the process of persuasion showed that their deservingness could be contested, mainly because definitions of success and high status—easily ascribed to elite-educated mothers—were more subjective for well-educated mothers. Many of the latter felt that they were stuck between their family's status-seeking and a traditional gender ideology that expects mothers to use their skills at home to educate their children. Yunseo (age 33, well-educated) described how the prestige of a specific job or firm helped one get beyond the traditional motherhood ideology. She explained, "You have to constantly tell your parents that you achieved something because adults like big names or brands. I work at the daycare center owned by a very famous corporation and my mother-in-law often brags to her friends about where I work. People are really sensitive to names." Some mothers, such as Soi (age 37, well-educated), had to make comparisons with siblings or with other women to "prove" that keeping their jobs was worthwhile and that they deserved to be exceptions to traditional motherhood ideology. She said:

> Since my parents are still working, I had to ask my mother-in-law for childcare help. She hesitated because she had already told my sister-in-law that she could not provide childcare support. I carefully explained how hard I worked to obtain my current position and she acknowledged that I do work in a much bigger and more famous company compared to my sister-in-law, who was a secretary at a small firm. I felt bad for bringing my sister-in-law into the picture in order to persuade my mother-in-law that my job was more … well, more worthwhile … to keep, and therefore I needed her help. I persuaded her and she agreed to help out.

For most mothers who ended up seeking help, the initial step of thinking about who deserves to work as a mother was critical, and the availability of childcare support was

determined not strictly by grandmothers' availability but by whether both agree that it makes sense for the daughter/daughter-in-law to keep working once she is a mother. Throughout the process, the better-educated mothers had to challenge traditional gender ideology and negative evaluations of maternal employment. Some ended up receiving support from both mother and mother-in-law, However, it was considered sufficient by mothers if they obtained support from one of the grandmothers. In the end, the better-educated mothers who sought and received childcare support were those who convinced first themselves and then at least one of the grandmothers that their employment contributed to their family's status and was something for the whole family to be proud of.

Finding the Logic of Deserving to Work from Economic Stability: Less-Educated Mothers. Women without a college degree mainly cited job stability as the reason to keep working after becoming mothers. As mentioned earlier, the logic that less-educated mothers used was not economic *need* but *motivation* to keep working and to seek childcare support. By emphasizing the *motivation* to continue working, which was, as noted earlier, often determined by the likelihood of being promoted and of having a stable position, less-educated mothers emphasized how jobs are important in encouraging them stay in the workforce. Dabin (age 41, high school-educated) explained this distinction between the push factor (monetary need) and the pull factor (opportunities and stability):

> I have worked at this bank for more than 20 years and now I am at the managerial level. I started as a clerk, so my wage has been increasing little by little. Compared to my friends from high school who had to change jobs almost every year, my job has been more stable and at least in this company, the more years I work, the higher my position gets. I was not earning a lot in the beginning—but everyone in my family thought my job and the company were both good. So when

I asked my parents-in-law to move in [to our house] and help with childcare, they said yes, right away.

Bomin (age 34, two-year college) also sought childcare help to maintain her job. She had a different job history than Dabin yet offered a similar reasoning of both long-term earning and job stability being the main reason that she decided not to quit after having her son, and to ask for childcare help. Bomin described vividly the moment when she started her current job:

I was very unlucky because all four of the companies that I worked for as a secretary went bankrupt. I rarely received my wage on time. Then, I started working at the current research center, doing similar work as before. Because this is a child development center and since the budget is pretty stable here, I always get my monthly wage on time and there is very little fear of getting fired. It was heaven and on my second week, I was pretty determined to keep this job as long as I can.

Like the mothers with a college degree, some of the less-educated mothers received childcare support relatively easily, while some had to work harder for it. Hasun (age 37, high school-educated) is one of the former. Before becoming a mother, she had worked in a number of department stores. When she was pregnant, she quit her job and was planning to take a long break with vague plans to eventually return to the labor market, but her mother-in-law changed her mind. Hasun explained, "My mother-in-law said that regardless of how much one earns, the act of engaging in paid work is good because it gives more economic power to the whole family in the long run." She thought having a stable job was important, so opened a nail salon and her mother-in-law in turn provided childcare support. Many other less-educated mothers who ended up seeking childcare support also made a point of their long-term contribution to the household's economic stability. Although they would not immediately have financial problems if they

stopped working, they agreed that a job that has a long-term economic payoff was worth keeping

because it would eventually benefit everyone.

Sanga (age 36, high school-educated) had had three irregular contract-based jobs selling

insurance. These offered no leave, so after having her first child she found a new insurance sales

job. Then she sought childcare help. Initially, her parents were against her working because they

were embarrassed that she was going to work as a saleswoman. She explained the process of

persuading them to help her out:

> My parents' generation has a bad impression about this kind of job. So my mom
> really disliked my job at first and for some time she refused to talk to me, because
> she was embarrassed. When I asked her to take care of my child while I was at
> work, I had to promise her that if I was not doing well at work, I would quit right
> away.

After one year, Sanga received an award as the best salesperson of the year. She explained how

her mother subsequently became her biggest supporter. She described, "I worked really hard and

every day, when I come home to pick up my kid, I would brag to my mom about my

performance and how I am able to help my household to be stronger financially. Slowly, she got

interested in hearing how many insurance items I sold. Now she is actually a VIP client who

introduces me to other people."

In sum, for most of the mothers in my sample who ended up relying on childcare support

from grandmothers, it was necessary to *persuade* grandmothers why they had to work and why

they deserved childcare support from their aging mothers or mothers-in-law. Forty-five of the 50

who sought childcare support got it, though they used different logics to define their

deservingness[7]. For well- and elite-educated mothers, status-seeking attitudes and the value of professional success defined who deserved support; that is, grandmothers would help only if the mother's job was of sufficiently high status. For less-educated mothers, deservingness was premised on the economic stability that their jobs guaranteed to the household.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the literature on women's work by adding to our knowledge of how women seek childcare support and account for their work. My findings show how childcare provided by grandmothers enables women to maintain continuous work pathways in a context in which overwork is normal and non-kinship childcare lacks ideological and systemic support—that is, childcare is neither widely trusted nor widely available that can meet working hours. However, despite the benefit of childcare support, the process by which working mothers or mothers-to-be decide to seek it is strongly shaped by persistent negative views of maternal employment and by an intensive motherhood ideology. The pressure to pre-arrange childcare and to think about who deserves to keep working after becoming a mother falls predominantly on mothers and, in fact, the notion of deservingness dominates how they construct their work expectations and their decisions to seek intergenerational childcare support.

Most of the women in my sample resembled those in other countries, including the United States, where women account for their work paths as undertaken for the family (Damaske 2011), and where cultural contradictions about working mothers leave them feeling that their

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[7] The five who did not receive support included three who had grandparents living very far (two abroad and one in Busan) and two whose grandparents were employed. This does not refute my argument that the "deservingness" discourse plays an important role: for the remaining 50 mothers who did not even think about and did not ask for childcare support (discussed in the section 1.5.2 Mothers Who Did Not Seek Help: Failing to Find a Motivation), 40 had non-employed grandparents and 42 had grandparents who lived close to them in the Seoul metropolitan area.

choices are under attack and have to be justified (Luker 1984). Before or while seeking childcare support, mothers in my sample went through a process of constructing meaning and identifying reasons to keep working. This stage involved identifying who *deserves* to receive childcare support. Women who thought they deserved to work—which was defined by whether their jobs were worth keeping—persuaded grandmothers to provide childcare support. Such a normative process of defining the worth of a job was contingent on the particular job's stability and prestige and on how the woman defined her contribution to a set of family members—in this case, the grandmothers.

Additionally, this case study has implications for societies where extended families have been important. Findings in this study go beyond arguing that extended families matter because within the context of Korea, grandmothers' childcare support is important. This study extends our knowledge by investigating when and how extended family support matters for women who are married mothers. The vast majority of the literature talk about extended family's downward support and focuses on patriarchal order (mainly supporting sons' families) for adult children (Kim et al 2015). Recently, studies on the salience of bi-lateral intergenerational support (receiving from either side or both sides of the family) have begun to emerge and my work contributes to this line of study (Bauer and Lee 2013). While interest in this issue is strong, little research captures how existing gender norms (in particular traditional norms and negative views toward maternal employment) shape the process of planning, negotiating, and receiving childcare support, which is the focal contribution of this study.

The idea of deservingness draws our attention to the importance of a particular job's stability, prestige, and prospective career trajectory. Existing frameworks that explain how mothers make work decisions and find meaning in maintaining their jobs emphasize the

incompatibility of demands from work and family (Blair-Loy 2003; Stone 2007); aspirations for paid work, which are related to multiple factors including family background, motherhood ideology, and the opportunities and constraints that women face (Correll 2004; Hays 1996); and job quality (Damaske 2011). Extending this line of work, my findings show that in the context of Korea, a mother evaluates the worthiness of her work according to its stability and prestige. Who deserves to work—a central idea of this study—is not just a matter of the mother but also of the job. The question is not only whether she deserves to keep the job, but whether the job itself deserves sacrifice on the part of other family members. Whether a job was worth keeping depended not only on its economic stability but also on occupational prestige and long-term financial stability.

Because different mothers face different constraints and opportunities in the workforce, this deservingness narrative was not consistent across groups but rather contingent on educational background. For less-educated women, opportunities to accumulate professional skills and to have a stable job enabled them to define their jobs as worth keeping. For better-educated women, brand names and prestige of the company or the occupation enabled them to define their jobs as worth keeping. The finding that mothers ground their work decisions in logics of prestige and job stability supports the ongoing demand from feminist scholarship to go beyond the "need" and "choice" rhetoric in explaining how women of different socioeconomic backgrounds account for their work (Damaske 2011).

Developing work expectations and receiving support involves people beyond the nuclear family because childcare support inevitably involves multiple participants—in this study grandmothers were the main arbitrators of the decision. While the literature focuses on how family background influences women's career aspirations and expectations until young

adulthood, future studies should consider the role of extended family networks —especially when grandmothers' childcare support is salient—and elucidate the roles of the family of origin and of in-laws in how women seek childcare support and develop their work expectations beyond young adulthood. The rationale that mothers used when explaining their work decisions and behaviors of seeking childcare support was mainly because such decisions are good for *the whole family* including grandmothers, which similarly mirrors the *for the family* rhetoric that Damaske (2011) found New York women using to account for their work decisions.

