

the institutions offer graduate courses, the graduate student body is limited in size, only about 200 thousand students. Female students account for slightly over a third of all students. A wide range of subjects are offered in universities, and most subjects require four-year programs while medicine and dentistry subjects require six years.

Two-year junior colleges number 559 and enroll 289 thousand students. Almost 90 percent of these students are female. These colleges offer non-technical courses on home economics, education, and the humanities. Unlike two-year schools in other countries which have opportunities for transfer to four-year institutions, Japanese junior colleges offer terminal education, and very few students transfer to four-year schools: in 2001 only ten percent of junior college graduates went on for further education which included not only four-year universities but also other two-year junior colleges.

Technical colleges specialize in technical training of engineering subjects. There are sixty-two schools, most of them public, enrolling 57 thousand students. The students are mostly men, and women account for 18 percent of the student body. These schools admit junior high school graduates and offer five-year education, so the latter two years, which are composed of some 20 thousand students, are considered a part of higher education. Therefore, students in technical colleges constitute a very small proportion of students in higher education, although these schools play an important role in producing engineers in Japan (Honda 1997). About a third of the graduates of technical colleges enroll in engineering departments in universities.

Special vocational schools which offered courses to high school graduates were incorporated into the system of higher education after the amendment to the School Education Law in 1975. Although these special vocational schools, often called "special training schools," are recognized as a part of the higher educational system, these schools are roughly comparable to postsecondary schools in many other nations (Kaneko 1992). Most of these schools offer various types of vocational training, including book-keeping, data processing, typing, English language and dress-making. Some schools are geared toward training lower professional workers, such as nurses and nursery school teachers.

It is worth noting that distinctive institutional features characterize Japanese postsecondary education. First, Japanese postsecondary education is heavily dependent on private institutions. Slightly over 70 percent of all four-year institutions are private, and over 70 percent of the student body belongs to private schools. As in the case of universities, junior colleges are dominated by private institutions. Almost ninety percent of colleges are private, and over ninety percent of all students study in

private schools. Although technical colleges are predominantly public, over 90 percent of special vocational schools are private. The private sector plays an important role in providing access to higher education in Japan. These private schools receive much less support from the government than public schools, and they must rely heavily on tuition and donations from the students and their parents.

Second, Japanese higher education is highly gender-segregated (Matsui 1997). Although universities are increasingly attended by female students, they remain a minority, constituting 37 percent of all students in 2001. In contrast, junior colleges are attended disproportionately by female students. A small number of male students who attend junior colleges are found in specialized colleges, so most junior colleges are attended exclusively by women. Two-year technical colleges are attended mostly by men, although the proportion of female students increased slightly in the 1990s, reaching 18 percent in 1995. Special vocational schools are attended by both male and female students almost on an equal basis. Even among university students, gender segregation is apparent by the field of specialization. Science and engineering subjects are dominated by men, while women are over-represented in the humanities.

Third, there is a hierarchy of types of postsecondary institutions. Four-year universities which offer B.A. degrees are most competitive in terms of the entrance examination and constitute top of the hierarchy in postsecondary education. Two-year junior colleges and technical colleges, which offer Associate degrees, are located at the second tier of the hierarchy, leaving special vocational training schools at the bottom of the hierarchy. Given that student transfers between the types of institutions are rare, students are placed into the rigid hierarchical structure when they complete their high school education. Universities are further differentiated by the quality of institution which is reflected in the difficulty of the entrance examination. Top-quality institutions are usually national universities, although some private schools are ranked towards the top of the quality ranking.

Fourth, the institutions of higher education are under the strict control of the Ministry of Education.¹ The establishment of a new institution must be approved by the Ministry, and any significant changes to the existing institutions are also subject to its approval. In order to integrate various rules governing higher education, the Ministry of Education issued a ministerial ordinance, "The Standards for Founding Universities and Colleges," in 1956. The Standards laid out detailed rules about the organizational structure, faculty and student composition, curriculum, and methods of student selection. For example, the total number and composition of the faculty, the number of student entrants, and the curriculum must be approved by the Ministry when

a university proposes to create a new department. Even the name of the department requires approval. During the 1980s, the Ministry of Education allowed each university to use more flexible methods of student selection and to organize more independent and creative curriculum, but the basic control mechanism has not changed until the present time.

