ASIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE U.S. LABOR MARKET: A COMPARISON OF MIGRANT AND NONMIGRANT KOREANS

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Abstract

This paper examines the determinants of labor force participation for Asian immigrant women in the United States by comparing the Korean immigrant women with other Asian immigrant women in the United States and also with the nonmigrant women in South Korea. The results from the analysis using the U.S. and South Korean data sets show that migrant and nonmigrant women have different patterns of labor force participation, suggesting that the social, economic, and contextual factors that surround a woman have a significant influence on her decision to work in the labor market. The similarities and differences among Asian immigrant groups highlight the influence of the U.S. institutions and the adaptation of each immigrant group. Finally, the results show that factors unique to the immigrant's experiences, such as citizenship, length of stay in the U.S., and ethnic community, explain a great part of the immigrant women's labor force participation.

Keywords: female labor force participation, Asian immigrants, immigrant women, South Korea.

This paper examines the determinants of labor force participation for Asian immigrant women in the United States. For a thorough analysis of the mechanism affecting these women's choices and constraints, I have employed an analytic strategy that stems from a critical review of the theory and the literature. This strategy has two features. First, unlike many studies in microeconomics, this paper looks at both individual characteristics and contextual factors that reflect the unique legal, economic, and cultural situations minorities typically experience. Studies have recognized the importance of immigration mechanisms and assimilation processes that determine future success of the immigrants and ethnic minorities in the U.S. labor market (Yoon, 1997). This study tests the relevance of the human capital theory by introducing other social and institutional factors that shape immigrant and minority families' situations.

The second feature of the strategy is to compare the Korean immigrant women with the women in South Korea. In most studies so far, Asian immigrant women have been disaggregated into several ethnic groups, e.g. Chinese immigrants, Japanese immigrants, and Korean immigrants, and compared to one another and/or to white women (Duleep and Sanders, 1993; Stier, 1991; Wong and Hirschman, 1983; also see Stier and Tienda, 1992, for a study of Hispanic immigrants). These studies have found an unexplained, residual distinctiveness either in Asian immigrants as a whole or between each ethnic subgroup. Many attribute these group differences to culture. They were not able to control for any unobserved cultural differences that they argue are at work. For a thorough investigation of the contexts that shape women's decision to participate in the labor force, one needs to look at the other part of the reference, i.e. the women in the source country.

Many studies of women in South Korea have reported that the microeconomic model of human capital theory fails to explain the employment behavior of Korean women, who tend to be affected by strong non-market forces such as gender role ideology and sex discrimination (Lee, 1997; Lee, 2002; Park, 2002). In other studies, Asian immigrants have been depicted as culturally unique, and this ethnic distinctiveness has been regarded as the key factor that distinguishes them from other minority groups in the United States, and also among each ethnic subgroup, in explaining their socioeconomic achievements (Hirschman and Wong, 1986; Nee and Wong, 1985; Sanders and Nee, 1996). Considering that strong non-market forces constitute the cultural distinctiveness of immigrant Korean families, the analysis in this paper includes a comparison of Korean immigrant women in the United States and nonmigrant women in South Korea, as Gurak and Kritz (1996) did in their comparison of Dominican immigrants in New York City and women residing in the Dominican Republic. The conventional strategy of comparing Korean immigrants with other immigrant groups (Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese immigrants in the United States) is also employed to supplement my strategy.

Labor Force Participation of Women in the United States and South Korea

Both in the United States and in South Korea, and also in many other industrialized countries, one of the most remarkable trends in the labor markets during the past few decades has been the increase in labor force participation of women. Although Koreans initially lagged behind Americans, women in both countries continued

to increase their involvement in the market work for several decades. Over time, increasingly more women, married or not, have worked in the labor market, both in the United States and South Korea, although the participation rate has been at a higher level in the United States than in South Korea.