Because this study is based on mothers in heterosexual marriages, its findings may not generalize to single mothers or to mothers in same-sex partnerships. While these are small in number in Korea, the number has been growing and it is important for future studies to investigate them, as they may face different constraints and different interactions with their extended families. Also, because the sample is composed of mothers in households where the median income is far above the poverty line, this study has a limitation in terms of understanding how mothers who are in households with low income might seek childcare support. Additionally, although my findings imply that families of origin play an important role in how women normatively construct work expectations, my interview data did not include how my interviewees' mothers and mothers-in-law themselves perceived the situation, only how my interviewees *thought* they did. Some grandmothers joined the conversation after the interview and one of them stated that, for mothers, the most valuable experience for a woman is raising a child with her own hands, but she ended her statement by saying this was "unless the society needs that woman, like judges or professors." To better understand the notion of deservingness from the standpoint of the *providers* of childcare support rather than that of the beneficiaries, a future study could be conducted with a sample of grandmothers.

Lastly, mothers who continuously stayed in the workforce argued that childcare help from grandmothers is the critical resource enabling them to do so. Yet, because the division of childcare takes place amongst women (grandmothers and mothers) rather than amongst couples (husbands and wives), the gendered division of childcare labor is reinforced. Ironically, although the sacrifice on the part of the older generation of women contributes substantially to helping the younger generation of women engage in paid work, the intergenerational division of childcare amongst women reinforces traditional gender-role ideology and the patriarchal division of childcare labor, as Lee and Bauer (2013) argued. It is important to discuss what the findings in this paper imply: not only that women have to jump the hurdle of persuading themselves and others that they deserve to work, but also that the end result if they succeed is the reproduction of gendered division of labor.

Chapter 4

Class-based Mothering in the Land of Concerted Cultivation

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Sociological studies have shown that family resources, including cultural, social, human, and financial capital, are salient in reproducing class-based educational achievement gaps and labor market inequalities (Bourdieu 1973; Grusky 1994; Hart and Risley 2003; Lareau 2011; Lareau and Weininger 2003). Among measures of social class, such as paternal education, family income, and neighborhood, maternal education has been found to play a significant role in the educational outcomes of children and adolescents (Augustine, Crosnoe, Kendig, and Prickett 2015; Conley, Lareau, and Weininger 2015; Lareau and Weininger 2008). The influence of maternal education on children's performance starts well before they go to school, as early as zero to three years of age (Hart and Risley 2003). The current study contributes to our knowledge of class-based childrearing in early childhood by empirically investigating the differences in how less-educated mothers and highly-educated mothers raise their young children in South Korea (hereafter Korea).

Korea is a case that invites both theoretical and empirical questions regarding how maternal education shapes childrearing. Theoretically, an underexplored question in the literature on class-based mothering is how mothers from different socioeconomic positions raise their children in a society in which everyone is expected and is known to engage in what Lareau (2011) calls concerted cultivation; that is, treating a child as a developmental project and providing a set of structured activities to promote skills, behaviors, and attitudes that lead to greater school success. Korea is known for having the world's largest percentage of students receiving private tutoring and education outside of school (Baker and LeTendre 2005) and Korean parents are often described as all having extremely high ambitions for educating their children (Seth 2002). In particular, mothers face massive pressure to ensure their children's educational success (Park and Abelmann 2004) and to become educational managers of their

children who hold intensified responsibility to navigate the private after-school market through information by providing a set of organized activities (Park 2006). Theoretically, the Korean context provides a compelling research site to investigate whether—and if so, how—mothers living in a macro context of concerted cultivation develop different ways to raise their children based on their own backgrounds.

Empirically, even within such a hothouse of intense pressure to focus on children's educational success, there is room for investigation of how different mothers approach[8] childrearing differently. This has been under-studied, especially in work that uses Korea as a research setting. Because most studies start with the assumption that all Korean parents are obsessed with their children's achievement, few have explored the micro-level processes of mothering and how mothers develop their childrearing strategies. This is unfortunate because recent studies show disparities—in fact, *widening* disparities—in the amount and kinds of private tutoring and after-school education based on parents' cultural, social, and financial resources (Byun, Schofer, and Kim 2012; Park, Byun, and Kim 2011). Complicating the uniform image of Korean mothers investing as much of their time and resources as possible in childrearing, this study unpacks how mothers with different educational backgrounds engage in childrearing.

Based on an analysis of 98 in-depth interviews with mothers of young children, I show the divergences in mothers' childrearing and explain the context in which mothers who have similarly high aspirations to provide maximum support for the academic success of their children end up developing different childrearing approaches. Mothers in my study, regardless of their different levels of education, are all under enormous pressure to apply copious time, energy, and skill in making sure their children receive the best early childhood education. Even less-educated

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[8] Throughout this chapter, I use "approach" to indicate both strategies and beliefs related to childrearing.

mothers, mirroring the common assumption about Korean mothers, engage in intensive

mothering, but given their constrained environments, they create their own strategy for doing so.

This finding extends our understanding of how mothers who lack resources develop adaptive

mothering strategies. I identify differences in childrearing strategies and beliefs based on

maternal education which I call *horizontal diversification* and *vertical cultivation.* These

represent different manifestations of the concerted cultivation ideology under different levels of

financial constraint. In the end, my findings suggest that in a high-pressure environment such as

Korea, the main effect of maternal education on mothering may not be the ideology or the

intensity of mothering but rather the resources available to implement that ideology and, for less-

educated mothers, the necessity of a higher-risk strategy and of a different belief about what

constitutes good childrearing.

4.2 MATERNAL EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Parents' socioeconomic backgrounds play a significant role in their children's

educational outcomes (Bornstein and Bradley 2014). Scholars have traced socioeconomic

disparities in achievement that emerge prior to formal education to financial, social, cultural, and

cognitive resources transferred through families (Bourdieu 1984; Grusky 1994; Lareau 2011).

The investigation of how soft resources (cultural beliefs and approaches) or/and hard resources

(material and institutional) explain divergent childrearing approaches continues to be important

in the literature. Emphasizing the role of soft resources, scholars have explored differences in

approach in the Western context; a group of middle-class parents, for example, treats their

children like adults and provides them with organized non-academic activities, approaching their

investment as an educational project (Lareau 2011; Vincent and Ball 2007). Working-class

parents are often contrasted to middle-class parents. Studies have demonstrated that working-class parents have different cultural understandings of how their children grow and focus more on their children's diet and healthy growth. (Lareau [2011] calls this the "natural growth model" in contrast to "concerted cultivation.") Some studies, although not disagreeing, emphasize that family differences in material resources and objective circumstances—that is, access to institutions and specific neighborhoods—produce distinctive childrearing patterns (Bennett et al. 2012; Chin and Phillips 2004), rendering the parents' own views about childrearing relatively insignificant. All told, research in Western contexts has consistently shown the salient role of families in their children's achievements.

Among several indicators of family status, studies have demonstrated that maternal education is especially significant in children's educational outcomes (Lareau and Weininger 2008; Weininger et al. 2015). Explanations include the influence of a mother's human capital, such as having a larger vocabulary, on the child's cognitive development (Hart and Risley 2003) and the impact of the mother's personal ties relating to unobservable resources such as information or cultural ideas on education (Weininger et al. 2015). Additionally, Ramey and Ramey (2009) demonstrate how the fact that mothers with higher education expect their children to attain higher education leads those mothers to invest in early childhood activities that can have long-term academic payoffs. Highly-educated mothers spend more time than less-educated mothers do in basic care and playing when their children are toddlers (Kalil, Ryan, and Corey 2012).

What makes the mother's role more important than any other factor in understanding the disparities in children's achievement is the pattern that mothers on average spend more time on childcare than fathers do in almost all postindustrial societies (OECD 2016b). From a child's

infancy, a mother is expected to engage in intensive mothering, defined by Hays (1996) as a logically cohesive combination of beliefs dictating that a mother must be the central caregiver who devotes copious time, energy, and material resources to her child. Related to such expectations, negative views of mothers working when they have young children persist even in countries where most women work (Jacobs and Gerson 2016). Both of the works just cited emphasize that middle-class mothers face stronger expectations to focus more on childrearing. The pressure to engage in intensive mothering may therefore differ across socio-economic groups and across different societies.

An underexplored research setting in the literature on class-based parenting is how mothers with different levels of education engage in parenting in the context of extremely high societal pressure to provide maximum support for children's education. For East Asian mothers, the pressure to engage in intensive mothering is high and is one reason for relatively low labor market participation (Ochiai and Molony 2008). Based on studies of the expectations women face when they become mothers, we predict that the pressure to prioritize childrearing over one's own career is an important societal and cultural context in which mothers raise their children. This chapter aims to pay careful attention to how maternal education and the different sets of maternal resources lead mothers to develop similar or different childrearing approaches in a context in which most mothers are expected to prioritize motherhood and to engage in intensive mothering.

4.3 URBAN KOREA: THE LAND OF CONCERTED CULTIVATION

Korea is a postindustrial society in which, despite dramatic increases in female educational attainment, gender-role attitudes emphasizing a woman's role as a mother remain

one of the most rigid norms (on rigid norms, see Ochiai and Molony 2008; Tsuya and Bumpass 2004). Brinton and Lee's (2016) analysis of gender-role attitudes in 24 OECD countries shows that Korea has the most gender-role-conservative attitudes and that a larger percentage of the population in Korea than in any of the other countries studied takes the attitude that women's primary role is in the household and that their role in the workplace is supplementary. Unsurprisingly, then, the division of childcare when there is a child under six in the household is highly gender-unequal (OECD 2012; Oshio, Nozaki, and Kobayashi 2013).

Embedded in the culturally rewarding context of educating children from an early age (Seth 2002; Park 2006), Korean women become managers of their children's lives in order to sustain their own and their children's status (Lett 1998; Park 2006, 2007). Some scholars observe the extreme degree to which Korean mothers identify with their children and fulfill their own dreams through them (Cha and Kim 2012; Lett 1998). Government surveys show that that for mothers with children, the most burdensome monthly expenditure, among all expenditures, is education fee for children (in all three waves that were conducted in 2007, 2008, and 2010; Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Families, The Annual Report 2012). For parents with older children who attend school, 64.5 percent stated that extra-class activities are the main source of the burden of educational expenditures. Park (2007), based on her ethnographic work on Korean mothers, argue that the pressure mothers feel is qualitatively different from the past when mothers were expected to generally sacrifice for their children. After the financial crisis in 1997 and the expansion of private education market after the financial crisis, Korean mothers face pressure to formulate a well-organized set of activities to ensure that their children grow to be competitive in the global world (Park 2006).