Finally, the transition from secondary to postsecondary schools is sequential, and there is usually no gap between the termination of the secondary education and the entrance to a higher level of education in Japan. In 2001, about 80 percent of new entrants to four-year universities were students who graduated from high school the prior month. The rest are those who graduated from high school in the previous year or two years prior, spending an extra year or two preparing for the entrance examination. Similarly, over 90 percent of new entrants to junior colleges are fresh high school graduates, and all entrants to technical colleges, which have a five-year program, are fresh junior high school graduates. Special vocational schools attract some people who already graduated from high school and had work experience, but over 70 percent of new entrants are high school students who graduated from high school in the previous month.

These figures highlight the distinctive institutional arrangement in Japan: the segregation between the educational system and the labor market (Ishida 1993). It is difficult for those who entered the labor market to come back to the formal full-time educational system. The entrance examinations to competitive universities are too demanding for those who have full-time work, and even if they successfully passed the exam, Japanese companies do not hire university and junior college graduates who are older than the normal age range. In other words, students and parents are forced to assure the best possible education when the students go through the system once and for all. There is virtually no chance of entrance to higher education for those who take a job immediately after high school graduation. This feature also implies that high school graduates are heavily constrained by the labor market condition and the system of higher education at the time of school graduation, since it is not possible to delay entry into higher education by working for several years.

Historical Development of the Japanese Postsecondary Education

The origin of the Japanese postsecondary education can be traced back to the late 19th century. The first Japanese university was created in 1877: The University of Tokyo was a comprehensive institution of higher learning, consisting of four departments of law, science, humanities, and medicine. Although most faculty

members were originally foreigners and courses were offered in foreign languages, Japanese instructors and courses were gradually introduced. The university offered professional training in specialized subjects such as law and medicine, and they were mostly based on Western-born scholarship (Muta 1997). The second national university was created in Kyoto in 1897, and there were eventually a total of seven national universities by the early 20th century. The entrance to national universities usually required three years of schooling in higher middle school, especially training in two foreign languages.

The Japanese government created these national universities in order to produce national elites, especially bureaucrats (Kaneko 1993). The graduates of national universities were given special advantage in the selection process into bureaucracies in the national government (Amano 1990). They occupied leading positions not only in the bureaucracy but also among professional occupations such as medical doctors, judges and lawyers, and engineers. The graduates enjoyed high prestige status, as well as pecuniary returns.

In the late 19th century, in addition to universities which offered comprehensive subjects, there were postsecondary technical schools (senmon gakko) which offered advanced training in a single subject, such as law, commerce, foreign languages, and engineering. These schools were ranked below universities because they concentrated on a single subject and used Japanese language as the means of instruction, thereby not requiring foreign language training for admission. The origins of these schools varied: some were modeled after national universities preparing students for becoming bureaucrats. Others were created for the purpose of training students for passing the exam for professional qualifications. There were also schools created by religious organizations, and schools for educating women. Private technical schools did not enjoy the same privileges awarded by the government to national universities, and their graduates found employment opportunities (such as middle school teachers and technicians in private firms) which were less prestigious than those reserved for university graduates (Amano 1986, 1990).

In 1895, forty-seven technical schools, which were mostly private, enrolled 8700 students, along with the University of Tokyo, the only university then, which enrolled 1300 students (Amano 1986, p.33). Therefore, it is clear from the very beginning of the development of Japanese higher education that (1) there were two stratified sectors of universities and technical schools as well as the distinction between national schools and private schools; and (2) Japanese higher education was heavily dependent on the private sector. Following the enactment of the University Legislation

in 1917, some of the technical schools were upgraded to universities. In 1935, there were 45 universities, 25 of them private, and 183 technical schools, 114 of them private. These institutions altogether enrolled about three percent of 17-21 year olds (Amano 1986, p. 145).

The end of World War II and the introduction of American-type education marked the beginning of the major changes in the Japanese education (Hata 1999). Beginning 1948, various pre-war institutions of postsecondary education including universities, technical schools, and teacher-training colleges were integrated into a single category of four-year universities. In the course of establishing new universities, technical schools which usually offered courses on a single subject were merged to form comprehensive universities. Some pre-war technical schools which were judged to have inadequate physical facilities and faculty organization for a university were upgraded to two-year junior colleges (Muta 1997). In 1950, there were 201 four-year universities (70 national, 26 local public, and 105 private schools) and 149 junior colleges (17 local public and 132 private schools). Four-year universities enrolled about 225,000 students, and junior colleges enrolled 15,000 students. Altogether these students consisted of about six percent of 18-21 year olds (Ichikawa 1995).

