I. Introduction

In recent years, married women in Japan have been breaking new ground in the workforce. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications’ “Annual Report on the Labor Force Survey,” the proportion of women within the overall employed population rose from 31.7% in 1965 to 42.6% in 2010. Furthermore, the proportion of married women among the female workforce exceeded that of unmarried women in the mid-1970s. A large portion of women still discontinue employment due to marriage and child rearing, and in 2010, 41.8% of female employees were short-term workers. However, the absolute number of the constantly increasing category of “husband as company employee and wife as full-time homemaker” reached a peak in the mid-1980s and the labor force participation rate of company-employed wives is continuing to rise (Hattori 2005). Further, it has been made clear through substantial quantitative research that among husbands whose wives are employed, there is a tendency for the husband to support the wife’s employment and the husband’s sharing responsibility for household chores and childcare. The entry of women with spouses into the workforce shatters the very base of the modern family system and economic system which is premised upon the division of labor by gender. Consequently, the massive increase in the number of women who are employed has been termed “a subtle revolution” and has drawn considerable attention (Meguro 1991).

According to research that employed interview data investigating in depth the power relations of married couples and their gender perceptions, the influence of the gender role attitude of husbands whose wives work differs discernibly depending on the husbands’ socioeconomic status. On the basis of this view, Zuo and Tang contended that to husbands of low socioeconomic status, the wife’s employment posed a “threat.” In order to maintain male-dominant gender relations—which were threatened by the wife’s employment—these husbands adhered to gender role attitudes, which the researchers postulated as the “threat hypothesis” (Zuo and Tang 2000). If one examines
According to research to date, the gender role attitudes of married men are strongly influenced by the conditions under which the wife is employed. For instance, where the husband’s income is insufficient and the wife finds employment to supplement it, it is conceivable that the husband’s gender role attitude would be somewhat reinforced.

However, to the degree that the present researcher has been able to ascertain, there appears to be no quantitative research, in Japan or in other countries, that seeks to verify whether or not there is a social status gap in terms of the influence exerted by the wife’s employment on gender role attitudes. That is, in regard to the possibility of generalizing from knowledge obtained from qualitative research, there has been insufficient support based on quantitative research. In addition, most qualitative research, such as that just mentioned, has taken American couples as subjects, and there has been almost no investigation of the disparity within social status levels when examining Japanese men’s gender role attitudes or the significance attached to wives’ employment.

Therefore, the present study employs the data of the National Family Research of Japan 2003 and the National Family Research of Japan 2008 to investigate whether, in the influence born from the gender role attitudes of the husband whose wife has employment, there is interaction resulting from the husband’s socioeconomic status. National Family Research is an ongoing project which began in 1998 as an activity of the Japan Society of Family Sociology. It is implemented for the following reasons: (1) to accurately grasp the present circumstances of the Japanese family, (2) to create a data set that, through consecutive surveys, makes possible the analysis of changes and trends, and (3) to expand a mutually shared analytical foundation by means of making data public and using it in collaboration, as well as to publicize statistical data regarding the family.

II. Factors influencing male gender role attitudes

According to research to date, the gender role attitudes of married men are strongly influenced by the conditions under which the wife is employed. According to most quantitative research, the husbands of working wives, in comparison with husbands whose wives are not employed, tend to support their wives’ employment and men’s sharing in household chores and child rearing. This tendency has been shown to be even stronger among those whose wives work full time, in comparison with those whose wives work part time (Cassidy and Warren 1996; Coltrane 1996; Ferber 1982; Mason and Lu 1988; Shirahase 2005; Smith 1985; Wilkie 1993; Yamazaki 1998; Zuo 1997). It is important to note, however, that according to research based on interviews investigating married couples’ power relations and the deep levels of gender perceptions, the impact of the wife’s employment on the gender role attitudes of the husband differs according to the socioeconomic status of the husband. On the basis of this knowledge, Zuo and Tang (2000) put forth their “threat hypothesis,” which suggests that to the husband of low socioeconomic status the wife’s employment presented a “threat.”