However, unvarying evaluation of Korean mothers as strong, obsessive about education, and willing to sacrifice their own needs for their children leaves an empirical gap in our understanding of possible variation in mothering by educational background. Despite having a reputation for high achievement and the highest educational attainment level in the world (for both men and women; OECD 2015), Korea has a widening achievement gap among individuals with different family backgrounds (Shin and Kong 2015). Among children, the achievement gap is especially pronounced for academic subjects rather than for non-academic achievements such as participation in classical culture by going to the opera, ballet, or orchestra (Byun et al. 2012; Park 2013). Therefore, in order to move beyond the stereotype and explore both the commonalities and the differences that mothers with different resources face, it is empirically important to understand the interplay between Korean mothers' resources and their cultural understandings of what will promote the academic success of their children and what good childrearing is. Additionally, the advantage of using Korea, where intensive mothering is normative regardless of class, is that we can complicate what we know about class-based parenting by exploring how different *kinds* of class-based childrearing may emerge in such a hypercompetitive context.

4.4 DATA AND METHODS

This study mainly uses qualitative interview data and relies on an interactive process of inductive insights and deductive analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Although the limited sample sizes of case-based approaches make it hard to draw general inferences about large populations, the qualitative, on-the-ground approach can uncover and interpret constellations of forces that change or reproduce social processes (Ragin 1987). My primary analysis is based on 98 in-depth

interviews, but the interview questions themselves were based on initial descriptive findings from 1,100 online surveys. All interviews and online surveys were with mothers who were married, had at least one child under six years old, and lived in or near Seoul.

4.4.1 Online Survey

The online survey was conducted in the spring of 2015. I asked the online survey company, Ovey, for responses from 300 to 400 mothers from each of three education levels: high school graduate, two-year vocational college graduate, and four-year university graduate. (Ovey provided 1,100 in total.) Because Ovey uses both downloadable smartphone apps and its website to send out surveys to a targeted panel who meet the interview criteria and because it has a relatively high average response rate of over 70 percent, I requested the company to first randomly pick—from its panel of over 350,000 respondents—individuals who met the criteria for my study. The sample was a convenience sample of mothers who were married, had at least one child under six years old, and lived in or around Seoul. They varied in their household income, employment status, and level of education. Ten percent were in their twenties, 78 percent in their thirties, and 12 percent in their forties. Based on the respondents' highest level of schooling: 25 percent had graduated from high school, 35 percent had graduated from a two-year college, 34 percent had graduated from a four-year university, and 6 percent had a graduate degree. Sixty percent were working (full-time, part-time, or self-employed).

The online survey asked 17 questions covering basic information (i.e., employment status, educational attainment level, number of children, and so on) and asking how the mother defined a good parent, what she saw as the most important resources for raising a child in Korea,

by what means she obtained such resources, where she acquired information about children's education, and what kind of information she trusted.

Table 4.1 shows results related to childrearing. The respondents felt that the two most important factors for raising children in Korea were money and information. Several sources of information were given similar credit, including Internet search engines, Internet communities, friends and colleagues, other mothers, and books and articles by professionals. Among these sources, the two most trusted were (a) friends and colleagues and (b) books and articles by professionals. Sixty-five percent of mothers considered the skills they had acquired in life through trial and error to be the most important in seeking and sorting through the abundant available information about childrearing. The only exceptional group by level of education was those with graduate degrees, 37 percent of whom said that the skills they had acquired through education and at work were the most useful and only 30 percent of whom said that their own trial and error was most useful. One of the questions was, "Who do you think is a better mother than yourself?" Interestingly, employed mothers pointed to stay-at-home mothers as better and stay-at-home mothers pointed to employed mothers as better. Also, more than one-third of the respondents considered mothers with a lot of money to be better.

Table 4.1 Summary of Responses from Online Survey

		Highest level of education			
	Total	High school	2-yr College	4-yr college	Graduate school
Total (N)	1,100	275	385	377	63

Table 4.1 Cont.

Q. What is the most important thing when raising children in Korea? (Please choose two)

(answers in absolute number)	Total	HS	2-yr	4-yr	Graduate
Money	697	173	262	226	35
Information	438	107	150	151	30
Neighborhood (school district)	131	39	50	38	5
Physical ability	252	63	73	102	14
My own standards and opinion	258	63	85	94	16
Patience	355	85	123	124	22
Other	7	3	4	0	0

Q. When raising your child(ren), which information source do you trust the most?

(answers in percentage)	Total	HS	2-yr	4-yr	Graduate
Internet (Google, Daum, Naver)	17	18	20	14	13
Internet café (community) or blog	16	12	17	16	19
Books or articles by professionals	20	15	18	25	24
My parents or parents-in-law	9	10	11	8	6
Friends or colleagues	23	29	21	22	21
Other mothers	14	13	13	14	17
Other	1	3	0	1	0
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100

Q. In your opinion, how do you think you have obtained your ability to sort out such abundant information about childcare?

(answers in percentage)	Total	HS	2-yr	4-yr	Graduate
From schools that I attended	4	3	2	5	17
From working experience (outside home)	20	21	18	18	30
From my own trial and error	65	63	70	66	37
From natal family members	10	12	8	10	14
Other	1	2	1	1	2
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100

Q. Who do you think are better moms than yourself? (You can choose more than one option.)

(answers in absolute number)	Total	HS	2-yr	4-yr	Graduate
I cannot think of better mothers than myself	201	39	65	83	14
Working mothers	217	58	81	68	11
Stay-at-home mothers	345	80	131	109	25
Mothers with high educational level	180	63	62	45	10
Mothers who have a lot of money	377	88	135	132	22
Other	162	41	54	57	10

The online survey reveals three patterns which helped me construct my in-depth interview questions and choose sample groups to compare. First, the responses of high school graduates and two-year-college graduates were largely similar. The responses of four-year university graduates and those with graduate degrees differed from the responses of those with less education on a few important questions, such as the use of skills obtained from the public sphere (school and workplace) and a greater emphasis on information than on money as the salient resource for childrearing in Korea. This led to a focus on recruiting three groups of mothers for the in-depth interviews: high school and two-year college graduates, four-year university graduates, and graduate degree holders. Second, money and information were both considered important resources for childrearing. In order to build on this descriptive finding, some of the questions in the in-depth interviews were aimed at understanding the contexts in which money and information became important. Lastly, it was not clear from the online survey whether mothers' approaches to childrearing and their use of information and money were influenced by their employment status.

4.4.2 In-depth Interviews

For my in-depth interviews, I used two sampling strategies to recruit 98 interviewees, who are the main source of analysis. First, with the goal of interviewing mothers with different work histories and educational levels, I randomly selected and contacted interviewees from the 1,100 survey participants and met with 50 of them. To minimize the unobservable bias of the online survey panel, I recruited another 48 interviewees through my personal ties, using a restricted snowball sampling strategy in which each respondent could refer no more than three others. Two potential interviewees were living separately from their husbands, so I removed

them from my sample because I did not have enough interviewees to represent mothers who are divorced, separated, or widowed.

I interviewed all 98 mothers face to face in 2015. The interviews lasted from 60 minutes to more than two hours, with most taking about 90 minutes. Interviews were semi-structured; I prepared 40 questions based on five large themes: (a) definitions of ideal motherhood and childhood, (b) aspirations related to children's achievement and perceptions about what is needed for children, (c) personal ties, informants, and mothers whom respondents interact with and ask for information and opinions, (d) children's daily schedules, and (e) mothers' own experiences of achievement, including educational attainment and employment.

4.4.3 Study Participants

The 98 respondents were from urban areas (in and around Seoul) and their ages ranged from 25 to 45, a range in which mothers make key decisions about work and family. The mean age was about 31 and the average ages at marriage and first childbirth were almost identical to the national averages (age at marriage for women in 2013 was 29 and age at first childbirth was 30; retrieved from Statistics Korea 2015). Twenty-eight held a graduate degree, 38 held a bachelor's degree, and 32 were high school or two-year college graduates. The sample was organized to include roughly equal proportions of these three categories, so it was more educated than the national average because I oversampled the population of mothers with graduate degrees. Throughout this chapter, I use the phrase *less-educated mothers* to refer to the 32 mothers who are high school or two-year college graduates and *highly-educated mothers* to refer to the 66 mothers with at least a bachelor's degree. At the time of the interview, 32 percent were non-employed, 49 percent worked full-time, and 19 percent were freelancers, part-time

employees, or self-employed. Lastly, the median monthly household income was US$5,850 for all respondents, US$4,285 for the less-educated group, and US$7,120 for the highly-educated group.

4.4.4 Methodology

The main source of data for this study is transcriptions of the 98 in-depth interviews. After using Excel to code basic background information on the respondents, I read all the transcripts multiple times to inductively identify themes. Based on qualitative methodologies proposed by Emerson (2001) and Lofland and Lofland (2006), who propose several steps of coding to construct an elaborate conceptual framing of what is happening on the ground (Emerson 2001: 282), I used three steps of coding. For the first round, I organized the data under five primary themes: (a) definition of ideal motherhood (including descriptions of other mothers whom the respondent respects and overall perceptions of good and successful mothers); (b) views about what they expect from their children; (c) their children's daily schedules; (d) descriptions of their core information network and how they acquire information about how best to educate their children; and (e) explanations of how their own education and employment relate to how they approach childrearing.

In the second step I used a focused coding strategy. I selectively coded line by line (Lofland and Lofland 2006: 202) to understand respondents' views, rationales, and behaviors and to find core ideas. For the theme of deciding how to educate a child, I wrote a separate memo for each respondent to examine how she constructed her opinions and how she came to trust particular information and hagwons[9].

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[9] Hagwons are for-profit private institutes or academies.

For the third step, I wrote a list of conceptual framings to capture processes that respondents went through and to pinpoint the core mechanism that differentiated their strategies. Based on the third step, I organized the findings section below.

4.5 KOREAN MOTHERS IN THE HOTHOUSE: MOTIVATION AND RATIONALE FOR CONCERTED CULTIVATION

As expected, mothers generally face high demands; intensive childrearing is the norm in the urban Korean context. Notably, this is independent of the mother's educational and employment status. Although almost all mothers wished their children to simply have a happy childhood, they were extremely stressed out about having to provide education in order for their children to survive in Korea. Min (employed, high school graduate) represents this perspective: "As a mother, you are always expected to take full, 100-percent care of your child, including developmental issues, education that needs to be provided, and overall well-being." Jin (non-employed, BA) echoes this: "This country is a jungle when it comes to educating your children. You would expect you could just feed your [very young] child and that is the end, but no, you have to start early on. You have to know when is the best to start teaching your child how to speak and write. This is why so many mothers just cannot be a working mother. There is so much to do to make your child survive in this jungle."

