

The Spread in Atypical Employment and Declining Birthrate

Rie MORIIZUMI

The purpose of this study is to examine whether employment patterns before marriage influence women's' post-marriage employment continuation rate and fertility behavior. The data used is employment history from the time immediately following school graduation to the present that is included in the 12th National Fertility Survey conducted by the Institute of Population and Social Security Research in 2002.

This paper noted that in the period from school graduation to just before marriage employment patterns have changed for a number of women. In particular, the number of young women who shift from permanent full-time employee status to atypical employment or who continue atypical employment right the way from school graduation is increasing. Based on such shifts in pre-marriage employment patterns, the survey observed employment patterns after marriage. Women who had switched to atypical employment prior to marriage, even if they had been permanent full-time employees immediately following school graduation, were more likely to face unemployment than those who had remained permanent full-time employees up to marriage or had continued in atypical employment. By contrast, those who had switched from atypical employment to permanent full-time employment before marriage were more likely to remain in employment after marriage than those who had remained permanent full-time workers all along.

The report next analyzed trends in the existence of or desire for children based on the pre-marriage employment pattern. Among the group of women who shifted from atypical employment to permanent full-time employment, the rate of childlessness was high. However, these women may have simply delayed child bearing since their average intended number of children is hardly different from that of a typical worker group. The women who had remained in atypical employment right from school graduation planned a small number of children on average.

The increase in atypical workers poses an obstacle to the rise in womens' overall employment continuation rate after marriage. Moreover, under present conditions where there are limited opportunities to shift from atypical to conventional employment, the increase in unmarried women who remain in atypical employment reduces child-bearing plans for women as a whole, and is in danger of becoming a serious factor which causes a decrease in the birthrate.