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Youth and the Life Course: Changing Patterns of Courtship, Marriage, and Employment



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Changing configurations of the labor market and demographics in Japan have transformed Japanese institutions and the social environment. How have such structural and social changes affected Japanese youth? What have been the notable changes and continuities in the life-style and consciousness of young Japanese citizens? In order to accurately grasp the changes and continuities, the Center for Social Research and Data Archives at the University of Tokyo has been conducting a national longitudinal study – the Japanese Life Course Panel Surveys (JLPS) – to follow the same subjects at different points throughout their lives in order to examine specific micro-macro relationships regarding how different individuals make particular decisions and actions in their life-course.

Social Science Japan Newsletter 47 features five reports from the JLPS's surveys. With the collapse of Japanese-style management practices and the ongoing economic recession, this project has highlighted the changes and continuities in the transitions to courtship, marriage and family, within the female workforce, and from schools to work places. First, in the contexts of increasing diversification of dating and courtship processes, Ishida Hiroshi and Motegi Akira examine who chooses whom for dating and marriage. They argue that while in the U.S. there is a strong homogamy in couples' educational levels in both dating and marriage, Japanese youth hold distinctively different standards in mate selection for dating and for marriage. Next, Yoshida Takashi's research results challenge the "economic independence hypothesis" of previous studies which assume that women in regular employment are more likely to delay marriage than women in non-regular employment. By analyzing categories of employment among female regular employees, Yoshida argues that marriage rates may differ depending on occupation type, and suggests the importance of future research on this issue. Hayashi Yusuke analyzes the effect of married couples' incomes on marital satisfaction in the contexts of increasing female labour. Noting the fact that most respondents indicated satisfaction with a gendered division of labor, Hayashi posits the resilience of the traditional gender-based division of labor in Japan. Suzuki Fumiko examines the diversification of women's life courses due to the increase in the number of women pursuing higher education and working outside the home since the 1980s. Her research reveals that employment and income insecurity tend to undermine women's desires to continue working. She argues that the added impact of the worsening labor market means that a woman's entire life course perspective, including both career and family formation, is affected by the employment conditions she experiences in her mid-twenties. Lastly, Oshima Masao analyzes job placement data of vocational high schools and postsecondary technical schools in order to shed light on the mechanisms by which graduates find their first jobs. He suggests that the high job placement success rates of vocational high schools and technical schools are strongly tied to extracurricular assistance through teachers' personal networks and schools' job placement offices.

In the next section, we introduce Professor Emeritus Tanaka Nobuyuki, who recently retired after working at the ISS since 1991. He outlines the dynamic transformations in China during his 21 years at the ISS. We then present Questions and Answers with Kato Takao, Professor of Economics and Far Eastern Studies at Colgate University. Professor Kato came to Shaken to develop a new university-industry-government research consortium for analyzing data from Japanese firms with Professor Owan from May to July, 2012.

Lastly, we feature recent updates on lectures by the ISS Contemporary Japan Group, recently published books written by ISS staff, and the "Focus on ISS" where we share updates on the ISS's Governance Project.

Contents

Youth and the Life Course: Changing Patterns of Courtship, Marriage, and Employment

Ishida Hiroshi and Motegi Akira	<i>Educational Assortative Mating in Japan and the United States</i>p.3
Yoshida Takashi	<i>The Impact of a Woman's First Job and Non-Regular Employment on Marriage Timing</i> ...p.9
Hayashi Yusuke	<i>The Effect of Married Couples' Incomes on Marital Satisfaction</i>p.13
Suzuki Fumiko	<i>Marrying Late or Not at All: Changing Life Course Choices among Young Women in Japan</i>p.17
Oshima Masao	<i>The Transition from school to work: The Role of Job Placement Assistance Provided by Schools</i>p.22

Special Essay

Tanaka Nobuyuki	<i>Chinese Law and the Lost Decade</i>p.26
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Questions and Answers with Visiting Professor

Kato Takaop.28
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Educational Assortative Mating in Japan and the United States

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Introduction

Couples, whether married or unmarried, are generally formed based on people matching on a variety of socioeconomic and cultural characteristics. The combinations of these matched characteristics generate distinct patterns of assortative mating. The resemblances or differences between matched couples reflect the extent of closure or openness in our society, a longstanding concern for sociologists (Blossfeld 2009). Among the various factors couples take into account, education is one of the most well-established measures in assortative mating (Blossfeld 2009, Miwa 2005, Schwartz and Mare 2005). We investigate patterns

of educational assortative mating in Japan and the United States.