Under strong pressure to focus on childrearing, mothers spent a substantial amount of physical, mental, and emotional energy on it; in particular, on finding appropriate hagwons, arranging programs, and scheduling and monitoring the learning process. Because all mothers in this study had children who had not yet entered school, one of the main issues they talked about was the future choice of a school or schools. Mothers drew on various sources of information

about the quality of potential elementary schools, of which there was a wide—and sometimes confusing—variety. Heejoo (employed part-time, BA) explained her preparation process: "Nowadays, whenever there is a family gathering, we talk about Eun's [future] elementary school. My husband and I are not really satisfied with the public schools in our neighborhood, so we searched for innovative public schools." Heejoo and her husband owned a small private English and math hagwon where they taught middle-school students. They had negative views about private elementary schools because they viewed the kids there as rude and arrogant. They did not want Eun to hang out with kids who acted as if they were privileged. However, they did not trust the public schools because of their lack of creative teaching and diverse curricula. Eun was an active girl who learned through playing and interacting, so Heejoo had been trying to find public schools that were innovative in teaching style and curriculum. At the top of her list was a school that focused on a debate style of teaching: "This school gets funding from the government but has full control over its organization of time and content. Usually, one class is two hours long, but the break is 30 minutes long. They do a lot of experimentation and play when they teach science and math concepts." Asked how she had learned about this school, she emphasized the fact that it is a result of the hard work she put into searching: "It is all about searching for information and asking around."

Saerom (employed, graduate degree) was also searching for a place to send her son, Kiwoo. As a working mother, she was looking for a private elementary school where he could stay until 3 pm; public schools—in particular, for first-graders—typically end around noon. She explained that talking with her colleagues who are parents, with her sister-in-law, and with her best friend from high school had made her aware that private schools vary a lot. When we met, she had narrowed her options down to three private schools, each with its own philosophy, and

one public school that had diverse after-school programs. "Eventually," she said, "I will ask Kiwoo. And there are so many unknown factors, such as friends, teachers, and learning programs. I will see how it goes, but just in case Kiwoo has a hard time adjusting, I am compiling information about which schools are good." It looked like this process of searching and listing would continue until she finally found the right fit for Kiwoo. For each subject or activity that mothers wanted their children to learn—math, reading, sports, and so on—they mobilized as large and diverse a body of information as they could. Many used the phrase "the power of information" as they described the motivation for their intensive daily searching.

Table 4.2 shows the average hours spent per week on caretaking, according to mothers' employment status and level of education. Taking care of children included not only feeding them, playing with them, and driving them around, but also time spent searching for information on educational programs and hagwons. Although actual time spent with the children was lower for full-time employed mothers than for part-time employed and non-employed mothers, the time spent searching for information about what to provide one's children was similar for all. Most mothers, on average, spent one hour per day on search and this was only slightly higher for mothers with more education.

Mothers' responses to the question "How do you define an ideal childhood?" dramatically differed from their responses to the question "How do you feel your child needs to prepare before entering school?" There is agreement that children have to be happy, but also agreement about how they need to prepare before they enter school: they must be able to read and write Korean at a basic level, use basic English expressions (such as greetings, the alphabet, and words such as "apple" and "banana"), and add and subtract and must have at least one non-academic skill in music, sports, or art.

Table 4.2 Average Time Spent on Childcare
by Mother's Employment and Educational Attainment Level

	Employment	
	Employed (full-time and part-time)	Non-employed
Number of hours spent daily with children (feeding, playing, and providing rides)		
Highly-educated	1-2 hours	3-7 hours
Less-educated	1-3 hours	2-8 hours
Average time spent daily on one's own searching for information about what to provide one's children		
Highly-educated	60 minutes	70 minutes
Less-educated	50 minutes	60 minutes

Mothers' responses to the question "How do you define an ideal childhood?" dramatically differed from their responses to the question "How do you feel your child needs to prepare before entering school?" There is agreement that children have to be happy, but also agreement about how they need to prepare before they enter school: they must be able to read and write Korean at a basic level, use basic English expressions (such as greetings, the alphabet, and words such as "apple" and "banana"), and add and subtract and must have at least one non-academic skill in music, sports, or art.

Notably, mothers were frustrated that their own standards for what kinds of academic and non-academic skills their children should acquire before entering school did not matter as much as the presumed skills and knowledge of the other children with whom their own children would be interacting—and competing—once they were in school. Mothers felt enormous pressure to find out what other kids were doing and to prepare their children academically and non-academically (mainly through sports, music, and art) to match the other kids. As Yena

(employed, graduate degree) explained, mothers' rationale was that they did not want to risk

their children's self-esteem:

> Yena: I really did not want my child to start memorizing English words from the age of four. I just wanted him to play and do nothing [academically]. However, all the elementary schools will be full of kids who already know how to speak English. I heard that only 10 percent of first-graders are unable to speak English. Within the current system, it is impossible to follow your own philosophy, because then you are risking your child's life.
>
> Interviewer: What do you mean when you say you are risking the child's life?
>
> Yena: Well, the cost of maintaining my ideal image of what my children's childhood should be, which is just freely playing and not studying, is my child's self-esteem. As soon as he becomes one of the 10 percent who cannot say a word [in English] when he enters elementary school, he will feel like a loser. I am not worried about his English-speaking skills. I am worried about him feeling like he is far behind on the first day of school. I mean, the [social] pressure is real.

Yena therefore asked around and found a good English kindergarten.

In addition to the commonly held idea that there is a set of academic skills that children

have to acquire in order to survive in the hypercompetitive Korean society, another strongly

shared belief throughout the sample is that mothers should pay attention to their children to

discover and cultivate each child's potential talents. As Hanna (employed, high school graduate)

puts it, "Children grow very fast, so mothers have to catch what they are good at and what they

have potential in." Mothers from different backgrounds emphasize that one of a mother's main

roles is to guide her children's growth by providing interactive feedback. Seenae (non-employed

BA) explains:

> As a mother, you should not always praise what your children do. You have to know your child well. What your child likes, is good at, and enjoys doing. I am not just talking about everyday issues such as food. I am talking about concrete

things such as whether my child likes fixing things versus breaking things or whether my child likes texts versus music. All these relate to what my child might innately have talent in, which I have to further develop. My role is nurturing, but not just in any way, but in a smart way.

However, despite commonly held ideas that there is a set of academic skills that children have to acquire and that a mother should be the primary person to cultivate a child's talents, the *means* for acquiring these skills differ greatly. The mother's agency was mainly dedicated to specific ways to provide the necessary opportunities. As Ari (non-employed, high school graduate) explains, the key question was not "What do I need to provide for my children?" but "How do I provide all the skills that my child needs before entering school?" This was the point at which the strategies of mothers with different levels of education diverged.

4.6 DIVERGING CHILDREARING STRATEGIES UNDER DIFFERENT FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Throughout the process of finding and providing learning programs for their young children, mothers with different educational backgrounds had different levels of resources. Financial resources, in particular, were the most important factor affecting a mother's development of her childrearing strategy. For highly-educated mothers, their financial resources provided more autonomy to provide diverse and numerous programs for their children, whereas for less-educated mothers, their financial constraints motivated them to invest their time and money in efficiently providing a smaller set of learning programs. Differing material resources thus result in two childrearing strategies and beliefs, which I call "horizontal diversification" and "vertical cultivation." Before explaining these approaches in the next section, the following

subsection demonstrates how financial resources become an important context in which mothers develop their childrearing approaches.

4.6.1 Less-educated Mothers and Financial Constraints

Like highly-educated mothers, less-educated mothers felt that the search for the right schools and learning programs was emotionally and mentally stressful and time-consuming, but the *most* constraining factor was money. Even in the few cases in which less-educated mothers had as diverse a collection of information about programs and curricula as highly-educated mothers typically had, financial resources stood in the way of providing their children with certain programs. Bobae (non-employed, high school graduate) explains: "My cousin told me that there is a really good play school that teaches English. Of course, I wanted to send my child to that place. If I could, today! But, it is . . . simply over our budget." She went on that all the good language and math hagwons are in the affluent neighborhoods but that it is really impossible for her to move to such places.

Where to live is a key issue that mothers talk about, especially when asked what more they would like to do for their children's education. More than two-thirds of the less-educated mothers considered it unrealistic to move to a more expensive neighborhood where they know that there are better early childhood learning programs. Hyojin (non-employed, high school graduate), for example, explains why she will probably stay where she is and send her son to a school near home:

> I am really good friends with three mothers from my son's daycare and we meet almost every day to talk about what to provide to our children and what schools to send our kids to. They also have a lot of information about which schools are good. But whenever we talk about schools, we conclude that it is dumb to have

loans and debts to move to an expensive neighborhood where everything will be so expensive. It is like the Korean saying, "If a crow-tit tries to walk like a stork, the crow-tit will break his legs."[10]

Even when less-educated mothers do not explicitly name money as a constraint on their children's educational opportunities, their practices and decision making implicitly show that it is. They are as convinced as highly-educated mothers that English is one of the most important assets in this global society and that their children need to start learning it early because the grammar and pronunciation are so different from Korean, but they all thought that it was far too expensive to send their children to learn English. Woojin (employed, high school graduate) describes the range of prices as well as the maximum amount she can spend on her daughter's English education:

> Usually, English kindergartens that start around 10 am and end around 3pm teach reading, writing, and speaking all in English. Also, they would have math classes taught in English twice a week. When all classes are taught in English, the price is really high, ranging from US$1,500 to US$2,000 a month…. I cannot afford that! I thought about sending my child to the one that was around US$1,000 but gave up because that would be a quarter of what my husband and I earn a month.

This did not, however, stop Woojin and other less-educated mothers from providing some kind of learning program related to English. Woojin's daughter goes to an English hagwon twice a week. Each class is two hours long and the cost is US$300 a month. Whereas highly-educated mothers spent about US$300–$2000 a month on English education, less-educated mothers spent about US$50–$400.

Other academic and non-academic subjects are less costly, but money was still one of the main factors mothers considered when choosing hagwons for private education. Hasun (self-

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[10] This is a literal translation. A similar saying in English is "Don't bite off more than you can chew."

employed, high school graduate) started sending her five-year-old son to math hagwons because "there were no children playing in the neighborhood." The reason for picking a specific hagwon was that some of her son's friends were going there and she could afford it. She was anxious, however, about its quality, so she called one of the mothers in the neighborhood who was known to be passionate about educating her children:

> I really admire her because, although she is not rich, she is very diligent in providing maximum support for her children's education. She told me that the effectiveness of hagwons depends on how mothers monitor their children. So, I took this advice to heart... I check every day to see if my son has finished his homework and is doing well. I get really upset when he does not do his homework because I am investing a lot of money and time... When I am upset, I tell my son that he should commit to mastering what he has learned from the hagwon or else I will stop sending him to that place.

