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Gender Segregation in the Process of College Student Job Seeking

A Survey of Higher Education as a Prelabor Market Factor

Abstract: *This article uses information from a 2009 survey of the employment circumstances of female college students from Beijing's higher education institutions to analyze the differences among college students in the process of job seeking. Such divisions are manifested in terms of gender, household registration, human resources, specializations, and differences in household social resource networks; they are gender, urban-rural, and class segregations that already exist in the prelabor market. Analysis by genders reveals that ascribed factors and achieved factors have different effects on the genders: male students are influenced more by urban-rural differences and specializations, whereas female students are affected mainly by family backgrounds. Communist Party membership and foreign language proficiency affect both men and women, but Party membership has a greater influence on successful job acquisition among men, whereas foreign language proficiency has a greater effect on successful job acquisition among women.*

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Higher Education as a Prelabor Market Factor

The phenomenon of buying and selling labor as a "special commodity" emerged with the birth of capitalism. By analyzing this special commodity, Marx defined the source of capitalist surplus labor and the secret of capitalism's development.[1] Karl Polanyi, on the other hand, was filled with anger at the process whereby labor became a commodity in nineteenth-century England. In his view, labor is merely a part of human activity that exists in human life; it is not being constantly reproduced simply to be sold, nor should labor be separated from life's activities, stored up, or circulated.[2] This means that the labor market does not exist independently, that it is constantly changing, that it not only constitutes an internal market with a social networking effect but also is of a transitional nature and divides into a prelabor market, a labor market, and a postlabor market. What one calls the "prelabor market" is when persons have not yet entered the labor market but are preparing to do so. They work to generate a qualified labor force, and they are affected by the needs of the labor market and affect the structure of that market. In this sense, higher education is an important part of the prelabor market. In this article, we proceed from the gender perspective and attempt to determine how higher education, as an element of the prelabor market, links gender segregation in education with the gender segregation of future vocations.

As a consequence of the stable advances of China's higher education in recent years, the gross enrollment rate of higher education has risen from 21 percent in 2005 to 23 percent in 2008. From the gender perspective, we are glad to see a substantial increase in the number of women entering the portals of higher education. Before 1949, the ratio of female students in ordinary higher education institutions was a mere 17.8 percent. This increased to 25.9 percent in 1955, 26.9 percent in 1965, and 32.6 percent in 1975, or to almost one in three students. This fairly high rate of women enrollments occurred in the Mao Zedong era when the emphasis was on gender equality and on sending the children of workers and peasants to college.

In 1979 the college entrance examination was restored in China, and in 1980 the ratio of female college students fell quite sharply to 23.4 percent. The reasons for this decline still need deeper study, but the competition revived by college entrance exams seemed to indicate that men were more competitive or that they had a greater desire, made more effort, and were better equipped to change their destinies. Subsequently, the ratio of female college student rose year after year. In 1985, the proportion of female college students was 30.00 percent and reached 33.70 percent in 1990. In 1997, it was 39.70 percent, and by 2007 women accounted for 47.36 percent of regular college students and 51.21 percent of junior college students. The proportion of women Ph.D. and master's degree candidates also rose. In 1987 women accounted for 29.40 percent of master's degree candidates and 19.60 percent of Ph.D. candidates, and by 2007 they accounted for 47.10 and 34.75 percent, respectively, of master's degree and Ph.D. candidates.[3] However,

the entry of women into the domain of higher education does not signify smooth sailing for high-level women talent. Job seeking has become increasingly difficult for college students in recent years. According to ministry of education figures, there were 6.1 million current-year graduates from higher education institutions nationwide in 2009. Add to this figure those who had not yet found jobs in 2008, and the total number of college students needing jobs reaches 7.1 million. In the case of Beijing, 2009 current-year college and university graduates are estimated to reach 210,000, including 57,000 postgraduates, 109,000 regular college students, and 44,000 higher vocational school and junior college students. This is 7,000 more than in 2008, and more than any time in the past.[4]

Women face enormous challenges. College students claim that "graduates come in four grades": the first grade consists of male students who have household registrations in the same city; the second grade consists of female students, also with household registration in the same city; the third grade is made up of male students with nonlocal household registrations; and the fourth grade consists of female students with nonlocal household registrations, that is, the fourth grade consists of female students with rural registrations. Is this alleged "ranking" among persons with higher educations a reality? If it is, what are its consequences? To answer this question, and especially to obtain information about female college students' difficulties in finding jobs, the Beijing Women's Federation conducted a "2009 Survey of Employment Among Female Students in Beijing's Higher Education Institutions." The survey took place in April and May 2009, when 3,600 questionnaires were distributed in eleven colleges and universities in Beijing, 2,964 of which were retrieved, for a retrieval rate of 82.33 percent; and 2,686 were effective, for an effective rate of 74.60 percent. Of these, 44.00 percent were filled out by men and 56.00 percent by women. The data used below are the results of this survey.