Despite the similarity in the trend of net participation rates in the two countries, the processes that generated the increase differ significantly. Whereas the increase of American women in the labor market was largely due to the effect of women's human capital on their increased market opportunities (Cohen and Bianchi, 1999), many Korean women were pulled into the market as a source of cheap labor during the period of rapid economic growth. In the United States, the expansion of education to women brought them opportunities in the labor market. With the increase in educational attainment of women, they began to fill many occupations that were traditionally not open to women due to employer's discrimination and employee's lack of skill. The civil rights movements of the 1960s and the legal changes of anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunities encouraged more women to pursue a career in the labor market. For women with high levels of education, the "pull" factors of the labor market were salient during the past few decades, which shows a trend opposite to the traditional pattern before the 1960s when female labor was limited to low-income families.

A different type of "pull" factor was at work in South Korea during the 1970s and 1980s. Korea's policy of industrialization was characterized by cheap labor in labor-intensive manufacturing industries. To maintain cheap manpower on a massive scale, occupational segregation, sex discrimination and a segmented labor market, together with oppressive labor politics, were crucial in Korea's economic growth. Women worked in

low-paying and low-status jobs, such as a seamstress, typist, or assembly worker in a manufacturing factory. Even when a woman worked at the same job as a man, she typically earned less, exerted less authority in the workplace, and had less chance of promotion than a male colleague. Moreover, a strong ideology of female domesticity and Confucian gender roles discouraged women to voice their right to equal opportunities and equal treatment.

Empirical studies have confirmed the historical explanation described here. Using a series of cross-sectional data from the years 1978 to 1998, Cohen and Bianchi (1999) found that the effect of American women's education on the labor supply has increased over time, while the effect of the family resources has diminished steadily. In contrast, Lee (1997), using a 1970 sample of South Koreans, reported that women with a higher level of education were less likely to work, while women with a husband with lower educational attainments were more likely to work (Lee, 1997). More recent Korean data show a changing trend since the 1990s. Yang (1995) found that the effect of a woman's own education and the earnings potential on the probability of being in a labor force increased between the years of 1985 and 1992. Lee (2002), using a 2001 sample, showed a similar change, where the negative effect of education on the probability of labor force participation almost disappeared, or was replaced by a positive effect, especially among recent college graduates.

Korean Immigrant Women in the U.S. Labor Market

Considering the two countries' distinct experiences of female labor, Korean women residing in the United States appear to be situated in a contradictory position. Are Korean women in the U.S. labor market in a situation similar to South Korean women or to American women in general? Are they situated on the continuum between non-Hispanic, white American women on one end, and South Korean women on the other, or do they face a unique situation as a minority group in the United States?

Asian immigrant women, including Korean immigrants, are no less likely to participate in the labor market than white women. In 1980, 61% of married Korean immigrants were in the labor force (Duleep and Sanders, 1993), even higher than non-Hispanic white immigrants (51%) and the overall white population (52%). The sample used in this paper also shows that almost 58.6% of Korean immigrants were in the labor force in 2000 (See Table 2). The labor force participation rates of Korean immigrants have been stable and at a high level throughout the three decades, compared to the South Koreans. Considering that the Korean immigration history is relatively short, one might conjecture that the labor market situation in the United States affects the decisions and constraints of immigrant and minority women so strongly that the female labor of immigrants and minority groups is simply not different from that of nonimmigrant white women.

However, the first look at the labor force participation rates of Korean immigrants can be misleading. Several considerations about demographic characteristics would lead to a contradictory prediction about their labor force participation. Asian immigrants in general, including Koreans, are more likely to have young children, have relatively low divorce and separation rates, and also are more likely to be recent immigrants (Duleep

and Sanders, 1993). These facts might lead one to conclude that Asian immigrant women would have lower labor force participation rates than nonimmigrant white women, which is not the case.

