

INFLUENCES OF GENDER DIVISION OF LABOR ON THE PROCESS OF RESIDENTIAL CHOICE: A CASE STUDY OF HOUSEHOLDS IN CHIBA NEW TOWN, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TOKYO METROPOLITAN AREA

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Abstract The aim of this study is to examine the influences of gender division of labor on the decision-making process in residential relocation. The data were collected through a questionnaire survey and interviews to both husbands and wives who have moved into detached houses in Chiba New Town, on the outskirts of the Tokyo metropolitan area. In the 73 sampled households, 47 wives have taken no jobs since before moving to the new town. In the decision-making process, both the husbands and wives were eager to own their houses. In addition, the wives attached more importance to rear their child(ren) and do the housework than the husbands did. These tendencies were especially true for most of the households whose husbands controlled all of the decision-making items concerning residential relocation. Furthermore, whether the husband or the wife controlled the residential choice depended on her labor force participation before moving from the previous residence. These findings imply that the gender division of labor in the household determines the process of residential choice.

Key words: gender division of labor, decision-making process, residential relocation, Chiba New Town, the Tokyo metropolitan area

1. Introduction

Since the 1960s, the cohort born in the 1940s which includes the first baby-boomers moved into metropolitan areas in order to obtain higher education or to take jobs. Many of them continued to live there, and subsequently moved to suburban residential estates. Especially in the Tokyo metropolitan area, a large number of residential estates were developed in the suburbs to solve the housing shortage of the time. The formation of today's suburban residential estates in the Tokyo metropolitan area has been entirely affected by the movement of the baby-boom generation (Miura 1999: 124-155).

In addition, a considerable proportion of women of the baby-boom generation has chosen to become full-time housewives rather than to take jobs (Ochiai 1997: 12-30). This implies

that this generation established a lifestyle that husbands commute from suburban residential estates to the central business district while wives take care of the child(ren) and keep the house. This process has made the suburb into an area that specializes in a private sphere.

According to *the 1995 Population Census*, Chiba New Town, located in the north east of Tokyo Prefecture (Fig.1), is one of the areas having the highest proportions of full-time housewives in this area. Ito (2001) illustrated that a large part of married women in Chiba New Town has been full-time housewives since before moving into the current residence. Furthermore, the housewives emphasized the importance of neighborhood environment in choosing the location more than the wives who have been working since before moving into the current residence did.

This can be interpreted that the concentration of housewives in the new town is caused by the inflow of married women who decided to become full-time housewives before moving into the current residence. Thus, the husband and wife spend their time in different environments during daytime in this area: they needed to make compromises in order to satisfy their different preferences on residential choice. Either of them makes the final decision in residential relocation; but, as a matter fact, husbands are more likely to do it than wives are.