As Hasun's case shows, it is important to note that although less-educated mothers have to make decisions about where to send their children for private education under financial constraints, they try to make the most of whatever they can provide.

4.6.2 Highly-educated Mothers and Financial Resources

While less-educated mothers did not address specific ways to send or take their children abroad to learn English, more than 80 percent of highly-educated mothers mentioned that they could provide their children with opportunities to learn English abroad. The range of ways to provide such an opportunity and how long mothers will send their children abroad varied. Some talked about summer schools in the Philippines, whereas some who had lived abroad themselves explained how they could apply for an MBA program. Some talked about visiting their relatives or friends for a short time to seize the opportunity to live in the United States or Canada, where

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their children would not be subject to such competitive stress and where it would be easier for them to learn English.

Although highly-educated mothers do not emphasize that their financial resources motivated them to provide a particular program for their children, the fact that money was infrequently mentioned explicitly during the interviews demonstrates that they have financial resources when deciding what to provide to their children. An exemplary case is Miso (employed, graduate degree), who was hired as a one-year research fellow at an American university. She took her son with her while her parents took care of her infant daughter. "My son was three and I thought it would be a good opportunity for him to learn English and to learn to socialize with others in a diverse environment." While in the US, it cost a fortune to send her child to a daycare—more than US$3,000 per month—so she received support from her parents and her husband. Upon returning to Korea, she searched for English kindergartens so that her son could maintain his English skills. Echoing other mothers, Miso also mentioned how expensive English kindergartens are but explained that she did not want her son to "lose interest in learning English because when you lose interest, you are not motivated to learn." Her son is currently attending a private kindergarten, with a good English curriculum, that costs US$1000 a month. He also receives private tutoring twice a week, costing US$300 a month.

Seventy-six percent of highly-educated mothers were, like Miso, providing more than one method to help their children learn English. Ahyoung (non-employed, BA) explains how a second language requires more exposure compared to native language (in this case Korean) and how it needs to be fun:

> Children listen to Korean all the time, voluntarily or involuntarily. From your parents, from TV shows, and from other children. However, exposure to English

is limited, so it is good to have diverse ways to increase the exposure to English. One way is to have a systematic way of learning English and the other way is to enjoy knowing English. These will help children to enjoy learning and facilitate the learning process.

Analysis of how mothers arrange their children's daily schedules reveals that highly-educated mothers spend much more money on providing not only more programs but also more diverse programs (such as two different programs for English). Both highly-educated and less-educated mothers engaged in a searching process that involves asking around and spending a lot of time searching on their own. However, compared to highly-educated mothers who ended up using many kinds of hagwons for several subjects, most less-educated mothers narrowed their findings down to the best available and affordable option.

4.7 HORIZONTAL DIVERSIFICATION VERSUS VERTICAL CULTIVATION: DIFFERENT STRATEGIES AND BELIEFS

The childrearing approaches of mothers with different educational backgrounds diverged into what I call *horizontal diversification* and *vertical cultivation*. With horizontal diversification, highly-educated mothers try to provide as many options and means as possible for each activity or academic subject in order to motivate children to *like* that subject. Less-educated mothers, with strong aspirations to provide maximum support for their children's educational achievement but with fewer resources, engage in vertical cultivation, investing in only a few activities in order to make the most efficient use of their limited resources. These two approaches are not just strategies but also beliefs about what good childrearing is, given the family's circumstances. The following section explains further how they are both strategies and

beliefs as well as the implications these two childrearing approaches have in the reproduction of inequalities based on family background.

4.7.1 Horizontal Diversification Versus Vertical Cultivation as Strategies

Different strategies are revealed in the analysis of children's daily schedules and mothers' ways of searching for information and choosing from the available options. Table 4.3 illustrates the main characteristics of these two strategies.

Horizontal diversification uses diverse and abundant options and resources in providing learning opportunities for children. The basic idea is that an ideal education (provided by the mother) should offer a child, diverse exposures to multiple subjects and enable him or her to perform above average in these subjects. Such a goal develops and is developed by strategies in which mothers use their financial resources to provide various means for their children's education. Among the 66 highly-educated mothers in my sample, 91 percent took this approach.

An important aspect of the horizontal diversification strategy is that the mother not only provides programs for different subjects, such as math, Korean, English, and *taekwondo*, but also provides one or more programs for each subject; for example, providing home tutoring, a hagwon, and group tutoring all for English education. Solbee (non-employed, BA), for example, describes her rationale for sending her child to different hagwons and playschools to provide opportunities to learn as many subjects as possible: "What is important for me to do is not taking a risk, and providing the child with as many opportunities as possible to be able to make a choice about her or his own dream." Eunbi (employed, BA) used various ways to get her child to enjoy learning English and eventually to speak it well. She often read books in English to her children at night and had English songs playing as background music during dinner. She wanted her

children to enjoy learning English as early as possible, so she asked her friends and colleagues for recommendations and found a hagwon that focused on learning (including English) through play. She liked the fact that the teachers were from a variety of English-speaking countries—Canadians, Australians, and Americans.

In contrast, the vertical cultivation strategy was used by 94 percent of mothers with less education and fewer economic resources. Given their resources, they viewed investing in multiple activities or skills as an impossible tactic; rather, their strategy was to focus on a few subjects or activities that the child liked and was good at. Less-educated mothers do not have the resources to provide as many different programs for their children, so—like Hasun—they seek a hagwon with a good reputation and try their best to monitor their children's homework and to cultivate their children's talents. While these mothers resembled their highly-educated counterparts in the time, energy, and emotional investment they put into their intense childrearing, they had a narrower range of options for schools and neighborhoods and less money to pay for multiple programs, never mind multiple programs for one subject. However, they invested a high proportion of their household income and their physical, mental, and emotional labor in educating their children and maximizing their children's well-being, their top priorities. Most try hard to help their children perform well at the limited group of subjects in which they are investing; for example, helping them finish homework on time and monitoring their children's hagwon performance.

Table 4.3 Summary of Differences in Childrearing Approaches

Dimension observed	Horizontal diversification	Vertical cultivation
Key elements	Mother has diverse options from the beginning and interprets that the child needs to be above-average with diverse skills.	Mother chooses one or two subjects early on to invest in and tries her best to ensure her children obtain appropriate skills.
Focus of investment	Spends a lot of money and time trying different hagwons.	Large *proportion* of income is invested in children's education, but it is hard to invest in various hagwons for one subject and it is hard to invest in multiple subjects.
Choosing hagwons	Intensive information gathering; choosing from a wide range of options for every subject; choosing several.	Intensive information gathering; choosing a few hagwons to provide learning opportunities.
Communication with the child	Tries many things and engages in interactive and responsive processes to find what kind of educational style best fits the child.	Compares a few options, finalizes the choice based on the child's behaviors, then tries to make the child get the most out of the hagwon.
Composition	91 percent of highly-educated mothers	94 percent of less-educated mothers
Median number of hagwons (child aged 4-6)	5	3
Median number of programs (child aged 1-3)	4	1

During the interviews, one of the main questions that led mothers to talk about the number of hagwons and programs they chose for their children was "What is your child's daily schedule like?" When we quantify the median number of programs and hagwons that children attend, there is a noticeable difference across the two childrearing approaches. As the bottom of Table 4.3 shows, the median number of hagwons for mothers using horizontal diversification is five per week for children aged 4 to 6 and four per week for children aged 1 to 3. In comparison, for mothers who use vertical cultivation, the medians are three per week for the older children and one per week for the younger ones.

There are eight cases which do not exemplify either approach. Three highly-educated mothers and one less-educated mother used a mixture of the two strategies. Another three highly-educated mothers and another less-educated mother had infants under six months, for whom they had not yet started providing learning programs.

4.7.2 Horizontal Diversification Versus Vertical Cultivation as Beliefs

The choice of strategy often shapes and is shaped by a mother's beliefs about what constitutes good childrearing. Highly-educated mothers provide learning programs for their children with the goal of motivating the child to like learning a particular subject so that he or she will be self-motivated to study. By offering the child a choice of programs, they aimed to consider his or her tastes, temperament, and talents in order to raise a self-motivated child who could be above-average in a variety of subjects and activities, this being seen as what a child needed in order to have a happy life in the long run.

Less-educated mothers provide fewer programs than highly-educated mothers do, but keep up a diligent monitoring of the child's work. At the heart of this monitoring is the belief

that if the child invests enough time and energy in a subject, he or she will excel in it. Purum (employed, high school graduate) exemplified this approach:

> You do not have to invest in three or four things and send your children to four different hagwons and a private elementary school. One thing a mother needs to remember is to discover her child's talent. Every child is good at one or two things and they shine when they are doing certain things. It is unlikely that there will be four or five areas that my daughter will excel in.

Purum disliked the idea of sending her daughter to multiple hagwons and to schools that teach various subjects without "digging deep." She strongly believed that if a child is good at sports or drawing, the parents should guide him or her to grow in that field instead of investing in all subjects. Similarly, Taein (non-employed, high school graduate) noticed that her first son was very good at sports, so she focused on providing chances to learn non-academic activities, especially sports. Her second son, who would enter school the next year, had already shown talent in math and science. She explained: "You can make a rough estimation about your child's temperament, skills, and interests from an early age. My two sons are very different, so I paid careful attention to finding specifically what I needed to provide for them." She chose a different public school for her second son than the one her first son was attending, with fewer hours spent on sports, art, and music and more on academics.

Although many mothers talk about how they hope their child can excel at one or two subjects, the level of excellence they have in mind is not always specified. Yet, implicitly showing fear of competing with other kids in more affluent neighborhoods, more than half of the less-educated mothers explained that the excellence they expect reflects the boundaries of their own circumstances. Aram (non-employed, high school graduate) expresses this rationale:

Of course, I am stressed out about the fact that our neighborhood may not the best place for my daughter's education. But I think she could do really well here. It is better to be the head of a snake than the tail of a dragon. I can't afford to live in Gangnam [in the southern part of Seoul, known for its affluent residents] or Mok-dong [in the northwest part of Seoul, known as the mecca for education in the northern region], but even if I moved to those places, borrowing money from the bank, my daughter won't be getting as much private education as other kids. Then, she will fall behind. My child will just try to follow what rich kids are doing but will never be able to be the top in that group. I would rather raise a child who can be a big fish in a smaller pond.

Several mothers echoed her point, but this did not mean that they had given up on searching for a good school or that they would just send their children anywhere. In their efforts to raise a big fish in a smaller pond rather than a small fish in a bigger pond, less-educated mothers concentrated on finding a public school in their neighborhood—or in a nearby neighborhood with similar housing prices—that could augment the strengths their children already had.