This paradox reflects the limitation of the supply side explanation. Characteristics of individual woman do not fully explain how one's decisions and constraints regarding market work are shaped by institutional and structural circumstances. To understand how immigrant and minority women participate in the labor market, one needs to examine the institutions that surround individuals: specifically, the family and the labor market. The context of her family relationship can affect an immigrant woman in a way similar to how it would in her country of origin. Being relatively new immigrants, Asian immigrants are known to preserve their distinct cultural heritage. One would expect that the strong Confucian ideology about familial responsibility and gender roles affects the labor force participation of Korean women in a similar way to South Koreans. Studies have reported that rigid gender norms and a sexual division of labor exist among Korean immigrant families (Kim and Hurh, 1988; Lim, 1997; Min, 1992, 1998). This persistent gender inequality and family conflict undermines the assimilation perspective, which predicts that the immigrant families will gradually move toward greater gender equality and conform to the American mainstream form of family life.

However, there is also a considerable discontinuity between the premigration situation and immigrant adaptation among Asian immigrants. Asian immigrant women in the United States are situated in the intersecting categories of the U.S. labor market stratification. They tend to experience a new situation where their labor market opportunities are less determined by the segmented labor market and low-wage jobs,

which are characteristic of the Korean labor market, than by the level of the individual human capital. While gender discrimination and segregation is less severe in the U.S. labor market than in South Korea, these immigrant women are likely to confront a new situation where they are treated as members of an ethnic minority (Woo, 1985). Even without overt racial discrimination, the human capital brought from South Korea may not be easily recognized in the American labor market, and the transferability of the human capital can be a new barrier to the success in the U.S. labor market (Duleep and Sanders, 1993). Lack of English language skills and insufficient knowledge about the American work environment also limit the employment opportunities of Korean immigrant women.

A remarkable consequence of the institutional settings surrounding the Korean immigrants is the prevalence of self-employment. Self-employment is one consequence of limited employment opportunities in the labor market and the role of family and kin networks as the main social organization of immigrant and minority economic activities (Sanders and Nee, 1996). Many Korean immigrant women are business partners of their husbands, running a small business or employed as family workers. The prevalence of self-employment and small entrepreneurship among Korean immigrants suggests that the high labor force participation rates do not necessarily mean that there is a mechanism that shapes Korean immigrant women's labor force participation in a way similar to the standard American pattern. Unique conditions of Korean immigrant families and the structure of their labor market opportunities call for a careful examination of the factors contributing to the economic activities of Korean immigrants. The two groups of Korean women situated in the two different settings, South Korea and the United States, may show different patterns in their decision to work, undermining the argument that the

immigrant group's unexplained uniqueness is mostly due to the alleged baggage of traditional culture that they brought with them from the origin country.[1]

Theories and Hypotheses

A classic theory of female labor force supply stems from human capital theory. The theory is characterized by the two opposite forces that determine a woman's decision on whether she will participate in market work or engage in nonmarket activities including housework and leisure. On the one hand, an increase in her income from nonlabor sources, i.e. earnings from other family members such as her husband or unearned income such as dividends and Social Security, decreases the likelihood of her labor force participation because the nonlabor income raises the value of nonmarket activities. When her market wage rate increases, on the other hand, the likelihood of market work increases because the wage raises the relative cost of nonmarket activities. From the economic theory of labor supply, we expect that women who have higher incomes from other family members are less likely to be in the labor force and that educated women are more likely to be in the labor force. Also I predict that the positive effect of human capital is stronger for the immigrants in the United States than for the women residing in South Korea.

Considerations of family situations and cultural backgrounds are needed for a more thorough analysis. Married women are likely to take more responsibilities for household work. Both in the United States and South Korea, there exists a sexual division

[1] The issue of selective migration is an important, confounding factor, but it is not addressed in this paper. A proper treatment of this issue would require a careful design of either a longitudinal study or a quasi-experimental study (or both), which are not easily achieved in studying international migration.

of labor within the household, and women tend to work longer hours on household work even when women have to work outside the household. Changing economic situations and social norms during the past few decades have reduced the unequal division of labor within households to some extent, particularly in the United States, but a married life still seems to distract women from market work and weakens their commitment to a career, and we can expect that married women are less likely to be in the labor force.