This article will address the following issues: (1) the type of segregation present in the job-seeking process of college students, in other words, the type of ranking structure in higher education as a prelabor market; (2) the role and state of the gender structure in higher education; and (3) the social effects of gender inequality that emerges in the job-seeking process of college students. Efforts are made to dialogue with human capital theory, gender discrimination theory, and class theories.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Background

This survey was conducted in April and May 2009, an important period for college students looking for jobs. College students who had already signed or were "about-to-sign" employment agreements possessed priority qualifications and "opportunities" in job seeking, and by analyzing them, one is able to identify the

existence of disparities. Judging from single-variable statistics, substantial gender segregation, urban-rural segregation, and family economic background segregation exist in college student job seeking.

From the gender perspective, among the female college students who chose to seek employment, the rate of signed or about-to-sign employment agreements was 31.6 percent, whereas it was 45.8 percent among male students, or 14.2 percent higher than among female students. Interviews revealed that many female college students chose to advance to postgraduate programs in China or abroad because work was so hard to find and they felt there was no alternative. And in fact, women had to go on studying for master's or Ph.D. degrees if they hoped to earn salaries close to those earned by male regular college students. The effects of education and income were evident from analyses of the data from the Chinese Women's Federation's Social Status Sample Survey in 2000. Among persons who had received twelve to sixteen years of education, the average annual income was RMB13,237 for men, but RMB9,430 for women; and for persons with more than sixteen years of education, the average annual income was RMB12,948 for men but RMB10,455 for women. Where the two genders had the same amount of education, returns on education differed and were substantially higher for men than for women. More schooling might somewhat increase the incomes of women,[5] and this may have influenced their choice to further increase their educational capital.

From the urban-rural perspective, the least employment agreements were signed with students with rural backgrounds. The rate of signed or about-to-sign job agreements was 32.9 percent for college students originating from within Beijing, 32.2 percent for college students from other cities, but only 16.5 percent for college students with rural backgrounds.

In view of the above-described circumstances, we used the sociological theories on status attainment to analyze the effects of people's ascribed factors and achieved factors on their status attainment. In an open society, people's attainment of social status depends for the most part on their achieved factors. In that case, how does higher education, as an achieved factor and crucial factor in the prelabor market, affect people's market status, and especially the market status of women?

Theoretical Assumptions

Proceeding from Blau and Duncan's theory of status attainment[6] and Lin Nan's theory of social capital,[7] this article regards gender, household registration, and family stratum status (parents' vocations and family economic conditions) as ascribed factors, and college specialization, state of human capital (including academic performance, foreign language level, Party membership or otherwise, and student cadre or otherwise) as achieved factors. Worth noting is the circumstance that this article regards being a Party member or student cadre or otherwise as an ability to build up one's own social capital although it is, in fact, disputed whether "Party

membership" status and "cadre" status fall in the category of "human capital." Some scholars maintain that human capital means such "nonmaterial conditions" crystallized in a person by educational training, health, and other factors and may consist of an individual's talent, knowledge, skills, qualifications, and experience. We maintain that Party member status and student cadre status manifest a student's ability to organize and communicate as well as his or her interpersonal contact experience and denote the attributes of a person building up his or her human capital. And so we regarded these as component elements of human capital and included them in the equations.[8] We then analyzed the influence of these factors on job seeking. The ascribed factors, achieved factors, and human capital hypothesized in this article have certain effects on student job seeking.

Assumption One

Attributed factors have certain effects on student job seeking.

1. Gender is a factor that affects student job seeking, as men are more likely to land jobs than women.

2. Household registration is a factor that affects student job seeking, as students with urban household registrations are more likely to land jobs than students with rural household registrations.

3. Family stratum status is a factor that affects student job seeking, as students from middle to higher stratum families are more likely to land jobs than students from middle to lower stratum families.

Assumption Two

Achieved factors have certain effects on student job seeking.

1. Specialization is a factor that affects student job seeking, as disparities exist in the likelihood of landing jobs among students who learn different specializations.

2. Human capital is a factor that affects student job seeking, as students with good academic performances and good English language capabilities are more likely to land jobs. Party members and student cadres are also more likely to land jobs than students who are not Party members or student cadres.