Among those aspects that are raised as “threats” are the wounding of “male pride” by the wife’s employment, symbolizing the inability of the husband to fulfill his role as the family breadwinner and the strengthening of the
wife’s power vis-à-vis her husband as a result of obtaining income (Mirowsky 1987). It is conceivable that when the wife’s employment produces such a “threat,” the husband, in order to maintain male-dominant gender relations by adhering to the gender role model, and it has been reported that such examples have often been observed among husbands of comparatively low socioeconomic status. For example, according to qualitative research on married couples of the working class, it is more difficult for the working-class husband to maintain status and power as the “breadwinner” due to his low income. Due to the fact that his position in the workplace is low and the only place he can exert authority is in the home, there is a tendency for him to grow greatly dissatisfied because he loses his identity as a “man” because his wife is employed and the wife’s power increases. Hence, working-class married couples, as a strategy for maintaining the husband’s pride and authority, which is lost as a result of the wife’s employment, elect to strengthen behavior that strengthens male-dominant gender relations. For example, the married couple’s relationship develops in ways in which the husband is treated both inside and outside the house as the “breadwinner” and the wife’s employment is presented as being merely a supplement to the household budget, where the husband’s income provides for fundamental living expenses and the wife’s income is earmarked for savings or as money for reserve, where the wife single-handedly bears responsibility for household chores and child rearing in order not to threaten the husband’s identity by doing “women’s work,” and where the wife acts more submissive and obedient in order to strengthen the self-respect of the husband and maintain his authority (Hochschild 1989=1990; Komarovsky 1962; Rosen 1987; Rubin 1976).

In contrast, it is speculated that in the case of husbands of higher socioeconomic strata, the wife’s employment would not tend to “threaten” the husband’s pride as the “breadwinner.” This is because, according to interview surveys which take as their subjects middle-class husbands and husbands who are professionally successful, the majority attach importance to the wife’s working not as supplementing the household budget but as working for her own benefit, for example, as a means of self-actualization. Further, because the husband sees it as his responsibility as a spouse to support his wife’s psychological enrichment, he supports his wife’s employment and shares responsibility for housework and child rearing (Hood 1983; Weiss 1987).

From this view, as a reason for the difference that appears between socioeconomic classes in how the wife’s employment affects the husband’s gender role attitudes, attention is paid to the degree of stability of the husband as the breadwinner. In looking at this mechanism, Zuo contends that it is necessary to examine the relationship between the husband and wife and employs as an indicator the ratio of the husband’s or wife’s income to the total income of the couple, or what could be called their respective “contribution to family income.” The reason for this is that it is necessary to specify the various gender relations involved in men’s experience. Seen from this perspective, it is insufficient to measure the status of the husband as “breadwinner” solely on the basis of the husband’s or wife’s earnings. Employing the husband’s or wife’s “contribution to family income,” it is necessary to consider the rise or fall of the husband’s status as breadwinner and the wife’s relation to that. That the wife’s employment becomes a “threat” is not simply because the wife earns a high income. It is conjectured, rather, that the husband’s contribution to family income declines and his status and power as breadwinner is threatened (Zuo 1997; Zuo and Tang 2000).

From the argument above, it is possible to
deduce the following hypothesis regarding the influence exerted by a wife’s employment on her husband’s gender role attitudes.

Hypothesis: The effect that the wife’s employment has on the husband’s gender role attitudes varies according to the husband’s socioeconomic status. In the comparatively low socioeconomic strata, the greater the wife’s contribution to family income, the stronger the maintenance of gender roles is.

Previous research also shows that in addition to the wife’s employment, factors such as the following also affect men’s gender role attitudes. First, the tendency to maintain gender roles is stronger the older the man is (Azuma and Suzuki 1991; Powell and Steelman 1982; Shirahase 2005; Ulbrich 1988; Wilkie 1993; Willinger 1993; Zuo 1997). Second, the tendency to maintain gender roles is stronger the lower the man’s educational background is (Azuma and Suzuki 1991; Ferber 1982; Powell and Steelman 1982; Mason and Lu 1988; Wilkie 1993; Zuo 1997). Third, factors related to occupation also affect the man’s gender role consciousness. Occupational category is one such factor, and middle-class males engaged in white-collar occupations have been shown to view participation in household chores and child rearing as a matter of course and to support their wives’ employment (Connell 1995; Hochschild 1989=1990). In Japan, regarding the idea that “men should work and women should stay in the home,” in the blue-collar stratum it has been reported that those who reject this are in the minority while those affirming this view are somewhat numerous (Yamazaki 1998). One further element is income. It has been found that the higher the income of the male, the greater the tendency to think “the best all-round situation is for the man to support the family and the wife to take care of the household” and “as a rule, if the wife works full time, it has a negative impact on family life” (Furuya 1994).