In sum, all mothers are trying their best to offer the most appropriate curriculum to their children. They all aim to raise a high-achieving child, whether in a small pond or a big pond. Where they diverged—based on their level of education—was in their beliefs about what a mother should aim for and their concrete strategies for providing opportunities for early childhood education. The horizontal diversification approach was taken to provide a child with as many learning options as possible so he or she could excel in diverse ways, whereas the vertical cultivation approach was taken to raise a satisfied child who could find the particular talent and skill in which he or she could excel. These two different approaches and beliefs are rooted in different levels of financial resources.

4.7.3 Interplay Between Financial Constraints, Childrearing Approaches, and the Reproduction of Family Inequality

What the diverging childrearing strategies and beliefs show is that under the pressure to ensure her children's success, a mother has to develop her own way of surviving in Korea's hypercompetitive society. This study shows how highly-educated mothers create their solution through investment of effort and financial resources while less-educated mothers have to come up with an adaptive strategy of limiting their contexts (for example, by avoiding the big pond and staying in the small pond). Throughout the interviews, less-educated mothers often showed confidence and—especially when explaining their own strategies—optimism. However, the strategies and beliefs they develop, in comparison to those of the highly-educated group, have two implications, one related to risk and the other to the reproduction of disparities in children's education.

First, the less-educated mothers' strategy involves risk because the main assumption is that children will excel at one or two subjects if those efforts are cultivated and monitored intensively. A few of those mothers wondered out loud if their strategy of investing in a limited number of subjects (what I call throughout the chapter, vertical cultivation) might be a high-risk way of investing in a child's education. Less-educated mothers were anxious about their children's futures despite their huge investment in their children's education because there was, as Junga (non-employed, high school graduate) argues, "a possibility that my child finds later that she is not good at the thing we thought she would be good at." Junga's daughter has shown talent in art, so she has been sent to art hagwons and recently started receiving private tutoring. Nevertheless, Junga is anxious: "My daughter is really good at art. However, I am worried because what if she suddenly fails to make progress? This is a nightmare because I have not provided her enough for other things like English and math because this was her talent since she was really young."

The magnitude of fear and anxiety was not equivalent across mothers with different educational attainment levels. In general, highly-educated mothers expressed more confidence than other mothers that their children would do fine. Although highly-educated mothers were also stressed about providing education and raising a child in the Korean context, they were not as anxious as less-educated mothers about their children's futures. Min (employed, BA) argued: "We prepare as much as we can, including for problems that might happen, and then when unexpected issues come up, we again try our best to find the most appropriate way to solve the issue." Highly-educated mothers almost always had various options. While they reduced their anxiety by listing multiple options as part of their method for reacting immediately to problems and preparing solutions, less-educated mothers, though passionate about educating their children, were also very anxious about their children's futures. They worried about whether they were doing the right thing for their children and whether their efforts would pay off.

Second, there is a social implication of the belief that "it is better to be a big fish in a small pond," which less-educated mothers construct as a motivation and justification for investing in a limited number of programs and for not moving to more affluent neighborhoods with better educational opportunities. This attitude demonstrates their desire to protect their children from the stigma and hyper-competition that they believe would be their children's fate in more affluent neighborhoods and in schools where richer kids go. Such deliberate social isolation creates a different default set of learning opportunities and experiences.

Thus, diverging childrearing beliefs, along with a potentially high-risk strategy, show how mothers become the gatekeepers and how families become an important source of different "default" contexts (e.g., a neighborhood, a particular school, a particular hagwon) in which children receive different forms of education.

4.8 CONCLUSION

Using qualitative methodology, this study shows that mothers with different levels of education find themselves able to mobilize different sets of resources—mainly financial capital—from which, in turn, emerge diverging childrearing beliefs and strategies. Both highly-educated and less-educated mothers use their own trial and error experiences of living through Korea's competitive educational system to guide themselves in providing maximum support for their children's education. However, mothers with different levels of financial resources have different options and different abilities to provide learning programs for their children and therefore construct different childrearing strategies and beliefs.

Most of the less-educated mothers, facing greater resource constraints than highly-educated mothers do, engaged in vertical cultivation, selectively investing in a few subjects and non-academic activities and closely monitoring their children in order to avoid the economic risk of investing in something for which the child might not have much aptitude. Highly-educated mothers, with greater economic resources and a greater amount and diversity of information, were more likely to engage in horizontal diversification, letting their children experience as many diverse options for academic and non-academic activities as possible. One implication of this divergence is that the risk-taking is a reflection of mothers' childrearing strategies.

This study makes three main contributions, one theoretical and two empirical, to the literature on class-based childrearing. Theoretically, going beyond the Korean context, the findings in this study complicate a previous finding—that parents develop different childrearing approaches based on their beliefs (Lareau 2011) and on their resources (Bennett et al. 2012)—by demonstrating how class-based mothering emerges even in a society in which concerted cultivation is expected of everyone. Under the enormous pressure to ensure children's

educational achievement, mothers in urban Korea—regardless of their educational attainment and employment status—engaged in concerted cultivation, viewing their child as someone whose talents need to be cultivated and whose abilities need to be nurtured to reach their maximum (as shown in Park 2006). However, my findings show that even in the uniform context of such intense pressure to engage in concerted cultivation, mothers from diverse backgrounds develop different beliefs about and strategies for childrearing.

Empirically, the findings of this study extend our knowledge about Korean society in two ways. First, they unpack the simplistic "education fever" narrative (Seth 2002) so often applied to Korea—particularly to Korean mothers—and look instead at the specific parenting styles and strategies adopted by different classes. Both public media and academic studies have regarded Korean mothers as obsessed with their children (especially their education), managing them and basing their own self-actualization on their children's success. Compared to mothers in other societies, Korean mothers have been portrayed as monsters of intensive mothering. However, they are not homogeneous in their backgrounds and upbringing and they have different beliefs and strategies for ensuring successful lives for their children. This study extends our understanding of their heterogeneity; specifically, the variation in how they use resources to provide differentiated options for learning. Resources - in this study, financial resources - matter because they affect the strategies that mothers pursue, but the choice of strategies (horizontal versus vertical) is justified as mothers create beliefs about what constitutes good childrearing. These beliefs (for example, raising a child to be the head of a snake rather than the tail of a dragon) then motivate the continuation of a particular strategy, which in turn consolidates the different childrearing practices of different classes. My findings pinpoint the interplay of

different levels of financial resources, different strategies of adaptive mothering, and different beliefs about good childrearing.

There are implications concerning how the diverging childrearing approaches create geographical and institutional boundaries within which children receive different learning opportunities. Studies of neighborhoods and of institutions—such as daycares and schools—as important mediators of social and cultural capital have been vibrant and rich (Sharkey and Faber 2014; Small 2009). The findings in this study show that one of the reasons children have access to different hagwons and learning programs – based on their family background - is mothers' belief that ideal childrearing involves creating a space for their children to excel based on their capacities. The assumption that, regardless of how well their children might do in a school in an affluent neighborhood, they would still be the tail of the dragon (the dragon referring to rich kids) becomes a rationale for mothers to socially isolate themselves and their children from such neighborhoods. This, as shown in the findings, does not represent pessimism on the part of less-educated mothers. However, the overall implication of such an approach to raising a high-achieving child in particular circumstances—in this case, in their own neighborhood and in a particular region—is that mothers' beliefs and assumptions may prevent their children from creating different class-based ties and less redundant social ties and from accessing learning opportunities other than those in their own neighborhoods.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I review the main contributions of the three empirical chapters to draw out connecting themes and discuss directions for future research.

5.1 OVERARCHING NARRATIVES

My dissertation explores the lives of the "in-between generation" of Korean women who came of age after the beginning of Korea's period of unprecedented rapid social change. I argue that Korea's compressed modernization has created a context where families continue to be salient women's lives. This work situates an analysis of the experiences and narratives of approximately 100 young mothers in the literatures on women's work, social class, and intergenerational relationships. The empirical chapters of this dissertation reveal how women develop beliefs about work and family by digging into the "black box" of how culture is created and disrupted at the micro-level. This final concluding chapter discusses three main themes that run throughout the standalone empirical chapters of this dissertation.

First, findings from all three chapters show how ideals and expectations of good motherhood and daughterhood remain strong, even while means to fulfill these ideals are contested. The Korean case shows that there is some homogeneity in the ideals shared by mothers at the micro-level, including intensive mothering, being a good daughter, and the importance of the motherhood identity. However, variation emerges in how women contest and interpret the roles associated with those ideals. In particular, these processes were differentiated based on mothers' educational attainment level and intergenerational relationships.

For instance, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 show how extended families matter for all mothers, but shape women's career aspirations and work choices in different ways according to educational attainment. Intergenerational educational mobility, and specifically the gap between

a mother's achievement and her adult daughter's achievement, becomes one of main drivers for

adult daughters to develop strong work-oriented aspirations. This further relates to the levels of

childcare support that women receive from their children's grandmothers, which is a critical

factor in new mothers maintaining their employment. Mothers receive different amounts and

levels of support from grandmothers based on the notion of *who deserves to work.* This idea

structured the way mothers thought about whether they should keep their job and ask for

childcare support and their answers to this question of who deserves to work stemmed from traits

of a specific job. This pattern of diverging approaches that mothers develop based on the

resources that they have is also evident in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I find that respondents share

a narrative of having to provide maximum support for children's education. However, again,

given different levels of financial resources, mothers pursue different childrearing strategies,

which I call *horizontal diversification* and *vertical cultivation*. As such, Korea represents a social

setting with a relatively dominant narrative surrounding what a mother should do, but in which

mothers' means for fulfilling these expectations diverge along lines of resources and natal family

background.

A second theme, especially emerging from Chapters 2 and 3, is that in the lives of

married mothers, intergenerational bonds – especially between women – become a critical

relationship and resource. Respondents describe developing their career aspirations through

interactions and comparisons with their natal family members, and later mobilizing childcare

resources through extended families in order to continue working. It is important to note this

theme sheds a new light on existing work on Korean families and women's interactions with

natal family members: only recently did literature on Korean society start addressing the gender

difference in amount of support (financial, emotional, and physical) given to and received from

extended families (Choi, Lee, and Kim 2003; Kim et al 2015). Some researchers have argued that changes in the level of intergenerational contact and increase in residing near daughters' houses represent bi-lateralization, a more balanced set of relationships with parents and parents-in-law, of kinship ties in Korean families (Cho 1997; Han and Yoon 2004). Lee and Bauer (2013) were the first, to my knowledge, to argue that the bi-lateralization childcare support emerged with the specific purpose and motivation of keeping mothers in the workforce. This is a change from the past, when most childcare support was provided by children's father's families: mothers supporting their own daughters is a recent phenomenon that open the empirical question of what this change looks like on the ground. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 contribute in extending our knowledge about this bond between mother and daughter in Korean society. In particular, Chapter 2 shows that some daughters measure their success in the public sphere by comparing their achievement with that of their mothers. Also, the idea of who deserves to receive childcare support and to work, a central issue in Chapter 3, relates to how mothers view and define their daughters' position in society. Respondents' mothers are often the gatekeepers and filters that respondents confront; both intergenerational educational mobility and achieved occupational prestige play central roles in how respondents develop career aspirations and make work decisions over their life course.