Assumption Three

Gender disparities exist in the effects produced on student job seeking by ascribed factors as represented by household registration and family stratum status and by achieved factors as represented by specialization and human capital.

Variables and Methods of Analysis

Variables

Dependent Variables

In this article, "agreement-signing opportunity" for college students in the job-seeking process serves as a dependent variable. In fact, when discussing the issue of stratification, Weber especially emphasized the "relationship between open and closure," and that "being excluded" or obtaining certain "opportunities" was a process whereby groups of people designed and strengthened their membership rules and, through monopoly strategies, elevated the status of a certain group of persons.[9] The gauging of agreement-signing opportunity was based on the questionnaire question "If you are looking for a job, have you found work at this time?" The figure "1" was entered if the reply was "I have already signed an agreement" or "There is the intent, but I have not signed the agreement yet," whereas "0" was entered if the reply was "I have not found any." Thus the presence or absence of agreement-signing opportunities constitutes a binary variable.

Independent Variables

In this article, all the students' ascribed factors, such as household registration, gender, and family stratum status are regarded as independent variables. "Household registration" comprises "urban household registration" and "rural household registration" (reference category). "Gender" comprises "male" and "female" (reference category). "Family stratum status" comprises "father's vocation," "mother's vocation," and "family economic circumstances." Parents' vocations are divided into nine categories: "governmental or institutional administrator," "enterprise administrator," "ordinary employee/service person/industrial worker," "freelancer," "peasant" (reference category), "specialized technician/physician/teacher," "military person," "unemployed, laid-off, or without work," and "retiree." "Family economic circumstances" is divided into five categories: "Very good," "fairly good," "average," "fairly poor," and "very poor" (reference category). All these categories are entered in the models as dummy variables.

In this article, the human capital acquired by college students is regarded as an achieved factor and the ability to build up social connections networks. Human capital variables comprise, in the main, "academic performance," "foreign language level," "Party member or not," and "have or have not been a student cadre." "Academic performance" is divided into four categories: "excellent," "good," "average," and "poor" (reference category). Foreign language proficiency is divided into five categories: "level four" (reference category), "level six," "professional level four," "professional level eight," and "TOEFL/GRE/GMAT" (Test of English as a Foreign Language/Graduate Record Examination/Graduate Management Admission Test).

"Party membership" and "student cadre" were both binary variables. These, and "student performance" and "foreign language level" are converted into dummy variables and entered into the models.

"Specialization"[10] is converted into a binary variable where the figure "1" represents "male-friendly specialization" (composed of science and engineering studies) and the figure "0" represents "not male-friendly specialization" (composed of philosophy, economics, jurisprudence, education, literature, history, agriculture, medicine, administration, and art). Of these, the "not male-friendly specialization" is included in the analysis as a reference category.

Method of Analysis

The dependent variable in this study is a binary categorical variable (whether or not there was an opportunity to sign an agreement). Hence, the logistic regression method is used in the context to analyze the effects of the ascribed and achieved factors on the college students' job-seeking process. Because we were interested in the gender disparities in these effects, we set up three models on this basis.

Model 1: Effects of ascribed and achieved factors on opportunities to sign agreements

Model 2: Effects of ascribed and achieved factors on men's opportunities to sign agreements

Model 3: Effects of ascribed and achieved factors on women's opportunities to sign agreements

Results and Findings

Multiple Segregations in the Course of College Student Job Seeking

We find from the data in Table 1 that obvious inequalities are present in the course of college student job seeking.

1. Gender had a significant effect ($p < .000$), because men obtained 1.7 times the opportunities to sign agreements than women did. This indicates that under similar conditions in terms of household registration, human capital, specialization, and family, men had a higher probability of obtaining opportunities to sign agreements.

2. Household registration also had a significant effect ($p < .05$), because students with urban household registrations obtained 1.4 times the opportunities to sign agreements than students with rural household registrations. This indicates that under similar conditions in terms of gender, human capital, specialization, and family, students with urban household registrations had a higher probability of obtaining opportunities to sign agreements.