The addition of a young child to the family increases the value of time spent at home taking care of the child and raises the reservation wage of the mother. When her reservation wage exceeds the market wage, she will leave the labor force. The influence of children is expected to be more salient when the responsibility of childbearing and child care is imposed more on the mothers than on anyone else in the family. Under rigid gender roles and a sexual division of labor within the family, the negative effect of the presence of young children would be greater. Substitutability of child care and housework, by contrast, would have an opposite effect on the female labor force participation. When there are some adults in the household, other than the parents, who may be available for child care, the likelihood of the mother's labor force participation increases. Children old enough to assist with household chores and to care for the younger siblings may have a similar role. It is known that mothers with extended family networks are more likely to use their relatives as caregivers and to participate in the labor force.

Individual and family characteristics are not sufficient in explaining the labor force participation of women. First of all, one should consider the other side of the issue, the *demand* side. As the above discussion of the difference between the U.S. and Korean

experiences of increased female labor suggested, the demand for female labor in the market allows the individuals to seek employment and constrains the type of workers to be employed. The U.S. and Korean women are expected to respond differently to the demand for female labor. Particularly for immigrants, contextual factors matter. Being a U.S. citizen opens the legal eligibility for employment in many formal sectors. On the contrary, lack of citizenship, or even undocumented residence, may limit the employment opportunities to ethnic enclaves and the informal economy. Thus I predict that women with citizenship are more likely to be in the labor force.

Another important factor that influences immigrants' and minorities' opportunities in the labor market is the extent to which they are exposed, or assimilated, to American institutions and culture. Studies have documented that the socioeconomic attainment of Asian immigrants is crucially dependent upon whether the person was born in a foreign country and emigrated to the United States, or was born and grew up in the United States (Wong and Hirschman, 1983; Iceland, 1999). For the immigrants who were educated in the country of origin, their educational and vocational skills may not be recognized as easily as in their home country. They might also experience a language barrier in the United States, as well as differences in culture and customs that are valued in American workplaces. From this observation, a hypothesis follows that women who immigrated to the United States earlier are more likely to be in the labor force than those who immigrated more recently.

Asian immigrants have formed ethnically concentrated areas, for example, Chinatown in San Francisco and Koreatown in Los Angeles, where they organized many types of dense networks, including business, religious, and social organizations. These

ethnic communities provide not only employment opportunities but also information and connections that can help immigrants to get a job. Urban ethnic areas are also heavily concentrated with small business such as grocery stores, dry cleaners, and restaurants. Ethnic entrepreneurs tend to mobilize family labor, usually the business owner's wife and female relatives. We can thus predict that immigrant women who reside in the ethnically concentrated areas are more likely to be in the labor force.

Data and Methods

The data for this paper come from two different sources. First, the data for the South Korean population come from the 6th wave of the Korean Household Panel Study (KHPS), a nationally representative sample of 2,468 households and 5,875 individuals, collected by Daewoo Economics Research Institute in 1998. This data set includes rich information on each household's financial and demographic situations, which can be matched to individual characteristics. Among the 5,875 individuals, women aged 23 to 64 were selected. Among them I excluded those who were in agriculture, in the armed forces, or in school. The number of observations analyzed in this paper is 2,272.

The U.S. data come from the 1% sample of the Public Use Microdata 2000 Census. Since each Asian immigrant group constitutes a relatively small proportion of the national population, any data set other than the decennial census is not appropriate in order to get the sufficient sample size. Applying the same sample selection criteria as in the South Korean sample, the final size of the sample is 2,861 for Korean immigrants,

4,978 for Chinese immigrants, 1,010 for Japanese immigrants, and 2,620 for Vietnamese immigrants. All Hispanic respondents were excluded from the sample.