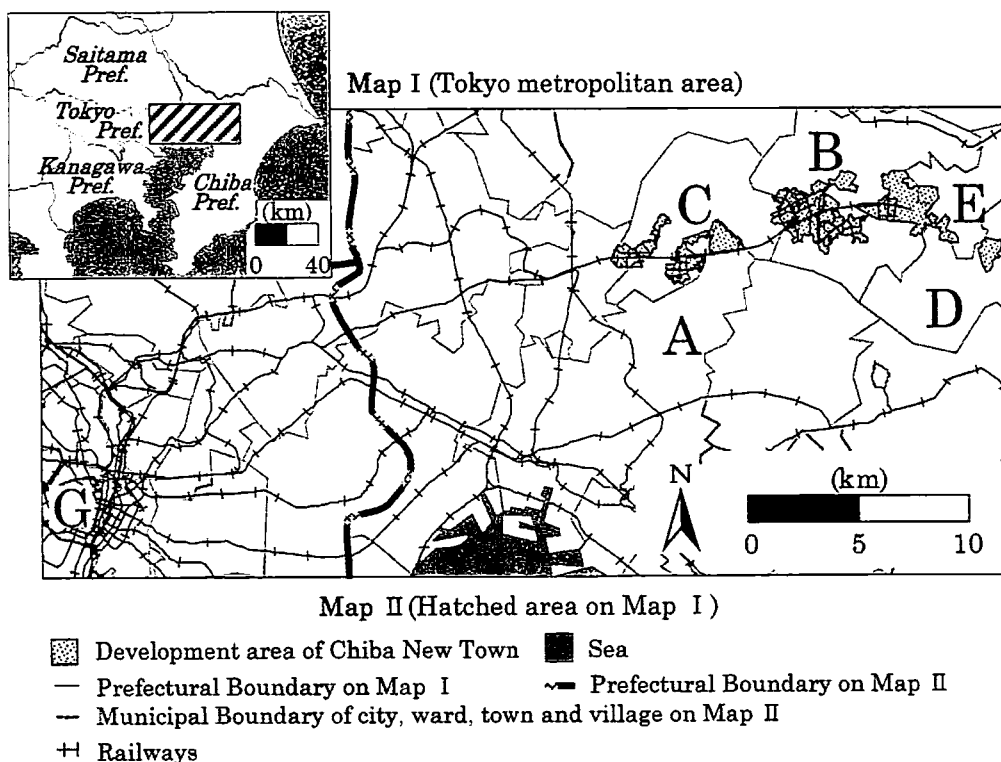


Fig. 1 Location map of Chiba New Town (1999). Chiba New Town partly overlays five municipalities: Funabashi City(A), Inzai City(B), Shiroyama Town(C), Inba Village(D) and Motono Village(E). Central Tokyo is around G on the Map II.

For example, residential relocation has the potential to prevent a married woman from working. Hanson and Pratt (1988) concluded that more women reported that choices of their residential locations had the priority over ones of their job locations than men did. Furthermore, when households chose their current residences, husbands attached smaller importance, if any, to their wives' convenience to jobs, whereas wives placed their husbands' job as an important factor in deciding where to live (Hanson and Pratt 1991).

In Japan, Tani (1997), who analyzed residential careers of Nagoya metropolitan suburbanites, reported that wives were likely to have moved to the husbands' residences when they married. Kawase (1997) also reported that in Kashiwa City, which is located on the eastern outskirts of the Tokyo metropolitan area, there are more wives looking for jobs after moving into the current residences than those continuing to work since living in the previous residence. These findings suggest that wives appear to accompany the husbands as a dependent householder in moving, and husbands control the residential choice.

However, recent studies focusing on dual-earner households reported slightly different facts. Green (1997) asked respondents to designate the partner whose career was given the priority in residential relocation; she suggested that the more highly paid career, which was husband's in many instances, dominated in residential relocation. Snaish (1990) described the relationship between married women and residential mobility; she concluded that once women got married, they were unlikely to move for their own career but very likely to undertake at least one move for the sake of their husbands. She also noted that the households made every effort to minimize the negative consequences of such relocations by careful choice of destination.

These studies have shown that the residential location is selected according to the role of the husband and wife, and that he is more likely to control the residential choice. Molin *et al.* (1999) interpreted this as the husband dominance on the residential choice, which is an evidence of power relation within the household.

However, Scanzoni (1979) asserted that both spouses had a certain degree of power within their own particular spheres of interest, and that both possessed powers in their own spheres of interest. So, this power relationship between the husband and working wife on the residential choice would differ from that between the husband and full-time housewife. Is it true that the full-time housewife accompanies the working husband in moving to the current residence at the cost of her own advantages? This study examines the differences of the residential preference and the power relationship between the husband and wife, focusing on households where the wife is a full-time housewife.

2. The sampled households and the study area

The data used in this study were collected through a questionnaire survey and interviews in October, 1999. The 73 sampled households moved to Chiba New Town, Inzai City in the first half of the 1990s. In the questionnaire survey, the wives as representatives of the households answered the question "Who was the most important person in the decision-making process in the residential relocation?". This question was concerned with "residential location" and "housing conditions". In particular, "housing conditions" were

asked in detail: "housing tenure", "housing type", "purchase budget for the house", "housing characteristics", and "house builder".

"Housing tenure" is defined as a choice between renting and buying a house, and "housing type" as a choice between a detached house and an apartment. The sampled households bought the detached houses that averaged 55 million-yen at that time: "purchase budget for the house" shows the most important person in the decision of this budget. The contents of "housing characteristics" include the decisions of house except "housing tenure" and "housing type", such as layout of rooms and size of the house. "House builder" means a choice of the house maker building their houses. In this way, we can find the power relationship between the husband and wife in the decision-making process. The questionnaire survey was complemented by interviews to four households (Table 1).