### III. Methodology

#### 1. Analytical method and data

The data employed was that of the National Family Research of Japan 2003 (carried out from January to February 2004) and the National Family Research of Japan 2008 (carried out from January to February 2009), hereafter referred to respectively as NFRJ03 and NFRJ08. The subjects of NFRJ03 are resident Japanese nationals born between 1926 and 1975, and 10,000 subjects were surveyed by stratified two-stage random sampling. Collected surveys totaled 6,302, an effective response rate of 63.0%. The subjects of NFRJ08 are resident Japanese nationals born between 1936 and 1980. Some 9,400 subjects were surveyed by the same stratified two-stage random sampling method. Collected surveys totaled 5,203, an
effective response rate of 55.4%. Of these, the present article takes as subjects for analysis employed men 65 years old or younger\(^4\) who have spouses, and this means 1,744 from NFRJ03 and 1,468 from NFRJ08.

2. Variables employed in analysis

“Husband’s age” was taken to mean the biological age at the time of the survey, while “husband’s educational background” was converted to years of education received on the basis of the final level of education received. “Husband’s occupational category” was converted to a “blue-collar dummy” variable, whose value was assigned as 1 for “retail or service occupation,” “skill, physical, or manual work,” and “agricultural, forestry, or fishing.”

“Husband’s annual income” was divided into 15 categories from “did not earn any income” to “more than ¥12,000,000.” “Did not earn any income” was established as “0” and “more than ¥12,000,000” was established as “1250,” and the others were set as medians. “Wife’s contribution to family income” was calculated by dividing “wife’s annual income” by “total of wife’s annual income and husband’s annual income.” Concerning “wife’s annual income,” the same categories established for the husband’s income were applied. Therefore, the “wife’s annual income” and “husband’s annual income” are established with “did not earn any income” set at “0” and “more than ¥12,000,000” set at “1250.” The others are calculated on the basis of the median values.

We established a scale of husband’s gender role attitudes using principal component analysis with the three variables of “Men should earn the living and women should take care of the home,” “Mothers should not be in the labor force but should concentrate on childcare until the children turn three years old,” and “It is a man’s role to financially support his family.” The choices provided for the questions were “agree,” “somewhat agree,” “somewhat disagree,” and “disagree,” with points descending respectively from 4 to 1 for these responses in order to indicate the level of support for gender roles. The correlations between these three variables were high for both NFRJ03 and NFRJ08 (NFRJ03 \(\alpha =.718\); NFRJ08 \(\alpha =.758\)). The principal component analysis yielded one marked component. For NFRJ03, eigenvalue of the component was 1.920 and the contribution was 64.0%, while for NFRJ08, eigenvalue was 2.023 and the contribution was 67.4%. In neither NFRJ03 nor NFRJ08 did other components reach an eigenvalue of 1. Therefore in the analysis that follows, the principal component score is used to measure “attitudes supporting gender role in the division of labor.”

IV. Analysis Results

1. Descriptive features of subjects analyzed

Descriptive features of the subjects are as follows (the former figures are for NFRJ03, and the latter in parentheses are for NFRJ08). Categorization by age groups is as follows: 2.6% (2.4%) for the 20s, 22.7% (21.7%) for the 30s, 27.2% (26.7%) for the 40s, 33.5% (32.9%) for the 50s, and 14.0% (16.3%) for the 60s (NFRJ03 \(n = 1744\); NFRJ08 \(n = 1468\)). The educational background categories were junior high school 10.4% (8.3%), high school 41.1% (43.5%), vocational school for high school graduates 8.5% (9.5%), junior college 5.4% (3.4%), college 32.2% (32.1%), and graduate school 2.4% (3.2%) (NFRJ03 \(n = 1732\); NFRJ08 \(n = 1468\)).
n=1456). The breakdown of the annual income for the previous year was 30.0% (32.8%) for less than ¥4,000,000 , 32.2% (30.5%) for ¥4,000,000 to less than ¥6,000,000, 18.9% (19.3%) for ¥6,000,000 to less than ¥8,000,000, and 19.9% (18.4%) over ¥8,000,000 (NFRJ03 n=1655; NFRJ08 n=1444). In terms of occupational category, professional or technical occupations account for 16.5% (20.6%); administrative occupations for 13.3% (12.4%); office work or business for 18.2% (15.2%); retail or service occupations for 14.9% (13.4%); skill, physical, or manual work for 34.9% (35.0%); agriculture, forestry, or fishing for 1.9% (3.2%); and others for 0.2% (0.2%) (NFRJ03 n=1717; NFRJ08 n=1464). From these results, there is virtually no difference between NFRJ03 and NFRJ08 in terms of the husband's age, educational background, annual income or occupational category.