The post-war educational system meant major re-organization of Japanese higher education, but the number of new entrants to higher education fluctuated around 170 thousand and the enrollment rate was about ten percent in the 1950s. A major expansion of the higher education sector took place during the 1960s and early 1970s. This period marked what Trow (1961) called the transformation from elite to mass higher education. As shown in Table 1, the number of new entrants to universities and junior colleges jumped about three times, from 205 thousand in 1960 to 599 thousand students in 1975. The enrollment rate (the proportion of 18 year-olds entering to universities and junior colleges) increased almost four fold from ten percent to 38 percent during the 15 year period of 1960 to 1975, as shown in Figure 1.

It must be noticed that the rapid expansion of higher education was due in large part to the increased share of private institutions. As shown in Table 1, the number of universities increased from 245 in 1960 to 420 in 1975, and during the same period the proportion of private universities increased from 57 percent to 73 percent. Similarly, from 1960 to 1975, the number of junior colleges increased from 280 to 513 with the corresponding increase in the proportion of private schools from 76 percent to 85 percent. The proportion of students who were enrolled in private institutions also increased by more than ten percent.

Demographic and economic circumstances were conducive to the rapid

expansion of higher education in the 1960s and early 1970s. First, the enrollment rate in high school increased rapidly from 58 percent of all middle school graduates in 1960 to 92 percent in 1975, thereby increasing the number of high school graduates who wanted to attend institutions of higher learning. Second, with the arrival of the first wave baby-boom generation to college age, the size of the 18-year-old population increased in the late 1960s (see Figure 2), and there was increased competition for entry into higher education. Third, following rapid economic growth in the 1960s, the private sector required young trained manpower who were adaptive to new technology (Aramaki 2000).

This demographic and economic environment forced the Ministry of Education to relax the requirements for founding new universities and junior colleges (Pempel 1973; Kuroha 1993). Since private institutions were heavily dependent on student tuition fees in running their business, it was an ideal opportunity for them to increase their revenue. Newly-established schools were usually placed at the bottom of the university ranking system, so the expansion of higher education took place by adding lower status institutions. Not only did new private schools emerge but also private schools already in operation increased the number of students they accepted every year. Universities whose student body exceeded ten thousand increased from nine in 1960 to 32 in 1975, all of them private. Furthermore, private universities admitted more students than they were approved to do so by the Ministry of Education. This was made possible because students usually applied to more than one school and withdrew their admission. However, the extent of over-admission escalated. In 1960, an average private university admitted 1.57 times more students than the number which was approved by the Ministry, while in 1975 an average private university admitted 1.84 times more students than their allowance. Consequently, private schools were able to increase their revenue without any additional investment in their physical facilities and faculty resources (Amano 1999).

Beginning in the mid-1970s, the expansion of higher education was put on hold by the Ministry of Education. To begin with, during the period from 1976 to 1985, the number of 18 year olds was stable around 160 thousand, so there was no demographic reason to continue the expansion (see Figure 2). The Ministry was concerned with the quality of education offered in institutions, especially those private schools which admitted almost twice the number of students than they were supposed to. The Ministry decided to introduce stricter control over the number of admissions by private schools in return for special subsidies for private institutions in order to compensate for the loss of revenue due to decreased number of admissions (Amano 1999). The

Ministry also used the logic of equalizing access to higher education by region and rejected any proposal to increase students in major cities, whether by establishing new schools and departments or by increasing the number of students in existing departments (Kuroha 1993).

The Ministry's educational policies were successful. As shown in Table 1, the number of universities and junior colleges (mostly schools in non-metropolitan areas) increased only slightly, and the number of new entrants to higher education was stable at about 600 thousand between 1975 and 1985. The rate of enrollment to universities and junior colleges remained about the same around 37 percent between 1975 and 1985, as shown in Figure 1. The university enrollment rate was in fact reduced in major cities, although the rate continued to increase slightly in non-metropolitan areas (Aramaki 2000; Tsuborai and Hayashi 2000). The rate of over-admission was reduced from 1.70 times the official allowance rate in 1975 to 1.22 in 1985 (Muta 1994, p.21).