The conventional approach taken by many previous studies had married couples as the primary focus of analysis. The main research question concerned educational assortative mating among married couples: who marries whom?¹ However, the past decades have seen the tremendous increase of cohabitation among unmarried couples in the United States and European countries, a well-documented fact which motivated researchers to look for the difference in the patterns of assortative mating between married couples and unmarried couples. Recent progress in data gathering on unmarried couples led to this new development, particularly in the United States. Thus, researchers can now reframe the research question as follows: who mates with whom among dating, cohabitating, and married couples?²

On the other hand, it is often pointed out that Japanese society has not experienced the dramatic increase of cohabitation observed in the United States or Europe. However, unmarried couples and courtship as a partnership status are no longer uncommon in contemporary Japan. Today most marriages are “love marriages” (*ren-ai kekkon*),³ implying that many married couples must have experienced courtship state prior to marriage. Despite the lack of prevalence of unmarried cohabitation as a partnership status, courtship has become an important life stage for unmarried Japanese youth. We therefore expand the topic of assortative mating by including unmarried couples into the analysis. To our knowledge, there has been no previous research

¹ Blossfeld (2009) provides an extensive review of the literature from a cross-country perspective. For examples of previous analyses on Japanese couples, see Miwa (2005), Shida et al. (2000), and Shirahase (1999).

² Schwartz (2010: 736-738) provides a concise summary of recent developments in the comparative investigation of married and unmarried cohabitating couples. Blackwell and Lichter (2004) study three partnership statuses—dating, cohabitating, and married. We employ the same three categories for the analysis of American data set.

³ Based on the results of the 14th Japanese National Fertility Survey conducted in 2010, the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (2012: 16) reports that 88% of the married couples in the survey formed their marriage as love-marriage.

that distinguishes the patterns of educational assortative mating between married and unmarried couples in Japan. Our paper presents the first systematic account of this topic.

Moreover, comparing married and unmarried couples will contribute to our understanding of marriage behavior in Japan. Courtship behavior of unmarried couples, including their patterns of assortative mating, is one of the most under-explored topics in Japanese sociological studies in general and marriage studies in particular, despite the importance of the courtship phase as a transitory state leading to marriage. Our explicit distinction of couples with different partnership statuses highlights the difference between the types of couples and the relationship between courtship and marriage. We also provide a comparison with the United States in order to highlight the distinctiveness of the patterns of Japanese couples.

The next section explains the datasets and methods used in our analysis. The third section reports the results of our analyses for Japan and the United States. The final section summarizes the main findings and discusses some implications of the differences in the pattern of educational assortative mating between the two nations.

Data and Methods

To characterize distinct patterns of educational assortative mating, we use datasets that specify the educational levels of both married and unmarried couples. We use the Japanese Life Course Panel Survey (JLPS) for Japanese couples.⁴ The JLPS is a nationally representative panel survey conducted annually by the Center for Social Research and Data Archives at the University of Tokyo. The sample design included men and women between the ages of 20 to 34 (youth sample) and 35 to 40 (middle-aged sample) who were living in Japan in 2007. We use the information

collected in wave 1 (2007) through wave 5 (2011) when the respondents were 24 to 44 (for details of the survey, see Ishida et al. 2012).

The data for couples in the United States come from the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). The NSFG is a nationally representative survey conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The survey is cross-sectional in design but conducted periodically. The sample design included men and women in the United States between the ages of 15 to 45 during the survey period and we exclude everyone falling outside of our 20 to 44 age range. We use the 2006-2010 surveys which were conducted from June 2006 to June 2010.⁵

We differentiate two partnership statuses for couples in Japan and three for couples in the United States. For Japanese couples, we consider two kinds of status: dating and married. Three kinds of status are distinguished for the couples in the United States. The first status is unmarried and dating couple (denoted by "dating couple" hereafter); second is unmarried cohabitating couple (called "cohabitating couple"); and third is married couple. Cohabiting couples are classified as a separate category because they form more stable partnerships than dating couples and constitute a substantial portion of the unmarried population.

We use log-linear models that are fitted to the cross-classified data for Japanese and American couples. The greatest advantage of log-linear models is that they can estimate the likelihood of couple formation of the specific educational combinations (expressed in interaction parameters), while controlling for different marginal distributions of education for men and women.⁶

We treat female education as a row variable and male education as a column variable. Partnership status is a layer variable, for which we classify

⁴ We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S) (number 18103003 and 22223005) from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and research support from the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo, and Outsourcing, Inc. in conducting the panel surveys. Permission to use the panel data was granted by the Research Planning Committee of the JLPS.

⁵ Note that the sample is restricted to people age 20 to 44 at the time of the survey in order to match the age range of the JLPS. We also restrict our analysis to couples who are racially homogamous. We obtained the dataset from the website of the National Survey of Family Growth (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg.htm>). See National Center for Health Statistics (2011) for details.

⁶ Xie and Powers (2008) provide a systematic review of log-linear models with applications in sociology.