The annual income of wives for the previous year, no income accounted for 32.6% (28.9%); less than ¥1,000,000 accounted for 30.4% (29.4%); ¥1,000,000 to less than ¥2,000,000 for 17.3% (18.7%); ¥2,000,000 to less than ¥4,000,000 for 11.8% (13.9%); ¥4,000,000 to less than ¥6,000,000 for 4.0% (5.5%); and more than ¥6,000,000 for 3.9% (3.6%) (NFRJ03 n=1653; NFRJ08 n=1414). In both NFRJ03 and NFRJ08 in approximately 30% of the analyzed subjects, the wife earned no income, and in only 20% of the cases did the wife earn more than ¥2,000,000. For this reason, the proportion of the wife’s contribution to family income are 32.9% (28.9%) for 0% contribution; 39.7% (42.4%) for contribution of less than 25%; 17.9% (18.7%) for contribution of 25% up to 50%; and 9.5% (9.9%) for contribution of 50% or more (NFRJ03 n=1634; NFRJ08 n=1410). That is, in both NFRJ03 and NFRJ08, among approximately 70% of the subjects analyzed, the proportion of the married couple’s total income contributed by the wife was less than 1/4th. Further, there was approximately 10% in which the wife’s contribution exceeded 50%, meaning that the wife earned more than the husband.

The gender role attitudes shown are as follows. In response to the statement “Men should earn the living and women should take care of the home,” those answering “agree” account for 11.6% (11.8%), “somewhat agree” account for 37.0% (41.8%), “somewhat disagree” account for 25.4% (23.7%), and “disagree” account for 26.0% (22.6%) (NFRJ03 n=1741; NFRJ08 n=1458). In response to the statement “Mothers should not be in the labor force and should concentrate on childcare until children are 3 years old,” those answering “agree” account for 37.6% (35.7%); “somewhat agree” account for 36.9% (38.0%); “somewhat disagree” account for 14.2% (14.5%); and “disagree” account for 11.3% (11.8%) (NFRJ03 n=1732; NFRJ08 n=1460). In response to the statement “It is a man’s role to financially support his family,” those answering “agree” account for 36.3% (39.3%); “somewhat agree” account for 43.5% (42.1%); “somewhat disagree” account for 11.1% (10.1%) and “disagree” account for 9.1% (8.5%) (NFRJ03 n=1737; NFRJ08 n=1457). The distribution of answers are almost the same for NFRJ03 and NFRJ08, with about 10% agreeing that men should earn the living and women should take care of the home, while close to 40% agree that mothers should not be in the labor force but should concentrate on childcare until children are 3 years old and that it is a man’s role to financially support his family. Particularly in regard to “It is a man’s role to financially support his family,” there is a high rate of support, with some 80% answering either “agree” or “somewhat agree.”
2. Influence of the wife’s contribution to family income on the husband’s gender role attitudes

By employing multiple regression analysis to identify factors that influence men’s gender role attitudes, results were obtained as shown in Table 1.

From the results in models 1 to 4, one can say that in both NFRJ03 and NFRJ08, the older the husband’s age, the more likely he is to support gender roles, and the higher the wife’s contribution to family income, the greater the tendency for the husband to reject gender roles. Regarding the main effect of educational background, in just NFRJ08, a tendency can be found among husbands with low educational background to support gender roles. On the other hand, when occupational category and annual income are taken as the main effect, there is no significance in either NFRJ03 or NFRJ08. In regard to interaction, both NFRJ03 and NFRJ08 revealed significance in interaction between the wife’s contribution to family income and both the husband’s occupational category (Model 3, note that in NFRJ08 p<.10) and the husband’s annual income (Model 4). The interaction between the wife’s contribution to family income and the husband’s occupation category was significant only in NFRJ03 (Model 2, note that p<.10).