Another important factor which contributed to the stability in higher education enrollment in the late 1970s and early 1980s deals with special vocational schools. Following the legislative change in 1975, special vocational schools which satisfied conditions set forth by the Ministry of Education were called "special training schools" and incorporated into the system of higher education. It was intended to boost the prestige of special vocational schools and recognize them as a legitimate and alternative path to universities and junior colleges, but these vocational training schools were still considered as an option for students whose academic records were not good enough for entry into a four-year university. Therefore, special vocational training schools were ranked at the bottom of the hierarchy in the Japanese higher education.

In 1976 about one thousand special vocational training schools were recognized as a part of higher education, and the number increased to three thousand by 1985. There were over 200 thousand students admitted to these schools, and about eleven percent of all high school graduates chose this path in 1985. Only ten years after the introduction of special vocational training schools, they provided a legitimate path to students, especially in major cities where the expansion of universities and junior colleges was limited between 1975 and 1985 (Amano 1999).

Social pressure to expand the higher education system built up again in the mid-1980s. The pressure came from the fact that the second baby-boom generation was reaching the age of college entrance beginning in the late 1980s. As shown in Figure 2, the population of 18-year olds reached the bottom in 1985 at 1.6 million and increased rapidly in the late 1980s, reaching the peak in 1992 at 2.1 million. In order to maintain the enrollment rate at about 37 percent which was the level between 1975

and 1985, it was necessary for the Ministry of Education to allow the expansion of the higher education system (Amano 1999; Hata 1999).

The second stage of expansion thus took place, following the Ministry of Education's announcement of the educational plan to relax the restriction on founding new institutions and departments in 1984. Proposals for expansion flooded the Ministry of Education because schools had been waiting for ten years to take advantage of this opportunity (Kuroha 1993). The number of new entrants to universities and junior colleges increased from 585 thousand in 1985 to 728 thousand students in 1990, as shown in Table 1. Similar to the first stage of expansion, newly-established schools formed the lower segment of the existing hierarchy in higher education. Because of the strong drive for expanding higher education, especially from the private schools, and the increased application to universities among high school students, the Ministry of Education was not able to put on hold the proposals for expanding universities in the late 1990s, even though the population of 18-year olds decreased sharply from 1993 (see Figure 2).

Junior colleges, however, faced difficulty in recruiting students because of the increased openings in four-year universities (Matsui 1997). The number of junior colleges decreased from 596 in 1995 to 572 in 2000, partly because some junior colleges were upgraded to four-year universities, and the number of new entrants dropped sharply from 232 thousand in 1995 to 141 thousand in 2000 (see Table 1). Consequently, the enrollment rate in universities and junior colleges increased from 36 percent in 1990 to 49 percent in 2000 (see Figure 1), but the enrollment rate in junior colleges alone decreased from 12 percent in 1990 to nine percent in 2000. Similarly, the number of high school graduates who were attracted to special vocational training schools decreased from 1990 to 2000. It was therefore four-year universities which benefited most from the expansive educational policies in the 1990s.

In summary, the development of Japanese postsecondary education was not a linear process. The postwar development can be characterized by four stages: the initial period of preparation for take-off (prior to 1960), the first stage of expansion of higher education (1960-1975), the period of stability and stagnation (1976-1985), and the second stage of expansion (after 1986). The following empirical analyses examine the relationship between social background and access to different types of postsecondary institutions by distinguishing four periods. The respondents of the national surveys are grouped into four cohorts depending on when they completed the secondary education. We will investigate whether the effects of social background on educational attainment differ by four cohorts, examining the possible impacts of the

expansion of postsecondary education.

Data, Variables, and Methods

The data sets used in this paper come from the 1985 and 1995 Social Stratification and Social Mobility (SSM) National Surveys. Two separate surveys are combined into one data set. The SSM surveys have been conducted every ten years since 1955, but the 1985 and 1995 surveys are the only ones which include both male and female respondents. The 1985 survey consisted of surveys A and B (male respondents) and survey F (female respondents). Each survey had different questionnaires although some questions overlapped. The sample size is 2473 (A and B combined) for male respondents and 1474 for female respondents (survey F). The 1995 survey consisted of surveys A and B, each having separate questionnaires, as well as a special survey P for the construction of occupational prestige scores. We combine surveys A and B which contained 2490 male respondents and 2867 female respondents. For details of the SSM surveys, see Naoi and Seiyama (1990) and Hara and Seiyama (1999).