3. Among the variables of human capital—academic performance, foreign language level, Chinese Communist Party membership and student cadre status—academic performance did not have much of an effect, nor did student cadre status. However, foreign language proficiency and Party membership status had a significant effect. Where foreign language proficiency was concerned, the ratio of agreement-signing opportunities among students with professional grade four and TOEFL/GRE/GMAT English levels was not much different from that of students who only had grade four foreign language levels, but the ratio of agreement-signing opportunities among students with level six and professional level eight [English], respectively, was 5.1 times that of students with only level four foreign language proficiency. That is to say, under similar gender, specialization, and family conditions, students with level six and professional level eight foreign languages were more likely to find opportunities to sign agreements than students with only level four foreign language proficiency. Further, the ratio of agreement-signing opportunities among students who were Party members was 1.5 times that of students who were not Party members. That is, the likelihood of Party members getting opportunities to sign agreements was higher than for non-Party members.

4. In terms of specializations, students who learned men-friendly specializations were more likely to obtain agreement-signing opportunities, and the ratio of agreement-signing opportunities among them was 1.4 times higher than among students in other specializations.

5. In terms of family resources or social connections networks, the ratio of agreement-signing opportunities among students with fathers whose vocation was "governmental or institutional administrator" was 1.6 times higher than that of students whose fathers were peasants. However, if the fathers were of other vocations, their children's opportunities to sign agreements were not significantly different from those of peasants' children. The effect of "mother's vocation" was not significant. And the effect of "family economic circumstances" was quite significant. Students whose family finances were very good were 3.0 times as likely to have agreement-signing opportunities compared with students with very poor family finances, indicating that where gender, household registration, human resource, and specialization circumstances were all quite similar, students with good family finances were more likely to obtain opportunities for signing agreements.

In sum, ascribed and achieved factors have definite effects on student job seeking. These are manifested as gender, urban-rural, and class segregations already existing in the prelabor market, and specifically manifested as male students being more likely than female students to obtain agreement-signing opportunities where all other conditions are basically the same; as students with urban household registrations

Table 1

Logistic Regression of College Student Agreement Signing

	Model 1	Coefficient	Standard deviation
Intercept		–1.449***	(0.341)
Ascribed factor	Gender: male (reference category: female)	0.527***	(0.093)
	Household registration: urban (reference category: rural)	0.315*	(0.142)
	Family socioeconomic status		
	Father's vocation: (reference category: peasant)		
	Governmental or institutional administrator	0.463*	(0.216)
	Enterprise administrator	0.022	(0.201)
	Ordinary employee/service person/ industrial worker	0.022	(0.201)
	Freelancer	0.204	(0.238)
	Specialized technician/physician/teacher	–0.113	(0.245)
	Military person	0.315	(0.530)
	Unemployed, laid-off, or without work	0.170	(0.289)
	Retiree	0.479	(0.310)
	Mother's vocation (reference category: peasant)		
	Governmental or institutional administrator	–0.013	(0.234)
	Enterprise administrator	0.452	(0.239)
	Ordinary employee/service person/ industrial worker	–0.165	(0.201)
	Freelancer	–0.307	(0.237)
	Specialized technician/physician/teacher	–0.277	(0.239)
	Military person	0.773	(0.790)
	Unemployed, laid-off, or without work	–0.308	(0.224)
	Retiree	–0.261	(0.237)
	Family financial circumstances		
	Very good (reference category: very poor)	1.087**	(0.356)
	Fairly good	0.362	(0.279)
	Average	0.119	(0.266)
	Fairly poor	–0.072	(0.283)

	Model 1	Coefficient	Standard deviation
Achieved (self-induced) factor	Human capital		
	Academic performance: Excellent (reference category: fairly poor)	–0.289	(0.258)
	Good	–0.128	(0.122)
	Average	–0.124	(0.083)
	Foreign language level: level six (reference category: level four)	0.198*	(0.098)
	Professional level four	0.021	(0.261)
	Professional level eight	1.648**	(0.441)
	TOEFL/GRE/GMAT	–0.013	(0.264)
	Party member (reference category: not Party member)	0.392***	(0.103)
	Student cadre (reference category: not student cadre)	0.136	(0.096)
	Specialization: male-friendly specialization (reference category: friendly to both genders)	0.323**	(0.097)
$\times^{2a}$		213.470	
Degree of freedom		32	
Quantity		2,449	

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

being more likely to obtain agreement signings than students with rural household registrations; and as students being more likely to get opportunities to sign agreements the higher their family's class status. Although gender, urban-rural, and class segregations do exist, such achieved factors as human capital and specialization are still capable of exerting definite effects, and students who learn men-friendly specializations, who possess Party member status, and whose English is of level eight proficiency are more likely to obtain opportunities to sign agreements. This, to a certain extent, breaks down the limitations imposed by the ascribed factors.