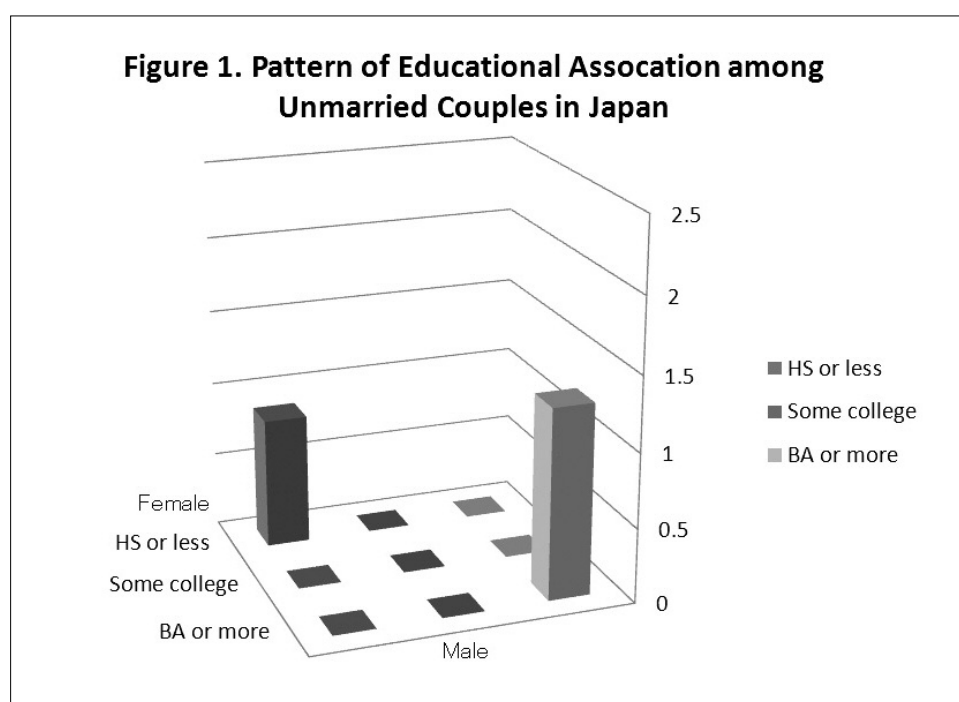
couples into either married or unmarried status in the JLPS and either dating, cohabitating, or married status in the NSFG⁷. We apply different log-linear models to the three-way table (row by column by layer) to model the pattern of association between men's and women's education. After estimating various log-linear models for the JLPS and the NSFG separately⁸, we report the results of our best-fitting model for Japan and the United States in the next section⁹.

Patterns of Educational Assortative Mating

Figures 1 and 2 show the pattern of educational assortative mating in Japan among unmarried couples and married couples.¹⁰ The figures show which combinations of education are found significant among the couples, and the bars represent the presence of significant association. Among unmarried couples, educational homogamy is found at the top and bottom levels

of education: men and women with college education are more likely to become partners with each other, and men and women with high school education are more likely to become partners with each other than with people of different educational levels. The degree of homogamy is stronger among college-educated couples than among couples with high school education. Among married couples, the same pattern of educational homogamy is found. In addition, there is a tendency of educational hypergamy (marrying up) among women with junior college degrees as they are more likely to marry men who graduated from four-year universities.¹¹

The most important finding in Japan is that the patterns of educational assortative mating are different for unmarried and married couples. There is a more apparent structuring among married couples. The strength of educational homogamy among college-educated couples is stronger



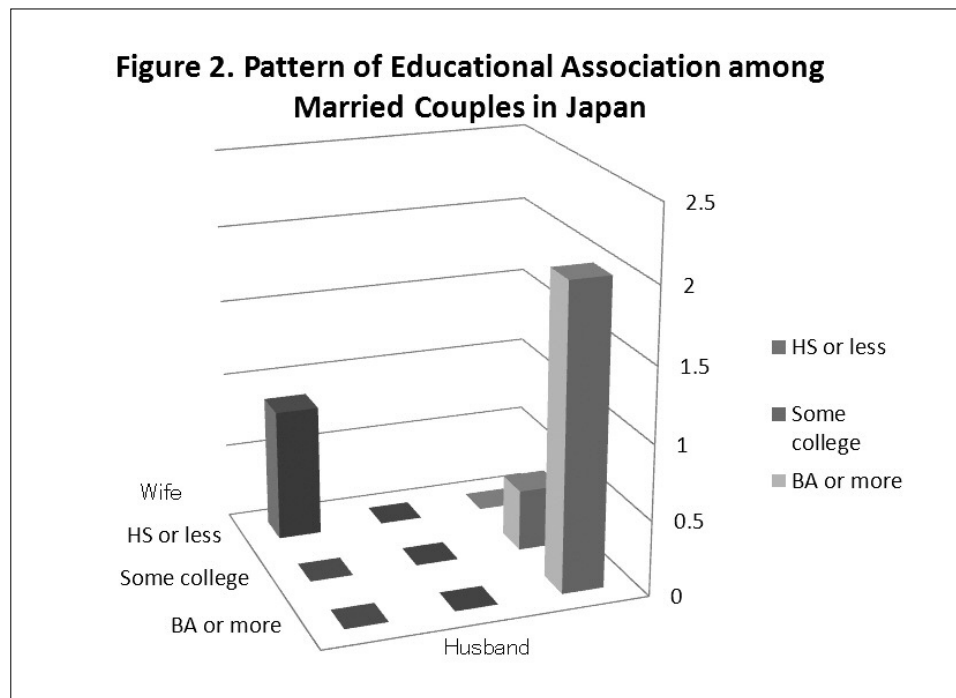
⁷ Previous research found high levels of racial homogamy in the United States in addition to educational homogamy. This suggests that our analysis should incorporate race as another layer variable. We estimated models allowing for patterns of educational assortative mating to vary by race, whites and non-whites. The model comparison tests, however, indicated that the models were not significantly different by race. So we present the results which assume the same model for whites and non-whites.