Relatedly, the third overarching narrative describes how women's perceptions of work and family as well as their decisions are a function of interactions and comparisons with others, rather than an independently constructed process. Women compare their achieved position to their own mothers and to their female siblings (and to other local moms, as described in Chapter 3) as they navigate work and motherhood. Women also repetitively compare what they are doing with other women when engaging in childrearing (as reported in Chapter 4). Personal desires,

aspirations, and interests are rarely cited by respondents as rationales when they are explaining how and why they made work and childrearing decisions and how they developed career aspirations. This pattern is particularly prevalent in Korea, but it is not uncommon in other societies: Classic work by Luker (1984) shows how cultural contradictions about working mothers and about decisions that mothers (including pregnant women) face lead mothers to feel their choices are under attack and require justification. The way women justify their choices is often through the rhetoric of doing something "for the family," thus mothers explain their work paths as actions undertaken for the family (Damaske 2011). A finding that is new from this study is the salient process of comparing with others (a respondent's own mother and parents' comparison of the daughter with their other daughters in Chapter 2; mother, mother-in-law, siblings, and other local mothers in Chapter 3; and other mothers living in the same and different neighborhoods in Chapter 4). Through comparisons against what other mothers – or other children – are doing, mothers develop strategies of how to provide learning opportunities for their children.

5.2 GENERALIZABILITY OF FINDINGS

An important consideration is the degree to which findings from each chapter can or cannot be generalized to social contexts other than Korea and its rapid social change. Findings from Chapter 2 on career aspirations are particularly focusing on this unique setting. Despite the fact that this chapter draws on a broader argument that intergenerational educational mobility is one of the sources of women's career-oriented aspirations, because of Korea's exceptionally rapid educational expansion, the findings in Chapter 2, for now, only apply to the Korean case. There are other societies where the educational attainment level of women has rapidly increased

recently (i.e. Singapore, Ireland, Iceland, etc; Barro and Lee 2010). Future research could further explore how intergenerational educational mobility in these settings has shaped women's career aspirations to test whether my findings are more widely generalizable.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 use the Korean context to explore two sociological questions – how women make different work decisions and class-based mothering - with the aim of developing implications that are generalizable to other contexts. In the literature, Korean mothers tend to be portrayed as hypercompetitive, obsessive about their children, and expected to stay home to focus on childrearing rather than having career ambitions. Also, extended families are often evaluated to have strong influence throughout individuals' lives. Chapters 3 and Chapter 4 start with these assumptions as cultural contexts and those conditions as part of a "baseline" culture to be able to make generalizations about the process of how women make work decisions under constant evaluations of whether their jobs are worthwhile to keep and of how mothers engage in different parenting under different levels of financial constraints.

Specifically, the concept of deservingness as explored in Chapter 3 draws attention to the importance of a particular job's stability, prestige, and prospective career trajectory. Frameworks in the literature that explain how mothers make work decisions and how they find meaning in maintaining their employment emphasize (a) the incompatibility of demands from work and family (Blair-Loy 2003; Stone 2007); (b) aspirations for paid work, which are related to multiple factors including family background, motherhood ideology, and the opportunities and constraints that women face (Hays 1996; Correll 2004); and (c) job quality (Damaske 2011). My findings contribute to the particular understanding that specific traits related to a job become important when women make work decisions.

Also, Chapter 4 emphasizes that despite an equally demanding atmosphere for all mothers to engage in concerted cultivation of their children, there are meaningful differences in how they approach childrearing across different educational backgrounds. How parents, especially mothers, engage in different parenting styles has been an important question in sociology of family because of its influence in reproducing social inequality (Augustine, et al. 2015; Bourdieu 1973; Conley, Lareau, and Weininger 2015; Lareau 2011; Lareau and Weininger 2008). Implications of Chapter 4 speak to recent literature on class-based parenting, in particular ethnic groups in the U.S. that are known to engage in hypercompetitive parenting (Chung 2016; Pawan 2016).

5.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

In the empirical chapters of this dissertation, the role that men play in women's decision-making processes has been underexplored. Findings demonstrate that men are notably absent as women seek childcare support, make work decisions, and interact with family members to define what it means to be successful. In Chapter 2, I find that when young women have become adult daughters, their aspirations are influenced by their parents, but strongly shaped by their own mothers. Chapter 3 demonstrates how childcare is divided among women across generations—between mother and grandmother—and points to the fact that men are almost always out of the picture when arranging childcare. In Chapter 4, I find that mothers feel intense pressure to devote their skills and time to childrearing, but interviewees did not talk about their husbands feeling similar pressure, thus I did address men's contribution as one of important factors influencing mothers' childrearing practices. These results broadly build on the evidence that parenthood becomes a critical point in time in which individuals' experiences diverge based on gender. In

future studies, building on literature about men's workplace conditions including working hours (Brinton 2001; Brinton and Oh 2018) and attitudes about fatherhood (Moon and Shin 2018), further investigation is needed to understand how men go through decision-making processes of work and family in the context of Korea.

Also, future research should examine how, in the context of rapidly changing societies, families provide opportunities and resources as well as remain a source of attitudes and perceptions. In Chapter 3, grandmothers are the main resource for childcare in a hypercompetitive labor market that demands long work hours. In the same rapidly changing context, mothers in Chapter 4 stress their own salient role—greater than that of public education or schools—in determining their children's achievement from early childhood on. Chapter 2 demonstrates how cultural understanding and aspirations toward career and family devotion are rooted in the intergenerational relationship. Explanatory quantitative studies regarding the differential impact of family background based on the speed and span of rapid social change can extend our knowledge about family influence. Additional exploratory qualitative studies about good daughterhood and about constructing and reconstructing one's identity as a daughter throughout one's life could also deepen our understanding of how, in rapidly changing societies and in the presence of a persistent intensive motherhood ideology, women maintain their identities as daughters even into adulthood and parenthood. In exploring how the daughter identity survives and is sometimes reinforced over the life course, it will be useful to know whether parental influence over the life course varies—and if so, how—based on socio-economic status.

5.4 CONCLUSION

At its core, this dissertation project extends our knowledge on how women transition to adulthood and make decisions about family, employment, and parenting. Understanding these decisions is important because East Asian societies, including Korea, have the highest female educational attainment levels in the world, yet also have a relatively low labor force participation rate among married mothers, and also are experiencing very low fertility rates. At the heart of these phenomena, I argue, families – across multiple generations – play an important role in differentiating how mothers develop expectations and make decisions about work and family.

By looking at the intersection of continuing traditional values and newly emerging opportunities for women, this project contributes to ongoing discussions on the persistence of society- and family-level pressures on mothers despite macro change in women's educational attainment and labor market participation. Also, studies of East Asian societies often conclude that contemporary familial norms and practices are the legacy of Confucianism or reflect a lag in the modernization process. Such scholarship loses power when attempting to elaborate how macro-social changes such as educational expansion have changed and reshaped how individuals construct values and practices. Especially in the Korean context, where educational expansion has been so rapid, it is not reasonable to generalize about motherhood for all Korean women. Young women's experiences in higher education and in the workplace are distinct from those of their mothers' generation. Nevertheless, findings from this study suggest that mothers and mothers-in-law still play a vital role as young women challenge existing norms and try to live different lives and think differently than the older generation did.

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Appendix A. Interview Guide (translated from Korean)

Interview Guide

After introducing myself and chatting a little, I would install my digital recorder, have them sign a consent form, and ask general questions about the project while avoiding specific probes that could influence their answers. Interviews started after respondents filled out a survey questionnaire that asked basic background information (name, birth, name of their schools, number of children, ages and names of their children, date and time of the interview, husband's age and job) and their career trajectories to the present (company names, jobs/tasks, specific years that they worked for that firm).

Introduction (5 minutes)

I am writing a dissertation about how mothers cope with parenting. If you don't mind, I am going to record this conversation. This is so I can listen to you, rather than take notes. First, let's make up a name for you, so that your privacy will be protected. You are the expert here, I am the learner. I'll ask a few general questions, but you can talk about anything you feel is important, even if I don't ask about it. And, if you want to answer off the record, we can turn the tape recorder off, and then turn it on again later. Are you ready to get started?

A. Life Trajectory Until Motherhood (especially regarding experiences at school and at work)

Let's start with you telling me a little bit about yourself. (Probe for parents' occupation, education, whether they grew up in Seoul, where their parents and grandparents grew up.)

- Where did you grow up?

- Tell me about your parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters. Where do they live now?

- What is your typical day like? Weekend? What about your children? (Probe for children's

    schedule.)

- You wrote that you went to —— school. How did your life change after graduating from ——

    school? (Probe for transition from school to work or marriage.)

Tell me about your working experience and plans.

[Mothers who are university graduates]

- What did you major in when you were in college?

- (If the respondent changed jobs) Why did you change your job? How did you know that the

    new job was a better option than your previous job? What was the least expected aspect

    of your career trajectory?

- What is the sex ratio of your current (or the latest) workplace? Are there many married women?

    What about mothers?

- What do (did) you specifically do?

- (If currently employed) Tell me a little bit about why you are working. (Motivations for

    working.) Do you think you will continue to work 5 years from now? Have you ever

    thought about quitting your job? Are you planning to stay in the same workplace? Why

    or why not?

- (If currently not employed) Tell me a little bit about the process of quitting your last job.

    (Reasons for quitting.) What could have stopped you from quitting your job? (Maternal

leave system.) Are you planning to re-enter the labor market? Have you ever thought about going back to your most recent job?

[Mothers who are high school graduates]

- What was your plan when you graduated?

- After graduating, what things did you experience that you were least expecting?

- (If the respondent changed jobs) Why did you change your job? How did you know that the new job was a better option than your previous job?

- What is the sex ratio of your current (or the latest) workplace? Are there many married women? What about mothers? What is the most important criteria when choosing your job?

- What do (did) you specifically do?

- (If currently employed) Tell me a little bit about why you are working. (Motivations for working.) Do you think you will continue to work 5 years from now? Have you ever thought about quitting your job? Are you planning to stay in the same workplace? Why or why not?