We believe that gender segregation, ranging from colleges and universities to the labor market, is caused not by the gender factor alone but certainly by its combination with diverse other factors, such as household registration (urban or rural), family resources, and human capital. This is well illustrated by the results in Table 2. [p. 106]

First of all, if we look at the circumstances of men alone, the effect of household registration was also significant ($p < .01$). Male students with urban household

Table 2

Logistic Regression of Agreement Signing by College Students of Different Genders

		Model 2: Male	Model 3: Female
Intercept		–1.041*(0.504)	–1.388**(0.497)
Ascribed factor	Household registration: urban (reference category: rural)	0.603**(0.214)	0.077(0.199)
	Family stratum status		
	Father's vocation: (reference category: peasant)		
	Governmental or institutional administrator	–0.186(0.323)	1.123***(0.308)
	Enterprise administrator	–0.424(0.324)	0.999**(0.326)
	Ordinary employee/service person/ industrial worker	–0.589*(0.300)	0.643*(0.287)
	Freelancer	–0.082(0.340)	0.570(0.353)
	Specialized technician/physician/ teacher	–0.825*(0.374)	0.580(0.344)
	Military person	–1.680(1.019)	1.374*(0.657)
	Unemployed, laid-off, or without work	–0.713(0.451)	0.928*(0.393)
	Retiree	0.675(0.449)	0.012(0.554)
	Mother's vocation (reference category: peasant)		
	Governmental or institutional administrator	0.253(0.343)	–0.355(0.331)
	Enterprise administrator	0.869*(0.370)	0.005(0.328)
	Ordinary employee/service person/ industrial worker	0.175(0.300)	–0.598*(0.283)
	Freelancer	0.104(0.367)	–0.792*(0.327)
	Specialized technician/physician/ teacher	–0.020(0.360)	–0.699*(0.335)
	Military person	22.526(1.699)	–21.372(2.240)
	Unemployed, laid-off, or without work	0.057(0.331)	–0.750**(0.320)
	Retiree	–0.122(0.360)	–0.694*(0.337)
	Family financial circumstances: Very good (reference category: very poor)	0.459(0.509)	1.547**(0.532)
	Fairly good	–0.045(0.396)	0.670(0.434)
	Average	–0.319(0.403)	0.486(0.419)
	Fairly poor	–0.624(0.403)	0.416(0.438)

		Model 2: Male	Model 3: Female
Achieved (self-induced) factor	Human capital		
	Academic performance: Excellent (reference category: fairly poor)	0.053(0.385)	–0.519(0.384)
	Good	0.113(0.182)	–0.317(0.173)
	Average	0.033(0.122)	–0.240*(0.117)
	Foreign language level: Level six (reference category: level four)	0.169(0.147)	0.204(0.137)
	Professional level four	0.146(0.446)	0.017(0.331)
	Professional level eight	1.575*(0.747)	1.717***(0.558)
	TOEFL/GRE/GMAT	–0.047(0.359)	0.085(0.396)
	Party member (reference category: not Party member)	0.513**(0.152)	0.342*(0.148)
	Student cadre (reference category: not student cadre)	0.094(0.144)	0.160(0.134)
	Specialization: Male-friendly specialization (reference category: specialization friendly to both genders)	0.483**(0.143)	0.150(0.292)
$\times^{2a}$		101.834	112.585
Degree of freedom		31	31
Quantity		1,056	1,393

* $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

registrations were more likely than male students with rural household registration to obtain opportunities for signing agreements, and the odds for them was 1.8 times that for male students with rural household registrations.

In terms of human capital, male students were not affected by either study performance or the student cadre factor, but were significantly affected by the foreign language level and Party membership factors. The likelihood of obtaining agreement-signing opportunities for male students with level six, professional level four, and TOEFL/GRE/GMAT foreign language levels was not significantly different from that for male students with only level four foreign language levels. However, male students with level eight foreign language abilities were more likely than male students with only level four foreign language abilities to obtain agreement-signing opportunities.

For male students who were Party members, the odds for obtaining agreement-signing opportunities were 1.7 times that for male students who were not Party members. This shows that male students who have Party membership are more likely

than non-Party member male students to obtain agreement-signing opportunities. In terms of the effect of specialization, male students who studied men-friendly science and engineering specializations were more likely to obtain agreement-signing opportunities than male students in other specializations, the opportunity odds among them being 1.6 times that of students in other specializations.