Inzai City, where the sampled households moved into, has the highest rate of population growth of all municipalities in the Tokyo metropolitan area in 1990-1995. Especially, the population aged 40-59 and 10-19 tend to have moved to Inzai City (Fig. 2). The ages of the sampled couples upon moving into the current residence averaged 44.5 (standard deviation =8.0) for husbands and 41.8 (standard deviation =7.5) for wives; these ages correspond with the age structure of Inzai City in 1995. The 58 households within the samples are married couples with their child(ren), who moved into the current residences because their previous houses were too small to rear dependent child(ren).

The development area of Chiba New Town comprises parts of five different municipalities including Inzai City (See Fig.1). The development area is located on the plateau called *Shimosa-daichi* or *Hokuso-daichi*. The Chiba Prefectural Government and the Housing and Urban Development Public Corporation, which was reorganized as the Urban Development Public Corporation in 1999, have developed the area since 1969. The planned development area of the new town is 1.9 thousand hectares, and 194 thousand persons were proposed to live in this area according to the development plan that was reviewed in 1996. In addition, according to *the Annual Report of Building Construction*, this area has the highest

Table 1 Characteristics of interviewed households

		Case household			
		A	B	C	D
Family type before moving to the previous residence		H,W,P,C,C	H,W,C,C,C	H,W,C,C	H,W,C
Husband's workplace		Tokyo Pref.	Chiba Pref.	Chiba Pref.	Tokyo Pref.
Wife's labor force participation	Before moving from the previous residence	Worker	Worker	Full-time housewife	Full-time housewife
	After moving into the current residence	Worker	Full-time housewife	Full-time housewife	Full-time housewife
Power relationship of the decision-making items	Housing tenure	H	H	H	H
	Housing type	H	H	H	H
	Purchase budget for the house	H	P	W	H
	Residential location	H	H	H	W
	Housing characteristics	W	W	W	H
	House builder	H	W	H	H

Notes:

H: Husband W: Wife P: Parent of husband or wife C: Child

"Power relationship of the decision-making items" shows the most important person in each of the six decision-making items.

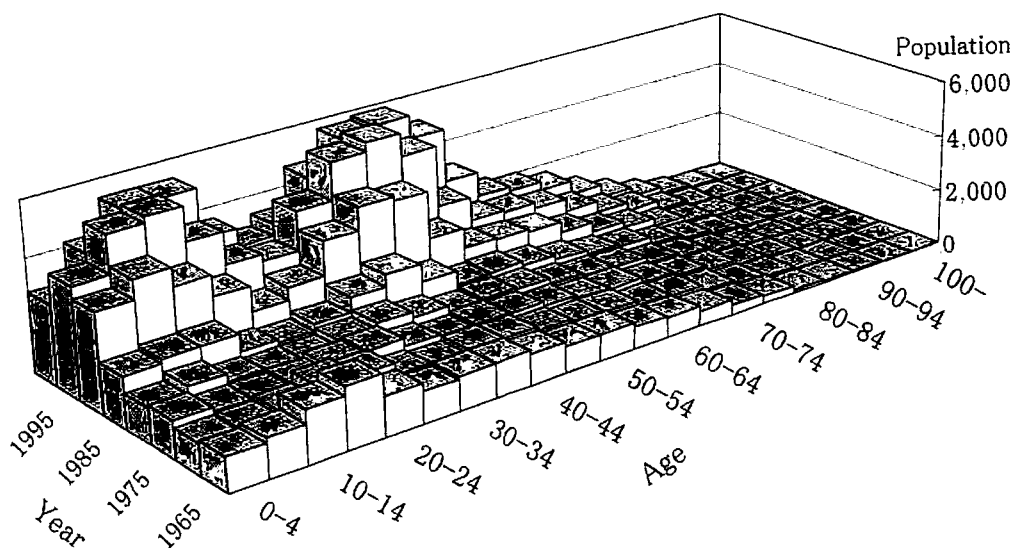


Fig. 2 Population changes of Inzai City by age group.
Source: *Population Census 1965-2000*

proportion of supply of new detached houses that used public funds for housing construction in the Tokyo metropolitan area in the 1990s.

The main business and retailing functions of Chiba New Town are located in Inzai City; the city was planned to accommodate the greatest share of population among the five municipalities, and to have 122 thousand persons in 2000. However, since the city is located about 30 kilometers away from central Tokyo, it has been very inconvenient to go there due to the delay in railway construction and its high railway fare (Fukuhara 1998: 66-80). Though the planned population was 340 thousand in 1979 when the first move-in to the new town started, it was cut down to 194 thousand in 1993, and the actual population was only 77 thousand in 2000.