Table 1 lists the definition of variables. All variables used here were defined in a consistent way to ensure the comparability between the Korean and American data sets. Since the dependent variable, labor force participation, is a dichotomous variable, logistic regression was used. Age and unemployment rates are entered in the regression equation as control variables.

(Table 1 about here)

Results

Descriptive statistics of variables are summarized in Table 2. The labor force participation rate for women residing in South Korea is substantially lower (37.2%) than for the immigrants in the United States. South Koreans and Korean immigrants, two groups that allegedly share common roots, show a considerable difference in the labor force participation rates. Korean immigrants' participation rate is closer to that of other Asian immigrants. Other family income shows little variation among the immigrant groups. Educational attainment of South Korean women is considerably lower than the immigrants'. South Koreans in my sample are mostly married with spouse present (86.4%), whereas a relatively smaller proportion of Vietnamese immigrants are in that category (65.8%). This reflects that the Vietnamese are relatively recent immigrants, with the mean years in the United States (14.9 years) being shorter than other Asian

immigrants' (e.g., 17.9 years for Korean immigrants). The Vietnamese immigrants also have the highest percentage of the youngest group (age 23-34, 32.2%). South Koreans and the Vietnamese immigrants again share some common characteristics in terms of the number of young children (.29 for South Koreans and .25 for Vietnamese) and family size (3.76 and 3.81). Japanese immigrants have the smallest percentage of citizens (28.5%) among the four groups of immigrants.

(Table 2 about here)

Table 3 presents the parameter estimates of the logistic regression coefficients predicting the labor force participation of women in South Korea, using the KHPS data, and the four immigrant groups, using the US Census data. The parameters were estimated separately for the five groups and the results are presented in separate columns of the table. The interpretation is in the order of the explanatory variables as opposed to the order of sample groups. First, as human capital theory predicts, other family income has negative effects throughout all the samples except for the Vietnamese. For the Vietnamese, women with a higher family income are almost equally likely to be in the labor force as women with a lower income. Considering that the Vietnamese immigrant families have a lower mean and a lower standard deviation on income than other Asian immigrants do (see Table 2), the Vietnamese families are more likely to be under financial burdens than other groups are. They are also more likely to be recent immigrants, who might have difficulties in adapting to the new environment. The need of family might push the Vietnamese immigrant women into the labor force at the same rate

regardless of the level of the family income. Among the immigrant groups, Japanese immigrant women are the most likely to be influenced by the material resources within the family. Japanese immigrants also have the widest dispersion of family income (see Table 2, standard deviation of other family income). For both migrant and nonmigrant Koreans, the effect of other family income is negative and significant at the .001 level.

(Table 3 about here)

Turning to the effect of education as a proxy for the potential wages for women, the positive effects are shown in all four groups. However, there are differences across the groups in how education influences women's decisions to work. The differences between the migrant and nonmigrant Koreans in two countries are clear, while there are some similarities among the immigrant groups, especially between Korean immigrants and Vietnamese immigrants. As the literature review suggested, the effect of human capital on South Korean women's employment is weak and limited to the most highly educated women, which constitute only 8.7% of the sample (Table 2, percent of college graduate). In other words, the likelihood of being in the labor force is almost the same among the women without college degree, controlling for other factors. The weak effect of education for South Koreans is contrasted with the strong effect of education for Korean immigrants. Surprisingly, the Chinese immigrants show a similar pattern to the South Korean women in terms of the education variables. The difference within Koreans between the migrant and nonmigrant population, together with the unexpected similarities between nonmigrant Korean and migrant Chinese, suggests that the social

contexts matter more than the ancestry in explaining the women's labor force participation.