The sample is further restricted to the respondents who completed their postsecondary education in post-war educational institutions. Because the pre-war educational system is substantially different from the post-war system and the focus of the analysis is on the development of postsecondary education which took place in the post-war period, older respondents who went through the pre-war system of education are excluded.

The analyses are based on a series of logistic regression which are conducted separately for respondents in different cohorts and by gender. The effects of social background variables on educational attainment are compared across cohorts and gender in order to determine the trends in their effects. The dependent variable in the logistic regression is entry into different types of postsecondary education. First, the likelihood of attendance in any type of postsecondary education conditional on high school graduation is considered. Postsecondary institutions include not only four-year universities and two-year junior colleges but also special vocational training schools which were incorporated into the system of higher education in 1975. Because the inclusion of special vocational training schools took place in 1975, the analyses of the attendance in any type of postsecondary education is restricted to individuals who completed secondary education in 1976-95, that is, two younger cohorts (1976-85 and 1986-95 cohorts). Furthermore, the 1995 SSM survey B did not ask the question on the attendance of special vocational schools, so the sample size is further restricted.

Second, the likelihood of attendance in higher education (universities and junior colleges) conditional on high school graduation is examined. This set of analysis is included although it is not sequential to the first set because we have access to full range of cohorts for the likelihood of entry into universities and junior colleges. No distinction is made between two types of higher education. Third, the final analysis focuses on the stratification in higher education and examines the likelihood of attendance in four-year universities rather than two-year junior colleges, among those who attend higher education. We have not reported the results of the likelihood of completing a B.A. degree, conditional on university entry. This is because most university students in Japan eventually graduate from the university and obtain a B.A. degree, unlike some other industrial nations. The attendance in four-year universities and the completion of a B.A. degree is almost synonymous.

We use the following independent variables. First, a dummy variable representing male is entered into the regression equation in order to assess the gender gap in educational attainment. We will also conduct analyses separately for males and females. Second, a series of social background variables are considered. Father's education and mother's education are determined by the question about the highest level of education attained by fathers and mothers. The responses are coded by the CASMIN coding scheme (Shavit and Muller 1998; Ishida 1998): (1) social minimum of education (compulsory education) (CASMIN category 1abc), (2) full secondary education, including both academic and vocational (2bc), and (3) tertiary education, including both junior colleges and universities (3ab). The first category is used as the base reference group. The 1985 SSM did not ask the question of mother's education, so mother's education is coded zero and a dummy variable indicating the absence of mother's education is included in the equation when the 1985 SSM data were used.ⁱⁱ

Father's occupation was coded using the five-category version of EGP class schema (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992). These categories include: (1) the service class (EGP categories I+II), (2) the routine non-manual class (III), (3) the petty bourgeoisie (IVab), (4) the farming class (IVc+VIIb), and (5) the skilled and the non-skilled manual working class (V/VI+VIIa). The last category was used as the base reference group.

Four cohorts are constructed according to when the respondents completed high school education. Closely following the development of postsecondary education in Japan, the youngest cohort consists of respondents who were born between 1968 and 1975 and completed high school between 1986 and 1995, which corresponds to the second stage of expansion. The next youngest cohort consists of those born between 1958 and 1967 and completed high school between 1976 and 1985, when the higher

education sector experienced stagnation. The third cohort consists of those born between 1942 and 1957 and completed high school between 1960 and 1975, which corresponds to the first stage of expansion. The oldest cohort members are those who were born before 1942 and completed high school before 1960, when postsecondary education was still preparing for take-off.ⁱⁱⁱ

Analyses

We begin with Table 2 which shows the descriptive statistics of our variables. First, the table presents the changes in the educational attainment among respondents: the proportions of those who attended postsecondary education, of those who attended higher education (university and junior college), of those who attended junior college, and of those who attended university. It is clear that an upgrading of educational level is observed as we move from the oldest cohort (those born before 1942) to the next youngest cohort (those born in 1958-67). However, there is no change in the level of educational attainment between the two youngest cohorts.

These changes correspond to the trends in the rate of enrollment in higher education, as shown in Figure 1. Respondents who were born between 1942 and 1957 completed high school between 1960 and 1975 when the rapid expansion of higher education took place, and some respondents clearly benefited from such an expansion. Respondents who were born between 1958 and 1967 completed high school between 1975 and 1985, when the college enrollment reached the high plateau. The respondents in the youngest cohort (born between 1968 and 1975) completed high school between 1985 and 1995 when the second expansion took place. However, the substantial increase began from 1993, so the overall level of educational attainment of the youngest cohort is not much different from the previous cohort. In summary, the trends of educational attainment across four cohorts reflect the postwar development of Japanese higher education which is characterized by multiple stages of expansion.