Next, let us examine the direction of the interactions that proved significant.

In order to identify the direction of the interaction between the wife’s contribution to family income and the husband’s educational background in NFRJ03, the husband’s educational background was divided into the two parts “high school graduate or less” (n=892, 51.6%) and “junior college or more” (n=840, 48.4%). Two-factor ANOVA was performed with this variable and four groups for the degree of the wife’s contributions: 0%, less than 25%, 25% to less than 50%, and 50% or more. As a result, the interaction between the wife’s contribution to family income and the husband’s educational background was not statistically significant (F=1.859, df=3, p>.10); but within the group in which the wife’s contribution to family income was 50% or higher, there was a comparatively large difference in gender role attitudes depending upon educational background. In other words, the tendency for husbands with high school education or less to support gender

| Table 1 Factors affecting husband’s consciousness of gender role division of labor |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                                | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|                                | NFRJ03 | NFRJ08 | NFRJ03 | NFRJ08 | NFRJ03 | NFRJ08 | NFRJ03 | NFRJ08 |
| Age of husband                 | .166*** | .163*** | .165*** | .163*** | .164*** | .161*** | .161*** | .161*** |
| Number of years of husband’s education (A) | -.012 | .029 | -.014 | .027 | -.014 | .027 | -.014 | .027 |
| Category of husband’s occupation (Blue-Collar Dummy) (B) | .021 | .024 | .034 | .027 | .024 | .027 | .024 | .027 |
| Annual income of husband (C) | .028 | .026 | .027 | .023 | .024 | .027 | .024 | .027 |
| Wife’s contribution to family income (D) | .275*** | -.246+ | -.272+ | -.21 | .111* | .077+ | .103* | .153** |
| (D) × (A)                      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| (D) × (B)                      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| (D) × (C)                      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| R2                             | .993 | .110 | .109 | .112 | .996 | .117 | .993 | .113 |
| Adjusted R2                    | .990 | .107 | .109 | .110 | .993 | .107 | .993 | .113 |
| Observations                   | 1564 | 1372 | 1564 | 1372 | 1564 | 1372 | 1564 | 1372 |
| F                              | p<.001 | p<.001 | p<.001 | p<.001 | p<.001 | p<.001 | p<.001 | p<.001 |

( +<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001)
roles more than husbands with junior college education or higher was especially noticeable in the group in which the wife contributed 50% or more to the family income (Figure 1).

In order to investigate the direction of the interaction between the wife’s contribution to family income and the husband’s occupational category in NFRJ03/08, retail or service; skill, physical, or manual work; and agriculture, forestry, or fishing were classified as “blue collar” (NFRJ03 n=888, 51.8%; NFRJ08 n=756, 51.7%), and professional or technical; administrative; and office work or business were classified as “white collar” (NFRJ03 n=826, 48.2%; NFRJ08 n=705, 48.3%). Two-factor ANOVA was performed with this variable and four groups for the degree of the wife’s contribution to family income: 0%, less than 25%, 25% to less than 50%, and 50% or more. As a result, the interaction between the wife’s contribution to family income and the husband’s occupational category was significant (NFRJ03 F=3.321, df=3, p<.05; NFRJ08 F=2.576, df=3, p<.10). When one looks at the mean value according to ANOVA (Figure 2), in NFRJ03 in the groups where the wife’s contribution is 0% or less than 25% and in NFRJ08 in the groups where the wife’s contribution is 0%, less than 25%, and over 25% but less than 50%, there is not much difference in the husband’s attitude toward gender roles based on occupational category. In comparison, in NFRJ03 where the wife’s contribution is in the group over 25% but less than 50% and the group which is 50% or more, and in NFRJ08 where the wife’s contribution is 50% or more, there is a relatively pronounced tendency for the husbands in a blue-collar occupation to support gender role division of labor more than those husbands in white-collar occupations.
In order to investigate the direction of interaction between the wife’s contribution to family income and the husband’s annual income in NFRJ03/08, the husband’s annual income was classified into two groups: “less than ¥4,000,000” (NFRJ03 n = 497, 30.0%; NFRJ08 n = 459, 31.8%) and “¥4,000,000 or more” (NFRJ03 n = 1158, 70%; NFRJ08 n = 985, 68.2%). Two-factor ANOVA was performed with this variable and four groups for the degree of the wife’s contribution to family income: 0%, less than 25%, 25% to less than 50%, and 50% or more. As a result, the interaction between the wife’s contribution to family income and the husband’s annual income was found to be significant (NFRJ03 F = 6.359, df = 3, p < .001; NFRJ08 F = 6.723, df = 3, p < .001). When one looks at the mean value according to ANOVA (Figure 3), in NFRJ03, in the group where the wife’s contribution is 0% and the group where it is less than 25%, husbands with annual incomes less than ¥4,000,000 support gender role labor division. In similar fashion, in NFRJ08, one finds a tendency to support gender role labor division among husbands with annual incomes of less than ¥4,000,000 when the wife’s contribution falls in the group of more than 25% and less than 50% and the group of more than 50%. This is particularly notable in the group of those whose contributions are 50% or more.
As a result of this analysis, the following is established regarding the factors that influence men’s attitudes toward gender role division of labor.