Marital status shows the expected effects on the labor force participation for all four groups. Compared to single women, married women with spouse present are less likely to be in the labor force. However, the consequence of being divorced, separated, or widowed is considerably smaller for Japanese immigrants. Japanese immigrant women who are divorced, separated, or widowed are as likely to be in the labor force as the single women who are never married. In fact, divorce, separation, and widowhood are rarer events for Japanese immigrant women than for other immigrants, as we can see in Table 2. Interestingly, for South Koreans who demonstrate much lower rates of divorce, separation, widowhood, the negative effect of "other" marital status is not weaker than for the Asian immigrants in the United States.

Consistent with the findings in the literature and the hypothesis in this paper, the presence of young children in the family reduces the likelihood of a woman being in the labor force. Family size, on the other hand, has no effect on women's decisions to work. Bigger household can have multiple effects that may confound one another. Additional members in a household, for example grandparents, can provide help in dealing with the housework and allow women to seek employment. This also means adding people that need to be supported by women's supplementary earnings from the employment. But if these are young people, they can also bring additional earnings to the household, reducing the need for the women to work outside the household.

I argued above that the demand for cheap female labor was the driving force for the female inflow into the Korean labor market. The data supports this argument. The

higher the rates of female labor force participation are in an area, the more likely a woman residing in this area is to be in the labor force in South Korea, but not in the United States except for the Chinese immigrants. This contrasts with the general trend of increasing opportunities for women in the United States. Indeed, we have found that the effect of human capital on women's employment is weaker in South Korea than in the United States, even when we limit our attention to the Koreans in two countries.

Turning to the variables on the immigrants' conditions and experiences, we see the significant positive effect of being a citizen across the immigrant groups. As we hypothesized, a citizen has a better chance of being employed and higher incentives to seek employment given that the job rewards are higher for a citizen than a non-citizen immigrant. Years in the United States show positive effects on the likelihood of immigrant woman being in the labor force, but an important exception is found for the Vietnamese immigrant women. Contrary to what the assimilation perspective would predict, Vietnamese immigrants do not increase their commitment to the market work over time as they experience the American life. Their rate of labor force participation is on average already at a high level (61.4%). Although the cross-sectional data do not show the longitudinal dynamics over time, the finding from this sample corresponds to the persistent disadvantages of Vietnamese immigrant families that Kibria (1993) reported.

The effects of immigrant concentration, as measured by the percentage of coethnic immigrants in the local population, are not consistent across the immigrant groups. Only for Japanese immigrants the coefficient estimate has the predicted sign. For them, residing in an area with higher percentage of Japanese immigrants increases the likelihood of being in the labor force. However, for Chinese and Vietnamese immigrant

women, coethnic population decreases their labor force participation rates, contrary to the hypothesis. Korean immigrants also have a negative effect of immigrant population, but the estimate is not significant at the 5% level. This result suggests that the dense concentration of coethnic immigrants can result in two opposite situations. On one hand, it can provide employment opportunities within the enclave economy, particularly for female immigrants who might be willing to work in the informal sector, such as domestic care work or piecemeal homework, in order to combine paid employment and own family responsibilities. The concentration of immigrants, on the other hand, may result in a crowding of job applicants. This can be the case when the female immigrants have a limited access to the employment outside the ethnic community. In addition, immigrants who have frequent contacts and interactions with other immigrants who share the same cultural backgrounds may be more likely to maintain the traditional norms about a gender division of labor and gender roles.

Discussion

The results from the data analysis correspond to the big picture of the trend in South Korea and the United States regarding a few points. First, migrant and nonmigrant women show different patterns of labor force participation, even when we control for the ancestry by comparing the Korean women in the two countries. This implies that the social, institutional, and contextual factors that surround a woman have a significant influence on her decision to work. Demand for female labor pulls South Korean women

into the labor market, whereas the Korean immigrant women to the United States respond to the increasing returns to their human capital.