Second, Table 2 presents the changing distribution of father's and mother's education across cohorts. Again, the changes are not linear and are influenced by the uneven development of Japanese education. Men's level of education increased earlier than women's, and consequently father's educational level is generally higher than mother's educational level. Third, Table 2 shows the changes in the distribution of father's class. These changes are consistent with earlier studies of class mobility (Ishida 1993; 2000) which reported significant trends in father's class: the rapid contraction of the farming class and the corresponding increase in the manual working class and the service class.

Table 3 shows the results of predicting the attendance in postsecondary education (that is, any type of institutions of higher learning including special vocational training schools), given that the respondent completed high school education. Because special vocational training schools which offer vocational courses to high school graduates were formally recognized as a part of higher education only in 1975, we present the results for two youngest cohorts. First, there is no gender difference in the chances of attendance in postsecondary education. Men and women are equally likely to continue education after high school education, with or without controlling for social background.^{iv}

However, there seems to be gender difference in the effects of social background on the likelihood of attendance in postsecondary education. As shown in Table 4, men are more likely to be affected by social background than women. There are more significant effects of social background and the magnitude of the effects are apparently stronger among men than among women. Men whose fathers belonged to the service class or the routine non-manual class were more likely to continue education after high school than men whose fathers were manual workers. These effects are substantial and persistent across two cohorts. Among men, strong effects of father's education are visible in the 1958-67 cohort, while strong effects of mother's education are apparent in the 1968-75 cohort. It is not clear why the effect of parental education shifted from father's education to mother's education, but the educational level of at least one of the parents exerted strong influence on men's chances of continuing education beyond high school. Among women, daughters of the service class were advantaged in the 1958-67 cohort, and daughters whose mothers had high school education rather than middle school education were also advantaged throughout the two cohorts.^v Both among men and women, there is no clear trend across two cohorts, although the effect of parental education shifted from father's to mother's education among men.

Table 5 reports the results of predicting the attendance in higher education (university and junior college), conditional on high school completion. The analyses are shown separately for four cohorts although respondents who attended the old pre-war system of education are excluded from the analyses because we concentrate on the development of postsecondary education in post-war Japan (after 1945). There is a clear trend of the reduction in gender gap across cohorts. Among the oldest cohort members who completed high school before 1960, men are six times ($e^{1.7978}=6.04$) more likely to attend institutions of higher learning than women, controlling for social background. This gap is substantially reduced among the members of the 1942-57

cohort who completed high school during the first expansion stage between 1960 and 1975. Men are only two times ($e^{0.764}=2.14$) more likely to attain higher education than women, although the difference is still statistically significant. This is the result of women having benefited greatly from the expansion of higher education, especially junior college, during this period. Among the members of the two youngest cohorts, men are 1.2 times ($e^{0.2}=1.22$) more likely to attend higher education, and the difference is barely significant. The gender gap was not further reduced among the members of the youngest cohort, even though they completed high school education when university education was expanded. This result probably reflects the fact that enrollment in junior colleges which attract mostly women shrunk during the 1990s, although the number of women who enrolled in universities increased.

Table 6 presents the results of predicting the likelihood of attendance in higher education by gender. We can examine the trends in the effects of various social background variables. First, father's class exerts significant impact on the attainment of higher education. Both sons and daughters of the service class (I+II) are more likely to attend higher education than those of the manual working class (V/VI+VIIa). The extent of advantage of being brought up in the service-class family seems to fluctuate. The effects are comparatively smaller during the periods of the expansion of the higher education: 1968-75 cohort and 1942-57 cohort. However, the fluctuations are not large, and the effects are consistently significant across all four cohorts.^{vi}

Second, father's education affects the chances of attainment of higher education. Both sons and daughters of the fathers who themselves had higher education increase their chances of attending the same institutions. The effects are consistent and strong, and there is no clear waning pattern. When the father completed high school education, it also increases higher education attainment of sons and daughters in most cohorts. The influence of mother's education follows a more complicated pattern. Among female respondents, there is an increasing impact of mother's attendance in higher education across cohorts: those whose mothers had higher education are not advantaged in the oldest cohort but are five times ($e^{1.6391}=5.15$) more likely to attend higher education in the youngest cohort than those whose mothers had minimum education. Similarly, among female respondents, the effect of mother's completion of high school education appears to increase across cohorts, with the exception of the 1958-67 cohort when the effect is not significant. Among male respondents, mother's completion of high school education increases the chances of entry into higher education in post-war Japan, except for the 1958-67 cohort, while mother's attendance in higher education does not seem to affect sons' higher education

attainment.