The accessibility to Tokyo Prefecture has improved with the opening of a railway connecting the new town directly to central Tokyo in 1991. In particular, the commuting rate to Tokyo Prefecture increased from 9.4% in 1980 to 31.2% in 1995. Taguchi (2001) reported this increase was not only because of the new residents from Tokyo and Kanagawa Prefectures, but also because commuting to Tokyo Prefecture has increased among the existing households since 1991. In any case, the population growth of this area was latest in the Tokyo metropolitan area (Oe 1996).

The number of firms in Inzai City has also increased with the population growth. According to the *Establishment and Enterprise Census*, 880 firms were located in the city in 1978, and their number increased to 1,452 in 1996. This represents 65.0 percent increase, and it is larger than that of Chiba Prefecture (32.6%).

Women's labor force participation rate of the ages 25-49 in Inzai City has, however, drastically declined (Fig. 3), which indicates that Inzai City is specializing in a private sphere. In fact, while 47 husbands of sampled households work in Tokyo Prefecture, their wives have

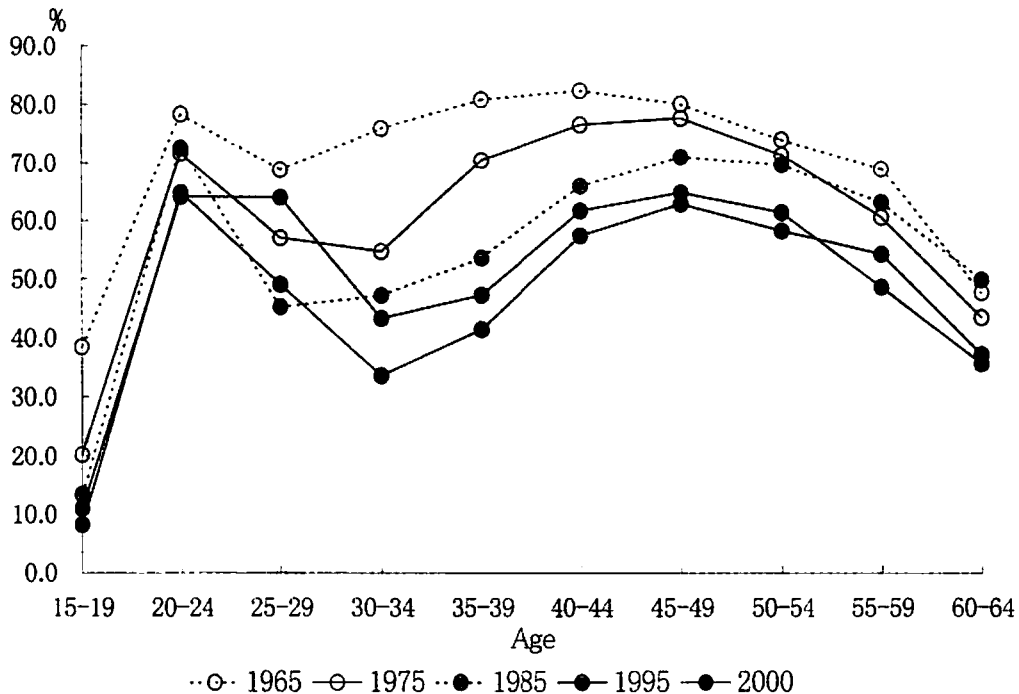


Fig. 3 Female employment rates by age group in Inzai City.
Source: *Population Census 1965-2000*

not worked since living in the previous residence. Hence, the decision-making process in residential relocation of the sampled households would be different from that of the previous studies by Green (1997) and Molin *et al.* (1999).

3. Power relationship between the husband and wife in the decision-making process in residential relocation

Differences of residential preference and power relationship between husband and wife

The husbands and wives in the sample were asked to rate each residential choice item by 7-interval method, from "1" defined as "not at all important" to "7" as "very important" (Table 2). Both husbands and wives rated "owning a detached house and land", "getting much sunlight and a good breeze" and living in "natural environment" higher than any other items. The differences in the ratings between husbands and wives were not statistically significant for these items.

In contrast, wives emphasized the items concerning living environment, such as "traffic safety", "neighborhood security" and "accessibility to the shop, the community center and public library", more than husbands did: basically, wives were likely to prefer conveniently located houses in a safe environment.