Second, substantial differences among immigrant groups suggest that the influence of the U.S. institutions and the adaptation of each immigrant group vary, which might not be attributed solely to the cultural heritages the immigrants brought from their origin countries. Immigrants' experiences in the new social environment and the distance from the origin countries make it almost impossible for one immigrant group to maintain the culture as it is in the origin country. Moreover, diverse experiences of each immigrant according to class, gender, and citizenship render it problematic to presuppose a unique culture for an immigrant group that is defined in a racialized term. One needs to look at carefully the history of immigration, social context of immigrant's experiences, and the dynamic changes of the immigrant's culture over time.

Finally, the results show that factors unique to the immigrant's experiences explain a great part of the immigrant women's labor force participation. Being a U.S. citizen, living in the U.S. for a long period, and residing in an immigrant concentrated region affect the immigrant women's decision to work. This supports the idea that the institutional circumstances regarding immigration and assimilation have a significant impact on the immigrants' and minorities' economic activities. But the results also show that the assimilation perspective is far from universally valid. Vietnamese immigrants present a vivid example where the assimilation story cannot explain their persistent disadvantages and the struggles to make the ends meet. Immigrant's network and social capital theories, on the other hand, are not successful in explaining the effect of dense ethnic population. What have been less discussed in the literature on the economic role of

immigrant network are the immigrant women's experiences that are shaped by the social relations and cultural norms of the immigrant communities.

Net labor force participation rates of immigrant women do not suggest that a similar, universal mechanism determining women's labor force participation is at work for different groups in distinct situations. What one also needs to look at are the reasons why one works, the condition under which one works, and the rewards one gets. This study investigated the reasons why Asian immigrant women work in the labor market. The reasons why Asian immigrant women work in the labor market give some implications for the characteristics of the other two aspects of employment: the condition under which they work, and the rewards they get. Having their employment decisions embedded in the family and labor market contexts, Asian immigrant women are very likely to be self-employed or work in a small ethnic business, where the working hours are exceptionally long, occupational status is low, prospects for the career advancement are limited, and earnings returns corresponding to the efforts and qualifications are smaller than average Americans. More studies on the working conditions and job compensations are needed in order to understand the dynamics of Asian immigrant's work and employment.

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Table 1. Definition of Variables.

Dependent Variable	
Labor force participation	1 if in the labor force, defined as working at least one hour for wage, or looking for a job and able to work if a job is available, during the previous week of the survey.
Independent Variable	
Other family income	Log of the average total family income less the respondent's own earnings in a month. Korean Won for the KHPS sample, and US dollar for the Census sample
Education	Three dummy variables: high school graduate, some college education, college graduate. Omitted category: less than high school.
Age	Three dummy variables: age 35-44, 45-54, 55-64. Omitted category: age 23-34.
Married, spouse present	1 if married and spouse present, 0 otherwise.
Other marital status	1 if divorced, separated, or widowed, 0 otherwise.
Children under 6	Number of own children under age 6.
Family size	Number of own family members except the children under age 5.
Area female labor force	Percent females in the regional labor market. Region is defined as the six metropolitan areas and eight provinces of South Korea, or fifty states and the District of Columbia of the United States.
Area unemployment	Percent unemployed females in the regional labor market. Region is defined as in Area female labor force variable.
Citizenship	(US Census only) 1 if a US citizen.
Years in US	(US Census only) Years since the immigration to the US.
Area ethnic group	(US Census only) Percent coethnic population in the region. Region is defined as in Area female labor force variable.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics.