As has been reported by previous researchers, the older the husband is, the stronger the tendency to support gender role labor division is. Previous research shows the effect of educational background, but in our analysis only NFRJ08 data demonstrate a statistically significant tendency for lower educational level to increase support of gender role division of labor. In contrast, no significant main effect was found regarding occupational category and annual income.

Regarding the impact of the wife’s contribution to family income on the husband’s gender role attitudes, which is the central focus of this analysis, the following results were observed. First, the higher the wife’s contribution to family income is, the greater the tendency for the husband to reject gender role division of labor. The degree of the wife’s contribution to family income has a significant negative effect, and the influence is comparatively large. In other words, in line with the views that have come from prior quantitative research, it can be said that the husbands of working wives are more opposed to gender role division of labor. Second, however, regarding the influence of the degree of the wife’s contribution to family income on the husband’s attitudes toward gender role division of labor, the following new viewpoint was obtained.

Based on the “threat hypothesis” (Zuo and Tang 2000), which argues that the wife’s employment poses a “threat” to a husband of low socioeconomic status, the present study takes as its hypothesis their assertion that the influence the wife’s employment exerted on the husband’s attitude toward gender role division of labor differs with the husband’s socioeconomic status. Within

V. Conclusion

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As has been reported by previous researchers, the older the husband is, the stronger the tendency to support gender role labor division is. Previous research shows the effect of educational background, but in our analysis only NFRJ08 data demonstrate a statistically significant tendency for lower educational level to increase support of gender role division of labor. In contrast, no significant main effect was found regarding occupational category and annual income.

Regarding the impact of the wife’s contribution to family income on the husband’s gender role attitudes, which is the central focus of this analysis, the following results were observed. First, the higher the wife’s contribution to family income is, the greater the tendency for the husband to reject gender role division of labor. The degree of the wife’s contribution to family income has a significant negative effect, and the influence is comparatively large. In other words, in line with the views that have come from prior quantitative research, it can be said that the husbands of working wives are more opposed to gender role division of labor. Second, however, regarding the influence of the degree of the wife’s contribution to family income on the husband’s attitudes toward gender role division of labor, the following new viewpoint was obtained.

Based on the “threat hypothesis” (Zuo and Tang 2000), which argues that the wife’s employment poses a “threat” to a husband of low socioeconomic status, the present study takes as its hypothesis their assertion that the influence the wife’s employment exerted on the husband’s attitude toward gender role division of labor differs with the husband’s socioeconomic status. Within
the comparatively low socioeconomic strata, the greater the wife’s contribution to family finances, the greater the tendency to support gender role division of labor. The results of this study’s analysis clarifies that the impact of the wife’s employment on the husband’s attitudes toward gender role division of labor does indeed differ according to his socioeconomic status. The tendency for the husband to reject gender role division of labor to increase among husbands whose wives make large contributions to family income is shown to be more conspicuous among husbands who are graduates of junior college or higher, who are white-collar workers with annual incomes of ¥4,000,000 or more. However, regarding their contention that within the comparatively lower socioeconomic strata the greater the wife’s contribution to family finances the stronger the husband supported gender role division of labor, no such tendency was found. Even among the low socioeconomic strata of blue-collar families, with educational background of high school or less and annual incomes of less than ¥4,000,000, there is a tendency for the husband whose wife makes a major contribution to family income to reject gender role division of labor. In other words, the present analysis shows that regarding the contention that “the influence the wife’s employment has on the husband’s attitudes toward gender role division of labor differs according to the husband’s socioeconomic status,” the disparity in attitudes might more accurately be expressed as follows: “Among husbands of the comparatively lower socioeconomic strata, the greater the wives’ contribution the more flexible the husbands are in rejecting gender role division of labor.” Further, it is particularly pronounced, across all strata, in groups where the wife’s contribution is greater than that of the husband, that is, where her contribution exceeds 50%.