Finally, Table 7 reports the results of comparing the chances of attendance in university and of attendance in junior college among those who entered the institutions of higher education. The analysis is aimed at examining the relationship between social background and stratification in higher education. Men possess a clear advantage in attending university over women. Men are on average fifteen times ($e^{2.7}=15$) more likely than women to enter university rather than junior college, net of social background. The strong male advantage is persistent across cohorts. Although there was no sign that the gender gap was reduced during the period of the expansion of higher education, the gender gap may have widened when the number of universities and junior colleges was held stable between 1975 and 1985.

Turning to the effects of social background, we examine these effects for the sample which includes both males and females shown in Table 7, because the sample size becomes too small if we break down by gender. Trends in the effect of parental education reveal ambiguous patterns. Father's education exerts its effect most clearly among the members of the 1958-67 cohort who experienced stagnation in the number of universities and junior colleges when they completed high school. Father's education does not affect the likelihood of attendance in university in the youngest cohort when the second stage of expansion of university education occurred. In contrast, mother's education shows the strongest effect among the members of the youngest cohort, and does not exert any effect on the members of the 1958-67 cohort. It is not clear why the pattern of the effect of father's education and of mother's education is reversed, but the result implies that the educational attainment of at least one of the parents is always consequential to the attendance of university rather than junior college by sons and daughters.

The most important and perhaps surprising finding in Table 7 pertains to the influence of father's class. The likelihood of attending university rather than junior college is not affected by father's class. Even the sons and daughters of the service class do not seem to enjoy any advantage in attending university. Furthermore, the absence of the effect of father's class is not affected by the stages of expansion in higher education; the effects of father's class are not significant across all cohorts.

Discussion

The development of the Japanese postsecondary education went through a process of multiple stages of expansion. Universities and junior colleges expanded rapidly during the high growth period of 1960 to 1975. The decade between 1975 and

1985 was the stagnation stage when the expansion of universities and junior colleges was put on hold by the policies of the Ministry of Education. However, during this period, special vocational schools were incorporated into the system of higher education, and these schools became an option for postsecondary education for those whose academic records were not good enough for entry into university. The second stage of expansion in higher education took place beginning 1985, following the Ministry of Education's plan to relax the restrictions on universities.

The postwar Japanese postsecondary education is characterized by a highly stratified system. Traditional national universities and a few prestigious private universities occupy the summit of the hierarchy, followed by the second tier institutions. Newly-established private universities during the expansion period usually constitute the bottom of the university hierarchy. Junior colleges are clearly ranked below four-year schools. The addition of a vocational component to higher education at the later stage of development did not lead to a binary character, because these vocational schools were ranked at the bottom of the existing hierarchy within the system of higher education.

The analyses examining access to postsecondary education and higher education show that the gender gap has reduced substantially in the postwar period. By 1980, men and women appear to have similar rates of gaining postsecondary education and of gaining higher education. Both father's class and parental education affect the chances of attendance in postsecondary and higher education. Sons and daughters of the service class are consistently advantaged in the postwar period, and the sons and daughters of highly educated parents tend to enjoy better access to postsecondary and higher education. The influence of father's class and father's education is generally stable throughout the postwar period, although the effect of mother's education appears to show an increasing trend.

The analyses focusing on stratification in higher education reveal that a gender gap in the chances of attending a university as opposed to a junior college persists throughout the postwar period, despite the multiple stages of expansion in these types of institutions. Men are over-presented in four-year universities, and junior colleges are dominated by women. Although the female enrollment rate in four-year universities has increased recently, junior colleges continue to be attended by women and the gender gap remains substantial. Similarly, there is a consistent pattern regarding the effect of father's class throughout the post-war period: a complete lack of any significant effect. The absence of the effect of father's class may be due to the fact that we were not able to distinguish the quality or the rank of four-year universities. It may be possible that

sons and daughters from advantaged families have better chances of attending high-quality institutions.