⁸ The models we estimated include independence and quasi-independence models. Xie and Powers (2008) provide the detailed explanations for the properties and interpretations of these models.

⁹ We first analyzed data separately for Japan and the United States. Once we arrived at the best-fitting model for each nation, we conducted statistical tests for the difference in parameters across nations.

¹⁰ The figures plot the log multiplicative parameters estimated from our best fitting model.

¹¹ The "some college" category includes women who attended technical colleges (*senmon gakkō*) or junior colleges. However, the tendency of hypergamy is observed only among women with junior college diplomas.



among married couples than among unmarried couples. There is an additional association of female hypergamy among married couples.

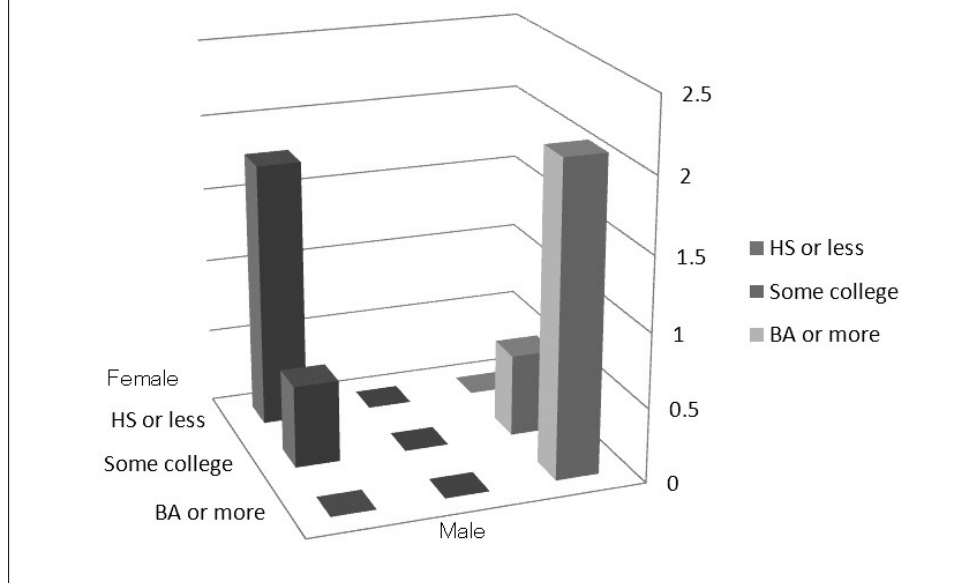
Figure 3 presents the pattern of educational assortative mating among couples in the United States. Although we distinguished married, cohabitating, and dating couples, the pattern of association is the same for all three types. The result shows that the pattern of association in the United States resembles that in Japan. First, there is a strong tendency for people with B.A. degrees to form partnerships with the equally educated, and their level of educational homogamy is almost the same as Japanese married couples. Second, as with the case of B.A. degree holders, there is also a strong tendency for Americans with no more than a high school education to form partnerships with the equally least educated. The extent of homogamy is significantly stronger than that found in Japan. The reason for their strong degree of homogamy derives from the fact that more than 40 percent of people with no post-secondary education in the US are high school dropouts. High school dropouts constitute the lowest level of educational attainment, and tend to have difficulty finding partners with higher levels of education. Those with high school diplomas also tend to form partnerships with those with a similar level of education, but the extent of the homogamy is weaker than that of high school dropouts. Third, women with college education,

especially those with A.A. degrees, have a tendency of hypergamy, that is, marrying up or forming partnership with those with B.A. degrees. In addition, women with some college education have a tendency to find partners who have education lower than themselves. Although women with some college education are composed of those with A.A. degrees and those who dropped out of college, both show two contradictory propensities (matching with partners with higher education and those with lower education).