Table 2 Average rating of importance for residential choice items

Residential choice items	Sampled households (<i>n</i> =73)			HD (<i>n</i> =32)		WD (<i>n</i> =35)		ANOVA		
	H	W	<i>t</i>	H	W	H	W	PR	HW	<i>ir</i>
Safety										
1 Safety from natural disaster	5.69	5.79		5.84	5.91	5.49	5.71			
2 Safety from fire disaster	5.32	5.47		5.28	5.66	5.29	5.31			
3 Traffic safety	5.13	5.60	*	5.09	5.72	5.06	5.51			*
4 Neighborhood security	5.07	5.62	**	5.09	5.81	4.97	5.47			*
Health										
5 Water supply, sewerage and drainage systems	5.68	5.99		5.50	5.97	5.74	5.97			
6 Garbage collection system	4.88	5.25		4.84	5.59	4.83	4.86			
7 Less-pollution	5.75	6.00		5.72	6.00	5.80	6.00			
Accessibility and convenience										
8 Accessibility to central Tokyo	5.44	5.21		5.52	5.26	5.34	5.17			
9 Accessibility to husband's work place	5.72	5.66		5.53	5.81	5.94	5.65			
10 Accessibility to wife's work place or opportunity of her work	3.86	4.14		3.81	4.78	3.94	3.56			
11 Proximity to the closest station	4.85	5.00		4.91	5.00	4.69	4.97			
12 Proximity to the nearest bus stop	5.23	5.51		5.39	5.32	5.06	5.71			
13 road	4.92	4.87		4.94	4.88	4.82	4.88			
14 Convenience to buy daily necessities and food	4.83	5.07		4.97	5.13	4.57	5.03			
15 Convenience to shopping at the supermarket and specialty store	4.11	4.61	**	3.81	4.88	4.20	4.37		**	*
16 Accessibility to the hospital	4.86	5.16		4.83	4.93	4.76	5.24			
17 Accessibility to the welfare facility	4.00	4.47	*	3.97	4.66	4.00	4.23			
18 Accessibility to the city hall and its branch office	4.10	4.50	*	4.13	4.53	4.00	4.40			
19 Accessibility to the community center and public library	4.10	4.64	**	4.31	4.72	3.89	4.43			*
20 Accessibility to the kindergarten and preschool	3.88	3.96		4.03	3.88	3.69	3.89			
21 Eligibility of entrance and services of the kindergarten and preschool	3.81	3.54		3.97	3.47	3.49	3.43			
22 Accessibility to the elementary school and junior high school	4.38	4.40		4.59	4.31	4.11	4.40			
23 Curriculum and facilities of the elementary school and junior high school	3.89	3.88		3.81	3.91	3.74	3.71			
24 Convenience to commute to the high school and university	4.14	4.13		3.81	4.00	4.31	4.14			
25 Proximity to the previous residence	3.13	3.76	**	2.88	4.06	3.17	3.23			*
26 Proximity to the residence of husband's / wife's parents, relatives and acquaintances	3.33	3.93	**	3.16	4.09	3.31	3.57			
27 Cost of living in the residential area	4.46	4.99	**	4.45	5.13	4.40	4.80			*

Table 2 (Continued).

