

Session : 201 Leaving Home and Family Formation  
Premarital Nest-Leaving and First Marriage in Japan

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*Research Issue*

The aim of this study is to investigate the causal linkage between residential independence and marriage timing in Japan. We will examine the effect of premarital nest-leaving experience on the timing of first marriage. The implication of this study can be highly relevant to family formation of southern European countries where not only household formation patterns but also fertility levels are similar to Japan.

Since almost all births take place within wedlock, marriage timing has been an important factor determining the trend and level of fertility in Japan. Marriage trend in Japan, however, is attributed as later and even fewer. A growing number of young adults live with parents as a result of the trend of late marriage. Unlike western European countries or the United States, the trend of later marriage did not facilitate young adults to choose various living arrangements before marriage such as living alone, group livings and cohabitation. This is as a result of the high housing cost and weak social pressure on young adults to leave parental home which is related to the tradition of extended family system.

Previous researches suggest that young adults who live with parents tend to marry later than those who do not live with parents. Several hypotheses have been proposed to explain the relationship. The explanations, however, remain obscure since their interpretations are different according to the theoretical point of views. Furthermore, the empirical results are rather inconsistent across studies and largely hampered by inefficient data measuring residential independence. Therefore, for the better understandings of the relationship, it is important to draw a comprehensive picture of

whether and how premarital nest-leaving behavior causally effects on the timing of marriage.

This study employs advanced techniques of event-history analysis to a nationally representative retrospective survey on life course of Japanese men and women. We take into account several duration dependencies of nest-leaving according to the reasons to leave parental home. For example, the reasons to leave parental home are classified as schooling, entering occupation, and other reasons. We examine not only the differential effects of nest-leaving on marriage timing, but also comparing its patterns across sex and cohorts.

Since nest-leaving behavior is strictly different according to sex in Japan, this study will also shed a light on gender context of opportunity structure and its change across cohorts. We expect our result to explain a part of mechanisms for the low fertility trend in Japan where reproductive behavior is largely regulated by marriage and majority of young adults live with parents before they form own families.

### *Method & Data*

The data is from the 1998 survey of National Family Research of Japan (NFRJ98). The NFRJ98 data is a retrospective survey of men and women at age of 28-77 in 1998. One feature of the NRRJ98 is that it contains information on the date of not only first marriage and nest-leaving, but also first job and graduation of the last education. Therefore, the NFRJ98 allows us to apply sophisticated modeling of first marriage such as even-history analysis. The birth cohorts of 1940-1970 will be chosen to analyze the relationship between nest-leaving and first marriage from the era of rapid economic growth in the 1950s to recent economic recession in the 1990s. The sample size will be around two thousands for both men and women.

Piecewise-linear spline models will be employed to the analysis. The piecewise-linear spline model is a kind of proportional hazard models which approximates the shape of baseline log-hazard by several linear functions which have different slopes in each interval. The attractive feature of this model is its flexibility in specification of non-proportional effect of covariates across the observation duration which is referred as the duration dependence. For example, it allows examining several duration dependences

simultaneously. Therefore, one can investigate how different reasons of nest-leaving affect marriage risks through the observed duration. The model also allows capturing the immediate shift in the risk of the event caused by onset of time-varying covariates. It makes possible to model, for instance, a dip in the risk of marriage just after leaving parental home for schooling and gradual increase in marriage risks after graduation. By employing the piecewise-linear spline models in this way, the effect of nest-leaving, net of several demographics, socioeconomic variables and macro economic contexts, on first marriage will be estimated. The results will be clearly displayed in graphical representations.

### *Expected Outcome*

We expect various patterns of duration dependency in the effects of nest-leaving on the risk of first marriage. For example, for both men and women, leaving home for schooling causes immediate drops in marriage risk. However, its drop is expected to sharply recover after finishing education and it will exceed the baseline risk of marriage for non-leaving group in some years later. We may also expect the gender difference in the recovery of the marriage intensity after the graduation since women with higher education have lower marriage intensity than women with lower education.

On contrary to the schooling, nest-leaving for getting a job would gradually increase the risk of marriage just after it takes place. Their marriage intensities, however, will swell up rather in the late age compared with those who have a job without leaving parental home. This is because it will take longer time to accumulate economic resources to marry for young adults who live outside parental home. This may be especially the case for men, yet its effects are unclear for women.

Finally, leaving parental home for other reasons than schooling and getting a job will be a combined category of such reasons as changing jobs, transferences, family conflict and merely independence from parents. This reason of leaving home may cause an immediate rise in the risk of marriage, while the effect will cause more fluctuations in marriage risks afterwards.

We expect those effects change across cohorts which reflect gender difference in opportunity structure. By using modern techniques of event-history analysis, this study

tries to explain whether and how household formation patterns affect the timing of marriage in post-war Japan.