Discussion

Our paper is the first systematic attempt to distinguish the pattern of educational assortative mating between married and unmarried couples in Japan. As far as we know, none of the previous research examined the pattern of educational association among unmarried couples. The most significant finding of our analysis is the difference in the pattern of educational assortative mating between married and courtship couples in Japan. Educational levels of the couples show a more structured pattern among married ones: there is apparently a stronger educational homogamy among married couples who graduated from four-year colleges and a propensity for women with junior college educations to marry men with B.A. degrees. In other words, unmarried couples seem to place less emphasis on the educational

Figure 3. Pattern of Educational Association in the United States



level of their partners than married couples. It is, therefore, possible to speculate that education and other characteristics of the partner are taken more seriously in deciding on a marriage partner than in selecting a courtship partner. Japanese people may hold different standards in mate selection between courtship and marriage.

In contrast, in the United States, the same pattern of educational association characterized all three types of couples: dating, cohabitating, and married. Regardless of relationship type, Americans appear to take serious account of their partners' educational level. There is a clear propensity to find partners with the same level of education at the top and the bottom of the educational hierarchy. In other words, the difference between marriage mating and pre-marriage mating (cohabitation and dating) is not clearly marked as far as partners' educational association is concerned. Unlike Japan, marriage in the United States may not be clearly distinguishable from other long-term unmarried relationships. Previous research in the United States shows a continuous transition from pre-marital to marital stages. For example, Thornton, Axinn, and Xie (2007: 86) report that about three-fifths of young people "who had cohabited reported that they planned to marry their partner before they started to live together." Cohabitations tend to occur with clear plans for marriage. Our data also suggest a similar finding: 26 percent of the Japanese married couples had

cohabitated with their spouses prior to marriage, while 54 percent of the American married couples had done so. There is a much smoother transition from cohabitation to marriage in the United States. The difference in the patterns of educational assortative mating between unmarried and married couples in Japan may reflect a discontinuous transition from courtship to marriage.

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The Impact of a Woman's First Job and Non-Regular Employment on Marriage Timing

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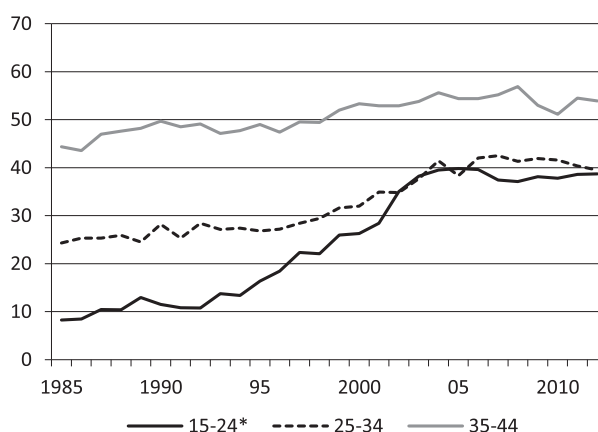
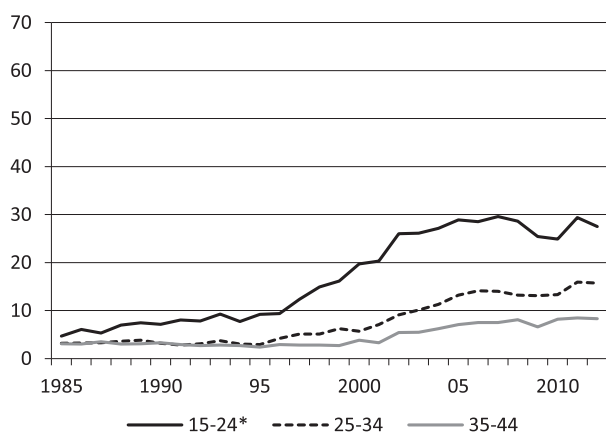
According to Becker's (1981) family theory, the tendency to marry later is explained in terms of women's economic independence. In other words, as women pursue higher levels of education, they enhance their economic independence, thereby reducing the benefits of marriage, and in

some cases, they choose not to marry. This is known as the economic independence hypothesis. In Japan, the opportunity cost of marriage, that is, the fact that it remains difficult to continue one's career after marriage and childbirth, has also been noted as a factor contributing to delayed marriage (Yashiro 1993).

Given this, one may wonder how the recent deterioration of the employment situation for young people has affected their marriage decisions. Here, I will focus on the difference between regular and non-regular employment as a representative indicator of economic standing. Although non-regular employment is less lucrative in any nation, rigidities in Japan's labor market make it unusually difficult to transition from non-regular to regular work. Failing to find regular employment at the start of their careers can shut people out of the middle class. Figures 1a and 1b show the change over time in the percentage of people in non-regular employment by age group. The data reveals that non-regular employment has been increasing for both men and women since the mid-1990s and that the rate of increase is particularly noticeable among persons under the age of 25, most of whom are unmarried.