	KHPS	US Census			
	South Korean	Korean	Chinese	Japanese	Vietnamese
Labor force participation	37.19%	58.58%	67.03%	52.28%	61.37%
Other family income* (mean)	5.688	10.156	10.174	10.190	10.157
Other family income* (standard deviation)	.505	.170	.183	.211	.154
Less than high school	45.77%	10.45%	19.18%	4.46%	30.61%
High school graduate	39.08%	32.47%	21.03%	24.26%	33.55%
Some college	6.47%	20.80%	17.24%	31.88%	19.62%
College graduate	8.67%	36.28%	42.55%	39.41%	16.22%
Age 23-34	30.11%	26.63%	25.15%	29.90%	32.18%
Age 35-44	32.61%	31.28%	34.11%	27.92%	27.63%
Age 45-54	18.71%	26.46%	25.77%	23.56%	26.56%
Age 55-64	18.57%	15.62%	14.97%	18.61%	13.63%
Never married	6.91%	10.77%	11.77%	12.97%	17.60%
Married spouse present	86.36%	72.60%	72.52%	73.37%	65.84%
Other marital status	6.73%	16.64%	15.71%	13.66%	16.56%
Number of children under 6 (mean)	.285	.192	.200	.194	.251
Family size (mean)	3.757	2.950	3.248	2.407	3.805
Area female labor force (mean)	37.20%	68.55%	68.02%	68.63%	67.89%
Area unemployment (mean)	3.21%	3.26%	3.35%	3.27%	3.27%
Citizenship	-	55.68%	59.28%	28.51%	60.19%
Year in US (mean)	-	17.979	16.433	17.068	14.931
Area ethnic group (mean)	-	.735%	1.428%	.355%	.774%
Number of cases	2,272	2,861	4,978	1,010	2,620

* Logged values.

Table 3. Logistic Regression of Labor Force Participation for Women in South Korea and Asian Immigrant Women in the United States.

	KHPS		US Census							
	South Korean		Korean Immigrant		Chinese Immigrant		Japanese Immigrant		Vietnamese Immigrant	
Other family income	-.770	(.110) ***	-1.720	(.269) ***	-1.462	(.186) ***	-2.636	(.489) ***	.000	(.301)
High school graduate	-.084	(.131)	.487	(.144) **	-.033	(.097)	.417	(.370)	.345	(.103) **
Some college	.055	(.232)	.665	(.159) ***	.100	(.106)	.787	(.371) *	.625	(.128) ***
College graduate	.486	(.208) *	.744	(.148) ***	.771	(.097) ***	1.365	(.376) ***	1.350	(.161) ***
Age 35-44	.090	(.148)	.098	(.125)	-.115	(.091)	.299	(.210)	-.133	(.119)
Age 45-54	-.084	(.182)	-.051	(.140)	-.133	(.107)	.115	(.255)	-.309	(.128) *
Age 55-64	-1.211	(.208) ***	-.860	(.161) ***	-1.408	(.122) ***	-1.397	(.311) ***	-1.239	(.152) ***
Married spouse present	-1.713	(.261) ***	-.751	(.173) ***	-.513	(.129) ***	-.825	(.286) **	-.373	(.133) **
Other marital status	-.739	(.329) *	-.487	(.198) *	-.493	(.147) **	-.059	(.337)	-.376	(.158) *
Children under 6	-.427	(.109) ***	-.675	(.100) ***	-.444	(.067) ***	-.656	(.183) ***	-.307	(.085) ***
Family size	.006	(.042)	.014	(.034)	.001	(.021)	-.007	(.084)	-.021	(.024)
Area female labor force	.040	(.011) ***	.015	(.017)	.034	(.016) *	.040	(.030)	-.004	(.017)
Area unemployment	-.001	(.031)	.090	(.131)	.290	(.151)	.352	(.213)	-.158	(.137)
Citizenship			.259	(.104) *	.460	(.083) ***	.537	(.214) *	.272	(.105) **
Year in US			.041	(.006) ***	.020	(.005) ***	.056	(.010) ***	.008	(.007)
Area ethnic group*			-.001	(.001)	-.001	(.001) *	.004	(.002) *	-.003	(.001) **
Constant	4.149	(.731) ***	15.978	(3.035) ***	12.500	(2.299) ***	21.868	(5.464) ***	1.585	(3.339)
Log likelihood	-1306.612		-1766.369		-2848.579		-559.469		-1596.321	
N	2,216		2,861		4,978		1,010		2,620	

*** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05.

Standard errors in parentheses.

* Percent coethnic population in the region multiplied by 100.