In terms of family, father's vocation and mother's vocation both had significant effects. This was manifested as male students whose fathers were ordinary employees/service persons/industrial workers or specialized technicians/physicians/teachers being less likely than male students whose fathers were peasants to obtain opportunities for signing agreements, the opportunity odds among them being 55.5 percent and 43.8 percent, respectively, of that for students whose fathers were peasants. This circumstance would seem to run against common sense, and a possible reason for this is that more male students whose fathers are employees/service persons/industrial workers or specialized technicians/physicians/teachers pursue advanced studies rather than seek employment. This may give male students from the rural areas an advantage in terms of job seeking.

Where mother's occupation is concerned, there was a significant difference only between enterprise administrators and peasants; the difference between peasants and other vocations was not significant. Male students whose mothers were enterprise administrators were more likely than those whose mothers were peasants to obtain agreement-signing opportunities, the odds for them being 2.4 times that for students whose mothers were peasants. Worth noting is the fact that family financial circumstances had no significant effects on job seeking.

Second, if we look at the circumstances of women alone, household registration had no significant effect. However, academic performance did have a significant effect, which was manifested as women with average performances being, in fact, less likely than women with fairly poor performances to obtain agreements, their odds of agreement being 80 percent that for women with fairly poor study performances. This may be because academic performance may not be of much help to job-seeking women. Many women do several internships or concurrent jobs while they study and thereby accumulate experience, which has a positive effect on job seeking even if their academic performances are less than ideal. This, of course, requires deeper investigation.

English language levels still played a significant role. Female students with professional level eight English proficiency had a far higher probability than female students with mere level four English to obtain opportunities for signing agreements, their opportunity odds being 5.6 times that of female students with level four English. Student cadre status had no significant effect on signing agreements. However, female students who were Party members were more likely than non-Party member female students to obtain agreement-signing opportunities, their opportunity odds being 1.4 times that of female students who were not Party members. Specialization had no significant effect for female students. Whether

female students learned men-friendly specializations or other specializations made little difference where agreement-signing opportunities were concerned.

Family had a very significant effect. Female students whose fathers were governmental or institutional administrators and enterprise administrators had a higher probability than female students whose fathers were peasants of obtaining opportunities for signing agreements. Among the former, the opportunity odds of female students whose fathers were governmental or institutional administrators was 3.1 times that of those whose fathers were peasants, that of female students whose fathers were enterprise administrators was 2.7 times that of females students whose fathers were peasants, and that of female students whose fathers were ordinary employees/service persons/industrial workers was 1.9 times that of female students whose fathers were peasants. Mother's occupation also had a significant effect where female students were concerned. Those whose mothers were freelancers and unemployed, laid-off, or without work were less likely than those whose mothers were currently peasants to get opportunities to sign agreements. However, female students whose families were in very good financial circumstances were far more likely than females students from families with very poor financial circumstances to obtain opportunities for signing agreements, their opportunity odds being 4.7 times that of female students from families with very poor financial circumstances.

Third, comparisons indicate that gender, in itself, is a variable that significantly affects the signing of agreements. Student cadre status had no significant effect on agreement signing by either gender. Academic performance had only a slight effect on female students and was manifested conversely as a lower rate of agreement signing among female students with average academic performances. In the model as a whole, however, the effect of academic performance was not significant. Household registration, foreign language level, Party membership, specialization, and family background all affected the male and female genders in different ways.

Their effects were as follows: (1) The effect of household registration was significant for male students, but insignificant for female students. This means that male students with urban registrations were more likely than male students with rural household registrations to obtain agreements, whereas among female students, the likelihood of obtaining agreements differed little whether or not they had urban or rural household registrations. (2) In terms of level of foreign languages, male and female students with level professional eight proficiency were more likely to obtain agreements than male and female students with only level four proficiency. However, if a female student had level professional eight foreign language proficiency, she enjoyed a more significant advantage. This was manifested as the agreement odds of female students with professional level eight proficiency being 5.6 times that of female students with level four proficiency, but the agreement odds of male students with a professional level eight proficiency being only 4.8 times that of male students with level four proficiency. (3) Male students enjoyed a greater ad-

vantage in terms of Party membership. The agreement odds among Party member male students was 1.7 times that among non-Party member male students, and the agreement odds among Party member female students was 1.4 times that among non-Party member female students. (4) In terms of specialization, male students who had studied men-friendly specializations were significantly more likely to sign agreements than male student who pursued other specializations, but the likelihood of female students who had studied men-friendly specializations to sign agreements differed little from that of female student who studied other specializations. (5) In terms of family, the effect of family on women was significantly greater than on men. This was manifested as family finances having no significant effect on men but a quite significant effect on women. Further, father's and mother's vocations also had a greater effect on women. This may mean that women who wish to find a job rely on their parents' social connections rather than on human capital or specialization.