Figure 1a Percentage of non-regular employees by age group (Men)

Figure 1b Percentage of non-regular employees by age group (Women)



Source: *Labor Force Survey*, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Note: The 15- to 24-year age group does not include students who work part-time.

Next, let us examine the percentage of unmarried people by age and type of employment (Figures 2a and 2b). According to this data, the percentage of unmarried men is higher for those in non-regular positions, while the percentage of unmarried women is higher for those in regular positions. While this fits with economic independence hypotheses, the correlation between employment type and marital status cannot be taken to imply causation because there are also people who work part-time after getting married.

Since the relationship between employment type and marriage cannot be properly ascertained from cross-sectional data collected at a specific point in time, an analysis using longitudinal information is needed. I have attempted to tackle this problem by using the Japanese Life Course Panel Survey (JLPS), a panel survey of young

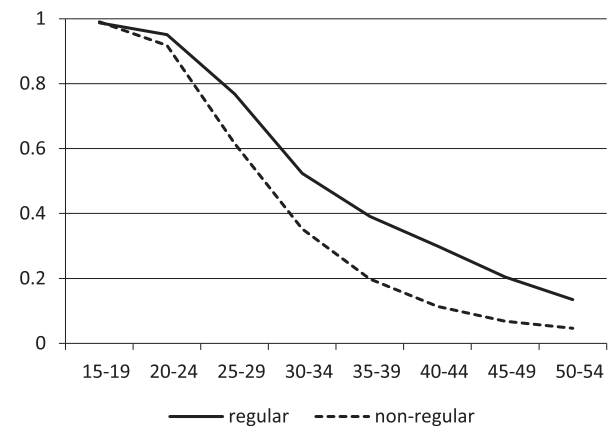
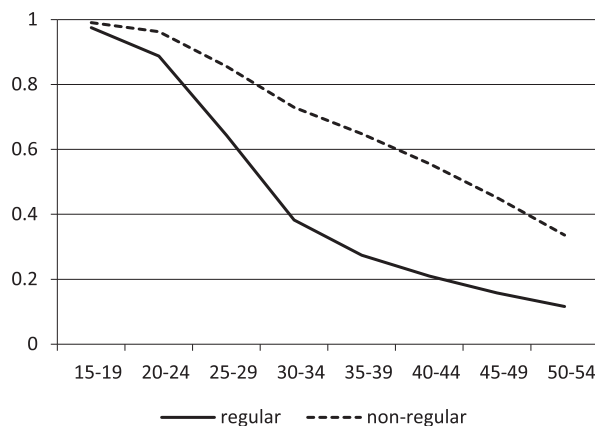
Japanese conducted by the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo.

An event history analysis that also includes cases of subjects who were unmarried at the time of the survey (censored data) is conducted. Excluding persons who were remarried at the time of the first JLPS survey in 2007, I used the Kaplan-Meier Method to estimate the residual non-marriage rate (i.e., survival rate) for the period from the legal age of consent to marry (18 for men, 16 for women) until marriage.

Men whose first job is a regular position clearly marry earlier than men whose first job is a non-regular position. On the other hand, while the step lines for women intersect and are unclear, they do reveal that women in non-regular employment through the tenth year (mid-20s)

Figure 2a Percentage of unmarried people by employment type (Men)

Figure 2b Percentage of unmarried people by employment type (Women)



Source: *Population Census 2010*, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Note: Non-regular employment includes dispatched workers and temporary part-time workers (*arubaito*).

Figure 3a Survival estimates by employment status: Men (log-rank test $\chi^2=32.1$, $p<.001$)

Figure 3b Survival estimates by employment status: Women (log-rank test $\chi^2=8.6$, $p<.010$)