Comfort								
28 Natural environment	6.11	5.93	6.19	6.03	6.11	5.89		
29 Open space (ex. Public park)	5.06	4.94	5.41	5.16	4.71	4.83	*	
30 Green space	5.92	5.65	6.09	5.84	5.89	5.54	*	
31 Landscape	5.43	5.71	5.44	5.75	5.40	5.77		
32 Quietness	5.76	5.76	5.84	5.69	5.74	5.89		
33 Family type of the neighborhood	4.38	4.96	**	4.35	4.94	4.20	4.86	*
Housing characteristics								
34 New house	6.07	5.90	5.94	5.91	6.29	6.03		
35 Ownership of land	6.08	5.99	5.91	5.75	6.31	6.37	*	
36 Ownership of detached house	6.13	6.04	5.94	5.75	6.34	6.49	**	
37 Housing structure and construction method	5.31	5.76	*	4.97	5.56	5.46	5.89	*
38 Large house	5.97	5.99	5.91	5.84	6.06	6.20		
39 Layout of rooms	5.68	5.81	5.38	5.47	5.89	6.14	**	
40 Outlook of the house	5.06	5.49	*	4.81	5.06	5.26	5.94	** *
41 Barrier free in the house	4.72	4.99	4.50	5.03	4.85	4.97		
42 Storage space	5.21	5.51	5.03	5.34	5.23	5.57		
43 Parking space	5.57	5.74	5.34	5.53	5.71	5.89		
44 Getting much sunlight and a good breeze	6.11	6.35	5.94	6.09	6.26	6.57	*	
45 Privacy	5.56	5.89	5.47	5.81	5.57	5.97		
46 Domestic facilities in the house (ex. Kitchen and bathroom)	5.54	5.83	5.53	5.66	5.60	5.97		
47 Easiness of maintenance, extension or reconstruction of the house	5.15	5.08	5.13	5.16	5.12	4.94		
Other items								
48 Tax and public fee	4.01	4.26	3.83	4.57	4.17	3.97		
49 Low price of real estate	5.67	5.47	5.53	5.53	5.86	5.46		
50 Support for homeowner by the local government	3.72	3.96	3.35	4.32	3.97	3.57		*
51 Historicity and tradition of the residential area	3.24	3.34	3.23	3.84	3.15	2.71	*	*
52 Development potential in the residential area	5.53	5.61	5.53	5.69	5.46	5.54		
53 Familiarly with the residential area	2.68	3.35	**	2.56	3.41	2.60	3.09	*
54 Image of the residential area	3.82	4.10	3.66	4.13	3.74	3.94		

Notes:

HD: Households where husbands controlled over all of the six decision-making items in residential relocation
 WD: Households where wives controlled over more than one out of the six decision-making items in residential relocation

H: Husbands; W: Wives

t: Average rating difference between husband and wife by paired t-test

ANOVA: The results of the two-way analysis of variance with "PR" and "HW" as factors;

PR : Type of the power relationship ("HD" and "WD" which are identified above)

HW: Husbands and wives

ir: Interaction between "PR" and "HW"

** : Significant difference at $p < 0.01$; * : Significant difference at $p < 0.05$

In fact, the husbands controlled the choice of "residential location", "housing tenure", "housing type", "housing characteristics" and "house builder", and the decision of "purchase budget for the house" (Table 3). Specifically, 32 husbands of sampled households controlled all of the six decision-making items. According to Bureau of Citizens and Cultural Affairs in Tokyo Metropolitan Government (1994), husbands make the final decision of "purchase of house" in 56.7% of households in Japan, while their contribution is around 10% in Europe and the U.S.A. The decision-making process in the households in this study is typical of the general trends in Japan.

On the contrary, only two wives controlled all of the six decision-making items. 35 wives, however, controlled more than one out of the six decision-making items: especially 28 out of these 35 wives did the choice of "housing characteristics". This is closely related to the fact that wives spend longer time in their houses than the husbands during weekdays. Hence, it is interpreted that, in the households whose wives controlled more than one out of the six decision-making items, the difference between the husband's and wives' ratings is less than one in households whose husbands controlled all of these items.

Then, what affects the ways in which housing preferences are rated? From the above results, we assume two factors at work: one is the power relationship in the couple in the decision-making process in residential relocation; another is the gender division of labor between husband and wife. These factors were examined by the two-way analysis of variance. The results of the analysis demonstrate that the ratings for seven items of residential choice are significantly different between two groups of the households classified by the power relationship between husband and wife in the decision-making process (See "PR" of "ANOVA" in Table 2). Most of the seven items are in the category of "housing characteristics" in Table 2, such as "owning the house and land", "layout of rooms", "outlook of the house" and "getting much sunlight and a good breeze". For a group of households whose wives took active roles in the decision-making, husbands and wives rated these items equally. This means that the power relationship between husband and wife affects the decision-making regarding purchase of the house and land.

On the other hand, "HW" of "ANOVA" in Table 2 presents that 10 items that the wives emphasized significantly more than the husbands did were related rather to the residential neighborhood than housing characteristics. These items were little affected by the power relationship between husband and wife.