In sum, ascribed factors and achieved factor had different effects on the two genders. Men were affected mainly by urban-rural registrations and specializations, whereas women were affected mainly by family background. Party membership and foreign language level affected both men and women, but Party membership had a greater effect on men, whereas level of foreign language had a greater effect on women.

Theoretical Discussion

The various discoveries described above are very enlightening, and there are many questions to be discussed. Here, we will only discuss such aspects as gender segregation in professions, the overlapping of gender and multiple inequalities, and the agency of women.

First, there may be a close connection between the gender segregation of specializations in China's higher education and gender segregation of vocations. Many studies in recent years show that vocational gender segregation does exist in China. Using survey data from seven provinces and eleven cities, Cai He and Wu Xiaoping analyzed the extent of gender segregation in forty-four to fifty-one vocations between 1985 and 2004. They drew the conclusions that the extent of gender segregation had risen somewhat, the types of vocation with gender segregation had increased somewhat, the number of vocations that segregated against women was far greater than those segregated against men, the extent of gender segregation against women was greater in white-collar vocations than in blue-collar vocations, segregation against women was greater in extrainstitutional units than in institutional units, and the extent of vocational gender segregation was higher in the coastal provinces than in inland provinces.[11]

Li Chunling, analyzing population census survey data taken during four years after the reform and opening up, found that the level of vocational gender segregation was gradually falling and that women were progressively expanding toward

the domain of white-collar vocations, whereas the state of gender segregation was being maintained and still existed in the blue-collar and semi-white-collar vocations.[12] Wu Yuxiao and Wu Xiaogang, using population census figures, conducted a comparative analysis of vocational gender segregation between 1982 and 2000 and drew the conclusion that vocational gender segregation was quite substantial. The vocational gender segregation index D in 2000 was 0.407, indicating that more than 40 percent of employed men or women needed to change their jobs to achieve vocational gender equality.

Meanwhile, the extent of gender segregation had increased somewhat in the 1980s but showed a tendency to decrease in the 1990s.[13] Worth noting is the fact that the degree of segregation against women is higher in white-collar vocations than in blue-collar vocations. This is mainly due to the income effect that becomes evident in gender segregation. Vocations that provide higher incomes, better social guarantees, and favorable prospects for development are held by men, whereas women can hardly get into them. Our research indicates that there were few women to start with in men-friendly-type specializations, and even if they do study men-friendly specializations, they are still subject to rejection when they look for jobs. That is to say, in terms of specialization, the likelihood of signing job agreements is substantially higher in male students who have studied men-friendly specializations compared with those who have studied other specializations, but the likelihood for female students who have studied men-friendly specializations is not much different from that for female students who have studied other specializations, meaning that female students have difficulty finding jobs regardless of their specializations background.

This shows that, although higher education has turned out somewhat more women, they are still being segregated out of male-dominated vocations by the screening processes of specialization and vocational venues. One may well say that vocational gender segregation is a result of the combined effects of educational inequality and labor market discrimination, a result of the accumulation of impediments that women face when they seek jobs. This accumulation of factors relegates women to an inferior position in the vocational pecking order.

Second, there is no question but that a significant overlapping of gender, class, and urban-rural inequalities exists in Chinese society. Gender, as an ascribed factor, affects student job seeking, it also interacts with other ascribed factors such as the urban-rural and family stratum statuses which deepen gender segregation in the prelabor market, and thereby forms multiple and crosscutting gender statuses. Our research has found that urban men get the highest percentage of agreement-signing opportunities, that is, 47.1 percent, after which come rural men with 35.7 percent. Only then come urban women, with 32.2 percent, and lastly, rural women, with 26.5 percent. Logistic regression shows that the likelihood of obtaining agreement-signing opportunities is very low both for urban women and rural women. This indicates that gender and urban-rural provenance act together to aggravate gender segregation in the prelabor market.

Our research has also found that family stratum status has little effect on men

and that even family economic status has no effect on men in terms of obtaining agreement-signing opportunities. Conversely, family stratum status has a greater effect on women; their job seeking is hugely affected by their parents' vocations, but also to a large extent affected by family economic conditions. This shows that, to a certain extent, family background interacts with the gender factor to aggravate gender segregation in the job-seeking process.