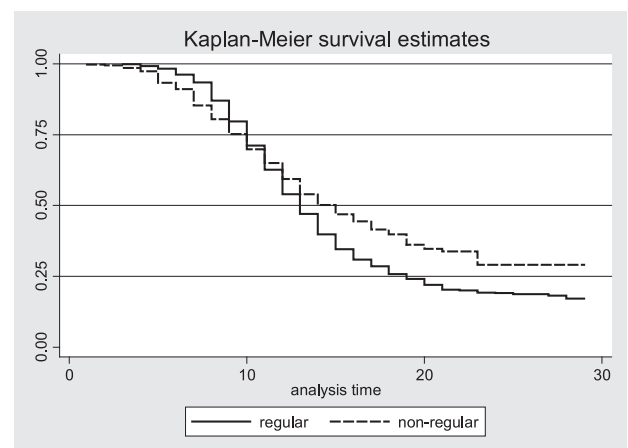
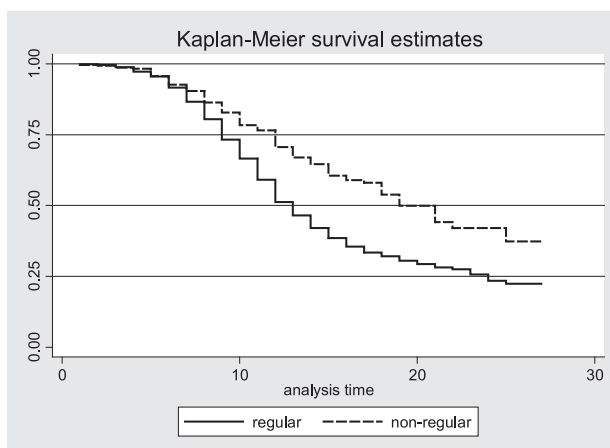
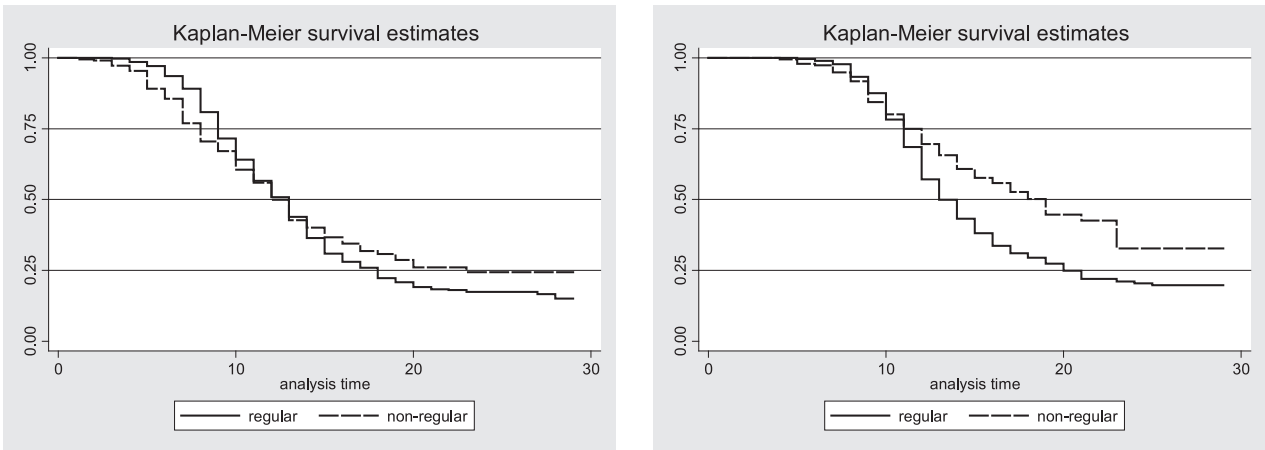


Figure 4a Survival estimates by employment status: Junior high school/high school graduates (log-rank test $\chi^2=0.12$, ns)
Figure 4b Survival estimates by employment status: Junior college/university graduates (log-rank test $\chi^2=15.78$, $p<.001$)



marry earlier than those in regular positions. Since this calculation does not account for differences in graduation year due to different education levels, I conducted a series of analyses stratified for each education level.

For high school graduates, the difference between regular and non-regular employment was not statistically significant. However, there is a tendency for junior college and university graduates in regular positions to marry earlier, while those in non-regular positions marry later. This trend is

the same for men and women, which means these findings are contrary to the economic independence hypothesis. Why do women whose first job after graduating junior college or university is non-regular end up marrying later?

I have tried to answer this question using clues from the occupational information below. The following table lists occupational classifications according to education level and the type of employment for the respondents' first jobs (Table 1). This category is contrived by the Social Stratifi-

Table 1 Comparison of women’s first job occupational classifications by education level

	High School Graduate		Junior College Graduate		University Graduate	
	Regular	Non-Regular	Regular	Non-Regular	Regular	Non-Regular
1st	General office clerks	Shop salespersons	General office clerks	General office clerks	General office clerks	General office clerks
2nd	<i>Nurses *</i>	Waiters/ waitresses	Accounting clerks	Shop salespersons	Sales clerks	Shop salespersons
3rd	Shop salespersons	Cashiers	<i>Nursery school teachers</i>	Waiters/ waitresses	General accounting	<i>Junior high school teachers</i>
4th	Accounting clerks	General office clerks	Sales clerks	<i>Nursery school teachers</i>	Shop salespersons	Waiters/ waitresses
5th	<i>Other health care professionals</i>	Barbers, hairdressers, beauticians	Shop salespersons	Cashiers	<i>Information technology engineers</i>	<i>Private instructors</i>
6th	Other office clerks		<i>Kindergarten teachers</i>		Door-to-door sales	<i>Junior high school teachers</i>
7th	Barbers, hairdressers, beauticians					<i>High school teachers</i>

Note: SSM occupational classification codes. Professionals are listed in italics.
 *) In Japan, nurses are qualified by nursing school, junior college, or college. Nursing school is regarded as high school graduate in this table.

cation and social Mobility (SSM) research project)¹⁾.