- (If currently not employed) Tell me a little bit about the process of quitting your last job. (Reasons for quitting.) What could have stopped you from quitting your job? (Maternal leave system.) Are you planning to re-enter the labor market? Have you ever thought about going back to your most recent job?

B. Motherhood

- When did you get married? How did things change after getting married? After how many

  years did you have your first child? How did things change after having your first child?

  What about your second?

Recall your memories of the first few months immediately following childbearing:

- How old were you when you had your first child?

- When you got pregnant (with your first child), was it the result of a conscious decision to have

  a child at that time? How many children in total are you going to have? Is this different

  from your ideal number of children?

- Did you use postnatal care centers? How much did your parents or parents-in-law help you?

- Do you have experience with outsourcing housework and childcare? How much?

- How do you divide housework and childcare with your spouse? What ratio?

- (If respondents have more than two children) What about your second child? Did your life

  change after having your second child? Or was it similar?

Motherhood and mothering:

- What do you think is the difference between motherhood and mothering?

- What methods do you use to discipline your child/children?

- What was something you experienced that you least expected after becoming a mother?

- Do you discuss your way of childrearing with your spouse? What do you disagree with and

  what do you agree with about your spouse's way of parenting?

- In discussing your way of parenting, who wins? (Check the influence of money and actual time

  spent with the child on who gets more power when making decisions.)

- How do you formulate your arguments? How do you decide who is right or wrong? Do you use

      a specific book or person to formulate an argument? Or your friends' experiences?

- In a typical week, how many hours does your child's father spend with your child?

Linking experience from school and from workplace with childrearing:

- What kind of skills do you find helpful in mothering? Where did you obtain them?

- Do you see studying in college and working at a firm differently than childrearing? Why? How

      are they different?

- If there are similar aspects, what are they and why are they similar?

Sources of advice, knowledge, and information regarding childrearing:

- When you don't know about a particular behavior or status of your kid, who do you ask and

      what kind of advice do you get?

- What sources do you trust the most?

- Why do you trust those sources of advice, knowledge, or information?

- What kind of advice do you like? What kind of advice don't you like?

- (If you use daycare or nannies) How do you evaluate their ways of childrearing and why?

- (If you receive help from extended family) Do you have a different style of mothering

      compared to your own mother? How is it different and where do you think the difference

      comes from?

- Are there certain people you think of as experts on childrearing?

- With whom do you share your thoughts and knowledge about childcare, and why do you share
      with those people? (If mothers meet regularly, ask them when and where they meet and if
      they show interest in meeting with other mothers.)

- Why do you meet other mothers? What regularly brings you and mothers you meet together?

- How are mothers different, from your point of view?

- Where do you think the different mothering practices and philosophies come from?

- For new moms, what kind of information regarding childrearing do you recommend they trust
      and follow?

Childrearing:

- How do you feel about raising a kid in Korea?

- Many people say that childrearing in Korea is very hard. Do you agree? Why is childrearing so
      tough? Do you think this is especially true in Korea? Why?

- What is so hard about childrearing in Korea? Could you give me some concrete examples?

- Why do you think people are getting married later and having fewer kids?

- Think about mothers you hang out with more often compared to mothers you don't hang out
      with. What kinds of mothers attract you in general? Can you give me specific examples?
      What qualities do these people have in common?

- What about your child's future? Ideally, what kind of a future would you like for your child to
      have?

- What can a parent do to help a child have this kind of a future?

- Do you do things that will help your child do better in school?

- How might you protect your kids from "getting into trouble"?

- Do you think your dreams for this child will be fulfilled? (Probe for why or why not.)

- What makes for a good mother?

- Ideally, what kind of a mother would you like to be for this child?

- Do you know any mothers like this?

- Describe a bad mother you know. Describe a specific person.

- Describe a good mother that you envy. Describe a specific person.

C. Growing Up and Intergenerational Relationships

- How about your own parents? What kind of a future did they plan for you?

- Did it turn out the way they had planned?

- What about work?

- What kind of work situation would you like to pursue?

- What about your own mother?

- How do you want to be a mother like your own mom? How not?

- What ways do you want to raise your child that are different or the same as how you were

     raised?

D. Moral Standards, Perceptions, and Evaluations

- All in all, do you think people treated you differently after becoming a mother?

- How did people treat you differently after you had your kid(s)?

- What makes a good mother? What's your image of a successful mother?

- What do you want to improve in terms of your childrearing—if anything?

- What is success? What is a successful life in your own thoughts?

- Who do you think are better and worse mothers (than yourself)?

- (In general) Whether we admit it or not, we all feel inferior or superior to some people at times. To what types of people do you feel inferior? Superior? Can you give me concrete examples?

- How are people evaluated in general in Korea? How are mothers evaluated in general?

- Today, fewer and fewer people are getting married. What do you think keeps people from getting married these days?

- What about people you know?

- Fewer and fewer people are having kids. What do you think keeps people from having more kids these days?

E. Policy Usage

- What are your general thoughts about leave policies?

- Have you ever used leave policies (separate questions for maternal and childcare leave)?

- For how long and why that length?

- Could you describe how you arrange childcare and your work after returning to the workplace?

- What are your general thoughts about daycare system and policy in Korea?

- Please share your experience of using daycares or financial support from the government.

Appendix B. Interviewees (pseudonyms)

Name	Age	Num_children	Employed	Own_edu	Mother_edu
Aejin	30	1	Full	BA	HS
Bada	34	1	X	BA	Elementary
Dajung	29	1	Full	BA	HS
Donghee	31	1	X	BA	BA
Eunhyo	39	1	Full	BA	BA
Heejo	35	1	Full	BA	HS
Hyegyo	37	1	Full	BA	MS
Kyuwon	33	1	X	BA	HS
Miae	38	1	Full	BA	BA
Mijung	33	1	Full	BA	HS
Seohee	32	1	Full	BA	BA
Seungeun	35	1	Part	BA	HS
Shinyoung	32	1	Full	BA	HS
Soi	37	1	Full	BA	BA
Somin	33	1	Self-employed	BA	MS
Yeden	32	1	Full	BA	HS
Yelim	30	1	X	BA	BA
Yesol	30	1	Full	BA	BA
Yoosun	28	1	X	BA	BA
Younghwa	37	1	X	BA	HS
Woori	42	3	Self-employed	BA	Elementary
Bomin	34	2	Full	BA	MS
Eunju	34	2	X	BA	BA
Jinsil	34	2	X	BA	HS
kyoungmi	31	2	X	BA	BA
Yunseo	33	2	Full	BA	HS
Chaerim	29	1	Self-employed	BA (elite)	HS
Chaeun	34	1	Full	BA (elite)	BA
Chewon	37	1	Full	BA (elite)	BA
Chorong	28	1	Self-employed	BA (elite)	BA
Gyuri	31	1	Full	BA (elite)	Graduate

Appendix B. continues

Name	Age	Num_children	Employed	Own_edu	Mother_edu
Hanbyul	30	1	Full	BA (elite)	BA
Hanul	32	1	X	BA (elite)	HS
Jooyoung	34	1	Full	BA (elite)	BA
Jungyeon	32	1	X	BA (elite)	HS
Juwon	32	1	Full	BA (elite)	BA
Keunyoung	33	1	Full	BA (elite)	HS
Kyongha	32	1	X	BA (elite)	BA
Myungji	34	1	X	BA (elite)	BA
Sarang	32	1	Full	BA (elite)	HS
Sodam	30	1	Full	BA (elite)	MS
Solbee	35	1	X	BA (elite)	BA
Yoonji	30	1	Full	BA (elite)	HS
Eunbi	34	3	Full	BA (elite)	BA
Haenim	41	2	X	BA (elite)	Elementary
Hyojoo	37	2	Full	BA (elite)	HS
Hyori	31	2	Full	BA (elite)	BA
Hyuna	31	2	X	BA (elite)	BA (elite)
Sejin	35	2	X	BA (elite)	BA
Seonju	36	2	Full	BA (elite)	HS
Sora	37	2	Full	BA (elite)	HS
Taeyeon	39	2	Self-employed	BA (elite)	HS
Wona	38	1	Full	BA (elite)	BA
Dahee	27	1	Full	Graduate	HS
Inyoung	34	1	Full	Graduate	BA
Jaesun	37	1	Full	Graduate	Graduate
Jinjoo	33	1	Part	Graduate	BA
Jiyoo	35	1	Full	Graduate	HS
Mina	35	1	Full	Graduate	HS
Nahye	34	1	Full	Graduate	BA
Saerom	31	1	Full	Graduate	BA
Inseo	37	3	Full	Graduate	HS
Kiseon	33	2	X	Graduate	HS
Miso	34	2	Full	Graduate	BA
Paran	36	2	Full	Graduate	BA
Yena	40	2	Full	Graduate	BA

Name	Age	Num_children	Employed	Own_edu	Mother_edu
Ahyoung	37	2	X	HS	Elementary
Aram	31	2	X	HS	HS
Bobae	41	2	X	HS	MS
Boyoon	40	2	Full	HS	MS
Dabin	45	2	Full	HS	Elementary
Haru	34	2	X	HS	HS
Hasun	37	1	Self-employed	HS	MS
Hyenim	43	2	Part	HS	HS
Hyogyeong	36	1	Full	HS	Elementary
Hyojin	34	1	X	HS	HS
Hyomin	46	2	Self-employed	HS	BA
Hyosun	37	3	X	HS	MS
Inhae	43	2	Full	HS	Elementary
Jimin	33	1	Full	HS	HS
Junga	37	1	X	HS	HS
Mijin	35	3	Full	HS	MS
Myungeun	44	3	X	HS	n/a
Noeul	34	1	Full	HS	n/a
Purum	38	1	X	HS	HS
Sanga	36	2	Self-employed	HS	HS
Shina	31	2	X	HS	MS
Sia	42	1	X	HS	HS
Suji	38	2	X	HS	Elementary
Sul	35	2	Full	HS	HS
Sungeun	40	2	Self-employed	HS	MS
Ari	34	1	X	2yr College	MS
Goeun	34	1	X	2yr College	HS
Hyena	24	1	Full	2yr College	HS
Juhyun	32	1	Full	2yr College	HS
Nayeon	32	1	Full	2yr College	MS
Soohyun	37	1	Full	2yr College	HS
Yooha	31	2	Self-employed	2yr College	Elementary
Ahyoung	37	2	X	HS	Elementary
Aram	31	2	X	HS	HS
Bobae	41	2	X	HS	MS
Boyoon	40	2	Full	HS	MS
Dabin	45	2	Full	HS	Elementary