As it happened, no husband of the interviewed couples controlled all of the six decision-

Table 3 The most important person in the decision-making process in residential relocation (n=73)

Decision-making items in the process	Husband	Wife	Others
Housing tenure	60	7	6
House builder	57	9	7
Purchase budget for the house	56	11	6
Residential location	56	12	5
Housing type	55	12	6
Housing characteristics	40	28	5

making items (See Table 1). In the case of household C, the wife controlled the decision of “purchase budget for the house” and the choice of “housing characteristics” (See Table 1). She said that she had always followed her husband in visiting housing exhibitions in search for a new residence. But when they went to one of the housing exhibitions that they sought, it was the wife who decided not to buy the house since she thought that the housing facilities were more than their needs; her husband, however, decided to buy the current house after all. Furthermore, the husband of case household D said that his wife, who is a full-time housewife, decided the layout of rooms and kitchen. These illustrate the cases where husbands and wives of sampled households played different roles in the decision-making process in residential relocation.

Influences of the wife’s labor force participation

The power relationship between the husband and wife affected their residential choice; the next question arises as to what influences this power relationship. As noted above, the sampled households emphasized the desires to own their sunny and airy houses in towns that richly endowed with nature more than the other residential choice items. The difference in the power relationship of the sampled couples presents especially concerning items of housing characteristics (See Table 2). In the sampled households, it is obviously true that the higher the purchase budget for their preferred houses, the wider the range of choices they had. Hence, we assume that many husbands have controlled the residential choices because they have been the sole earners in the households. In fact, the wives who continued to work before moving from the previous residence tended to control more than one out of the six decision-making items ($\chi^2=3.97, p<0.05$; Table 4).

According to the interview, household B in which the wife had worked before moving from the previous residence decided to the residential location early in the process of residential choice, taking account of the convenience to her husband’s workplace. But he was so busy to work that he could not search for a new residence satisfactorily at that time. As a result, his wife searched for a new residence mostly alone after the decision to move.

In the case of household A, where the wife continued to work before moving to the current residence, she controlled only the choice of “housing characteristics” (See Table 1). For example, she said that she emphasized the security of the house and neighborhood because she often returned home from her workplace late at night. For this reason, she

Table 4 Relationship between the wives’ labor force participation and power relationship between the husband and wife in the decision-making process in residential relocation

a)The wife who had worked before moving from the previous residence			b)The wife who has worked after moving into the current residence		
	Worker	Full-time housewife		Worker	Full-time housewife
HD	24	8	HD	28	4
WD	18	17	WD	28	7
$\chi^2=3.97 (p<0.05)$			$\chi^2=0.69 (n.s.)$		

Notes:

“HD” and “WD” refer to the those in Table 2.

The wives whose labor force participation was unknown are excluded in these tables.

wanted to live in a condominium apartment and intended to get the mortgage for the house. Whereas her husband was impatient to own a detached house, the “residential location” they searched for was more convenient to his workplace than to hers. This indicates that the wife can control only the decision-making items relating to her domestic activities.

4. Conclusion

It is evident from the results of this study that the husband predominantly controls the process of the residential relocation. It confirms the implication of Green (1997) that chief earners control their partners. This did not mean that all of the sampled wives in this study stayed out of the decision-making process in residential relocation; however, they are more likely to control only the decision-making items that are closely related to their domestic activities. This is a finding that differs from results of previous studies on dual-earner households. It is not true that full-time housewives accompany the working husbands in moving to the current residence at the cost of her own advantages, but they are likely to search for the new residence from the standpoint of their own gender role. Probably this implies that, as Sodei (2002: 98-110) explained one of the reasons why a husband officially makes a final decision to purchase the house and land, he is officially the last to decide to move, although full-time housewife actually decides it.

However, in the Tokyo metropolitan area in the early 1990s, when the sampled households move into Chiba New Town, the supply of detached houses they preferred concentrated around the new town. It is natural that the households looking for detached houses like they chose the new town as their new residence. These imply the process in which new towns become the place where full-time housewives concentrate in a metropolitan area.

In households that did not move into detached houses in suburban residential estates, in contrast, wives would chiefly control the residential choice. For example, Matsunobu (1996) described that married career women chose to live in central Tokyo as a strategy to play their dual role as career women and the traditional female roles within a household.

Recently in Inzai City, more women aged 25-39 are taking jobs in spite of being the age group facing significant life events such as the first marriage, childbearing, and baby care, in general (See Fig. 3). This trend can be due to the inflow of working women, the increase of opportunities for women's employment, and the improvement in support for child rearing in this area. Hence, even the gender roles which were played by husbands and wives living in suburban residential estates seem to vary with the generation. At any rate, the transition of residential segregation in the Tokyo metropolitan area would be affected by the variation of the power relationship between the husband and wife in the decision making process in residential relocation.

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