From such results, it may be surmised that in the future, as married women proceed into the workforce, even if there is an increase in the number of wives who earn more than their husbands, the impact of the view that the wife is working “because her husband’s income is insufficient” on the husband’s attitudes toward gender roles will be comparatively small. Based on the arguments of Zuo and Tang regarding the reasons for this, the wife’s earning a larger income than the husband could possibly be interpreted by the husband of low socioeconomic status as a “threat.” According to the present data, the belief that “It is a man’s role to financially support his family” is highly supported, and judging from the fact that there are only a small number of wives contributing more than 50% of the family income, it can be inferred that the model of “the husband should earn greater income than the wife” remains strong. The present results suggest the possibility that among Japanese men who engage in spousal relations that run counter to such a model, the meaning of “the wife’s earning a higher income than the husband himself” may differ depending on socioeconomic status.

Actually, Zuo and Tang indicate that for a husband who earns less than the wife, the wife’s working may pose a greater threat, and they contend that the “threat hypothesis” is particularly applicable to such husbands. In other words, they suggest this as a special characteristic of gender role division of labor attitudes of men whose socioeconomic status is low and whose wives, in addition, earn more than they do. Unfortunately, however, at the stage of verifying their hypothesis, the researchers gave almost no consideration to the factors of social strata. By employing panel data that they obtained by tracing married men and women, they investigated how changes in family income contribution affected gender role attitudes. As a result, they found that even controlling for variables of age and education, the lower the husband’s contribution to family income or the
higher the wife’s contribution to family income, the tendency was toward a rejection of traditional gender patterns. They therefore concluded that the reduction of the male’s family income contribution brought about egalitarian tendencies in the gender attitudes of both husband and wife. On the basis of these results, they rejected the “threat hypothesis,” which argued that the employment of the wife was seen by the husband as a “threat,” and to the contrary argued that the husband gained “benefit” from the wife’s employment. In other words, as a result of the improvement in economic level that results from the wife’s income, the husband is relieved of shouldering the heavy responsibility of being the sole breadwinner. The researchers thus contend that when one adopts an egalitarian gender attitude as a result of the employment of the wife, the “benefit hypothesis” is given support (Zuo and Tang 2000). Their analysis can be seen as a major contribution in that by employing panel data it eliminates the reverse causal relationship in which the husband’s egalitarian attitude encourages the wife’s employment; it clearly states that the employment of the wife makes the husband’s gender role division of labor egalitarian. However, in the end, they confirmed the accumulation of previous quantitative research which concluded that husbands with employed wives were more likely to reject gender role division of labor than husbands whose wives did not work. Further, they did not carry out sufficient investigation regarding the possibility that the wife’s employment might be seen by the husband as a “threat.”

To be sure, even the present analysis does show that the wife’s contribution to family income has a major negative effect on the husband’s gender role division of labor attitudes, and even within the comparatively low socioeconomic strata, there is a tendency for the husband to reject gender role division of labor the higher the wife’s contribution to family income rises. But it is of considerable interest that where the husband’s socioeconomic status is within comparatively low strata, the wife’s contribution to family finances has a relatively low effect on the husband’s gender role division of labor attitudes, and especially conspicuous is the group where the gap is large, especially in the group where the wife’s contribution is 50% or more. The knowledge that there is a strata gap in the impact that the wife’s employment has on the husband’s gender role division of labor attitudes can be taken as including valuable suggestions for deepening the understanding of Japanese men’s gender consciousness.6

In concluding, allow me to mention the limitations of this article and topics for future consideration.