In summary, gender inequality in access to higher education was reduced substantially in the postwar period, although gender inequality in access to university rather than junior college persisted. The overall picture of the relationship between social background and educational attainment is of stability, while there are some fluctuations, especially regarding the effect of parental education. There was neither a clear correspondence between the pattern of the effects of social background and the stages of expansion, nor a linear pattern of diminishing or increasing effects of social background. The stability is remarkable given that the Japanese higher education went through the series of changes described above, closely following the educational policies of the Ministry of Education. Although the educational policies of the Ministry of Education did not explicitly attempted to reduce the impact of social background, the expansion of the higher educational system did not necessarily bring about equality of access to higher education.

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Table 1 Trends in the Number of Institutions of Higher Education, the Number of Students in Higher Education, and the Number of Entrants to Higher Education

	Number of Institutions				Number of Students				Number of Entrants			
	University		Junior College		University		Junior Colleges		University		Junior College	
	Total	% private	Total	% private	Total	% private	Total	% private	Total	% private	Total	% private
1955	228	53.5	264	77.3	523355	59.7	77885	81.1	132296	61.0	37544	81.9
1960	245	57.1	280	76.4	626421	64.4	83457	78.7	162922	68.2	42318	81.6
1965	317	65.9	369	81.6	937556	70.5	147563	85.3	249917	74.5	80563	88.8
1970	382	71.7	479	86.4	1406521	74.4	263219	90.1	333037	77.6	126659	91.8
1975	420	72.6	513	84.6	1734082	76.4	353782	91.2	423942	79.7	174930	92.8
1980	446	71.5	517	83.6	1835312	75.0	371124	90.9	412437	76.8	178215	92.5
1985	460	72.0	543	83.8	1848698	72.7	371095	89.7	411933	75.9	173503	91.4
1990	507	73.4	593	84.0	2133362	72.7	479389	91.4	492340	76.6	235195	93.3
1995	565	73.5	596	83.9	2546649	73.2	498516	92.4	441142	77.6	232741	93.8
2000	649	73.7	572	86.9	2740023	73.3	327680	91.2	473023	78.9	141491	92.5
2001	669	74.1	559	87.5	2765705	73.4	289198	90.8	476815	78.9	130246	92.4

Note: Number of students in university include graduate students

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Variables Used in the Analyses by Cohort

	Birth cohorts			
	1968-75	1958-67	1942-57	Before 1942
Attendance of postsecondary education	55.1	55.7	37.3	27.5
Attendance of higher education	42.0	41.4	25.0	14.9
Attendance of junior college	14.0	14.0	6.9	2.6
Attendance of university	27.9	27.4	18.2	12.3
Father's education				
CASMIN 1abc	30.6	42.4	63.5	73.4
CASMIN 2bc	45.1	35.5	23.5	16.7
CASMIN 3ab	24.4	22.1	13.0	9.9
Mother's education				
CASMIN 1abc	30.9	45.5	62.2	75.7
CASMIN 2bc	56.0	47.6	33.5	22.4
CASMIN 3ab	13.1	6.9	4.3	1.9
Father's class				
I+II	34.3	27.4	20.6	18.6
III	7.0	6.4	6.0	5.1
IVab	25.1	26.9	26.0	26.7
IVc/VIIb	4.9	15.3	27.7	37.8
V/VI	18.1	13.5	12.1	6.8
VIIa	10.5	10.6	7.6	5.1

Table 3 Logit Regression of Attendance of Postsecondary Education

Independent Variables	Birth Cohorts	
	1968-75	1958-67
Male	0.0239	0.0309
Father's education (2bc)	-0.698	0.6914 **
Father's education (3ab)	-0.1755	1.2992 **
Mother's education (2bc)	2.0263 **	0.4019
Mother's education (3ab)	3.2904 **	1.4924
Father' Class (base V/VI+VIIa)		
Father's class (I+II)	1.3158 **	1.1456 **
Father's class (III)	1.3437 *	0.5662
Father's class (IVab)	0.5838	0.5597 *
Father's class (IVc/VIIb)	0.2676	0.1086
Mother's education missing		0.2995
Constant	1.4869 **	1.6736 **
-2 Log Likelihood	230.412	855.879
N	222	726

Note: ** p<.01 * p<.05 + p<.10