Third, regarding the initiative and achieved status of women, there is no question that the entry of women into higher education has brought them more possibilities for vocational advances. The results of this research indicate that English language achievement and Party membership capital are factors that help female students obtain agreement-signing opportunities. However, Party membership capital has a greater promotional effect for men than for women, whereas English language achievement has a greater promotional effect for women than for men. English language achievement and becoming a Party member do help female students to obtain agreement-signing opportunities. This furnishes women with the possibility of giving play to their own initiative. On the other hand, this may imply the possibilities available in one type of employer—the transnational corporation. We found in the course of interviews that transnational corporations do not subject talented persons to any obvious gender discrimination, and where persons with both college educations and excellent foreign language capabilities are concerned, women are able to exercise their due advantages. This is merely an assumption that needs further study. However, this may mean that the human capital advantages of women will have opportunities to manifest themselves against the background of globalization.

Conclusions

This study has found that gender segregations already exist among male and female college students before they enter the labor market. These segregations are manifested as the different effects of ascribed factors and achieved factors on both genders. Male students are influenced more by urban-rural differences and specializations, whereas female students are affected mainly by family backgrounds. Communist Party membership and foreign language proficiency affect both men and women, but Party membership has a greater influence on successful job acquisition among men, whereas foreign language proficiency has a greater effect on successful job seeking among women. This finding means that our reflections on, and countermeasures against, gender inequality in the market should start with, and go more deeply into, the field of education. In his studies on gender in domains of science, Xie Yu has found that gender disparities constantly accumulate during lifecycles and manifest themselves at different time points (Xie and Shauman 2005). In today's China, special gender divisions are manifested in the process of college students entering the labor market, and the various divisions in higher education that exists as a premarket factor act upon gender segregation in the labor markets of the future.

Notes

1. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital,* trans. Guo Dali and Wang Yanan (Shanghai: Shanghai Joint Publishing Company, 2009).

2. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time,* trans. Feng Gang and Liu Yang (Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Publishing House, 2007).

3. For 2007 figures, see Development and Planning Department of the Ministry of Education, comp., *China Education Yearbook* (Beijing: People's Education Press, 2007), 5. For other figures, see Ma Wanhua, "Development and Involvement: Problems of Females in Higher Education," in *Half a Century of Women's Development: Collection of Theses from the Chinese Women's Fifty Years Theoretical Symposium,* ed. Li Qiufang, 246–55 (Beijing: Contemporary China Press, 2001).

4. See "210,000 Graduates in Peking Seek Rice Bowls This Year," *Jinghua Times,* November 26, 2008.

5. Tan Lin; Li Junfeng; and Wang Jing, "Education Investment and Returns: Gender Disparities and the Reasons for Such Disparities," in *Social Status of Chinese Women at the Turn of the Century,* ed. Jiang Yongping, 176–93 (Beijing: Contemporary China Press).

6. Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, *The American Occupational Structure* (New York: Wiley, 1976).

7. Lin Nan, "Social Networks and Status Attainment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 25 (1999): 467–87.

8. See Xie Yong and Zhao Yapu, "An Empirical Study on Human Capital, Social Capital and College Student Employment: On the Cases of a Number of Higher Education Institutions in Nanjing Municipality," *South China Population,* no. 3 (2009): 49–55; Chen Chengwen and Tan Rihui, "The Relationship Between Human Capital and College Student Employment: An Empirical Study Based on College Graduates of 2003 and 2004," *Higher Education Press* [sic], no. 6 (2004): 31–35; Chen Haiping, "Human Capital, Social Capital and College Graduate Employment: A Study on the Factors That Influence College Graduate Employment," *Youth Research,* no. 11 (2005): 8–15.

9. Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

10. About this method of classification, see Liu Yunshan and Wang Zhiming on the classification of specializations in *Higher Education Research,* no. 2 (2008), 49–61. Specializations are classified as women-friendly specializations (advertizing, major languages, and minor languages), bi-gender-friendly specializations (psychology, biology, psychological management, English language, Chinese language, history, sociology, international relations, economics, administration, jurisprudence), and men-friendly specializations (science, engineering).

11. Cai He and Wu Xiaoping, "Social Changes and the Gender Inequalities of Employment," *Management World,* no. 9 (2002): 71–77.

12. Li Chunling, "Current State of Occupational Gender Segregation in China and Changing Tendencies," *Jiangsu Social Sciences,* no. 3 (2009): 9–16.

13. Wu Yuxiao and Wu Xiaohua, "Studies on Gender Segregation in Non-Agricultural Vocations 1982–2000," *Society,* no. 5 (2008): 128–152.

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Xie, Yu, and Kimberlee A. Shauman. 2005. *Women in Science: Career Processes and Outcomes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.