First, I would like to carry out similar investigations of men’s gender role division of labor attitudes in various other countries, in order to determine whether similar class disparities can be found in other countries. There is reason to believe that by carrying out such international comparisons, the distinctive features of Japanese men’s attitudes toward gender roles might be clarified further.

Second, in order to further deepen understanding of the disparity among social strata that appears in Japanese men’s gender role attitudes, quantitative research on married couples is required. The reason for this is that in the present analysis, only the effect of the “husband’s attributes” were used as factors in differentiating “influences affecting the gender role division of labor attitudes.” However, as argued in section II, qualitative research investigating the deep levels of the married couple’s power relations and gender consciousness among couples of comparatively low strata have shown that to support the husband’s pride and authority, which has been diminished as a result of the employment of the wife, as a strategy, not only the husbands but also the wives strengthen
gender relationships based on male dominance (Hochschild 1989 =1990; Komarovsky 1962; Rosen 1987; Rubin 1976). From this view, the husband’s gender role division of labor attitudes are not only specific to the husband but are also to a large degree influenced by the wife’s attitudes. It is therefore conjectured that interactivity depends not only on the husband’s attributes but also by those of the wife. In order to reach the deepest levels of this mechanism, qualitative research is vital. On the basis of the current findings, there is reason to believe that in order to do this, it would be most effective to focus on couples in which the wife’s contribution to family finances is 50% or more.

Supplementary note
In employing National Family Research of Japan 2003 (NFRJ03) data, individual sample data was provided by the SSJ Data Archive affiliated with the Center for Social Research and Data Archives, University of Tokyo. In employing National Family Research of Japan 2008 (NFRJ08) data, permission was received from the NFRJ Committee of the Japan Society of Family Research.

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References
Their Changing Gender Beliefs,” in *Sex Roles*, 37 (9/10), pp. 799-816.

Notes
1. In regard to the National Family Research of Japan 1998 (NFRJ98) survey, items dealing with gender roles and the division of labor as well as the categories of the married couple’s income differed from those of the National Family Research of Japan 2003 (NFRJ03) survey and the National Family Research of Japan 2008 (NFRJ08) survey. Therefore, the former was not used for analysis in the present research. All of the variables used in this analysis taken from NFRJ03 and NFRJ08, however, are identical in terms of items and categories.
2. One can presume that both “scale of city” and “existence or non-existence of children” would also influence men’s attitudes toward gender roles. However, in the models described below, when “14 Major City Dummy (NFRJ03) / 18 Major City Dummy (NFRJ08),” “Town and Village Dummy,” and “Child Exists Dummy” were input, the results did not yield statistical significance, and coefficients were small, therefore they were excluded from analysis.
3. As discussed in section II, regarding the influence of men’s socioeconomic status on gender role attitudes, it has been reported that the lower the men’s educational background, whether the men held blue-collar occupations, and the higher the men’s income, the tendency was toward support for gender role division of labor. Therefore, investigation is carried out on interaction effects with educational background, occupational category, and income, respectively. In general, there is a strong relationship between educational background, occupational category, and income. Therefore, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which is an indicator that estimates the degree of multicollinearity, was less than 2 for every coefficient in Model 1. This suggests there was no substantial multicollinearity between these variables.
4. It is conceivable that in the case of subjects 66 years or older a large number were included who, by becoming reemployed following mandatory retirement, have taken up conspicuously low-paying or blue-collar jobs. Because a similar possibility exists for the 61 to 65 age group, by limiting analysis to employed married men 60 or younger, the results are almost identical. (Restricting consideration to those aged 60 and under, within the NFRJ03 data, the only point that differed in the results was there was no significant interaction effect between the wife’s contribution to family finances and the husband’s educational background.) Accordingly, the age limit for subjects for analysis was set at 65 years or less.
5. When two-factor ANOVA was applied to the two groups of wives contributing less than 50% to the family income and 50% or more to the family income, it was found that there was significant interaction between the wives’ contribution to family income and the husbands’ educational background (F=4.292, df=1, p<.05).
6. In the analysis of the NFRJ03 and NFRJ08, the same was found to be true for wives. Among wives with husbands of comparatively lower socioeconomic strata, the greater the wives’ contribution, the more flexible the wives are in rejecting gender role division of labor (Shima 2011).