While most female employees begin as clerical workers, a closer look at the skilled professions reveals considerable differences in the type of work by education: high school graduates tend to become nurses, junior college graduates become nursery school and kindergarten teachers, and university graduates become information technology engineers or school teachers. These results suggest that some kind of occupations and their working conditions, such as working long hours or male-female ratio of workplace, may be related to the likelihood of getting married. Previous studies have shown that experience of non-regu-

lar employment has a negative effect on the marriage rates of males and females. These results imply that employment status is not enough to explain delayed marriage. To understand the transition to marriage, we need to consider not only employment status, but also occupational characteristics and workplace environments.

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¹⁾ SSM occupational classification has about 200 categories. This classification is adopted by major Japanese social research projects, such as SSM surveys, Japanese GSS, and JLPS.

The Effect of Married Couples' Incomes on Marital Satisfaction

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1. Introduction

In this article, I explore the effect of married couples' incomes on marital satisfaction. Numerous studies on marital satisfaction have been conducted in Japan and overseas, and many of these have focused on the effect of the spouses' division of domestic duties and child care on women's marital satisfaction. Less has been written about how couples are affected by changes in one or both spouses' income or when women earn nearly as much or more than their husbands. Using data from the Japanese Life Course Panel Survey (JLPS), conducted by the University of Tokyo's Institute of Social Science, I analyzed the impact of income on marital satisfaction by specially focusing on the following two questions.

First, how do changes in income affect marital satisfaction? To answer this, I examined husbands' and wives' incomes separately and grouped marital satisfaction levels according to the gender of the respondents. This means there exist four pat-

terns for relationships between income changes and marital satisfaction which are determined by combinations of husbands' incomes and satisfaction levels and wives' incomes and satisfaction levels. Put simply, one can assume that an increase in the income of the husband, the primary breadwinner in the household, would increase the marital satisfaction of both partners. Conversely, an increase in the wife's income would heighten her economic independence and weaken her dependence on the marriage, which might, in turn, lower her marital satisfaction. The second question is how do husbands' and wives' share of total household income affect marital satisfaction? By treating the proportion of a couple's total income contributed by the wife as the independent variable, as opposed to examining changes in actual income, it is possible to observe the effect of a married couple's economic co-dependence on their marital satisfaction.

To address this question, I employed two opposing hypotheses on wives' income share and divorce risk from Rogers (2004) and Nock (2001). The first is the equal dependence hypothesis which states that the economic dependency and obligation contribute to marital commitment and stability. The risk of divorce indicates highest when wives' and husbands' economic contributions are approximately equal, because this is the point at which mutual obligations are weakest. If this is correct, then graphing wives' income share on the X axis and divorce risk on the Y axis should result in an inverted U-shaped correlation. The competing hypothesis, the role collaboration hypothesis, predicts that, based on husbands' and wives' egalitarian consciousness, the more equal their economic contributions are, the more stable their marriages will be. In contrast, if the couples are highly economically dependent on one partner, it will increase the risk of divorce. Therefore, under the role collaboration hypotheses, the correlation between wives' income share and divorce risk will appear as a U shape. Rogers' (2004) argument focused primarily on the risk of divorce,

and since it predicts a correlation between a high risk of divorce and low marital satisfaction are correlated, I will apply this thinking to marital satisfaction in this article.

2. Data and Methods

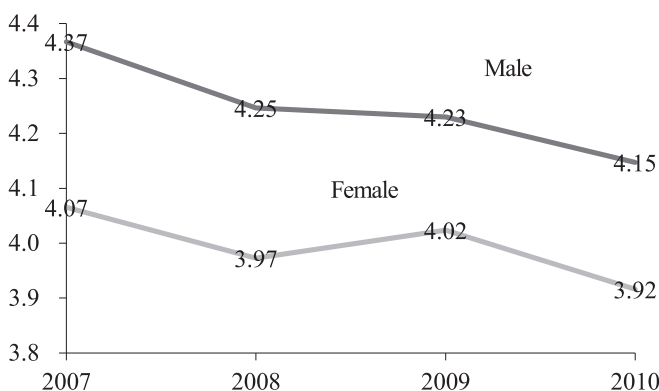
The data for this study comes from Wave 1 (2007) through Wave 4 (2010) of the Japanese Life Course Panel Survey (JLPS) for the Young and the Middle-Aged. Marital satisfaction was measured from responses to the "married life" sub-item of the question, "At present, how satisfied are you with the following?" The survey used a five-step response scale (satisfied, somewhat satisfied, neutral, somewhat dissatisfied, dissatisfied), and I scored responses from one to five, with five being the most positive response.

By excluding respondents who had lost a spouse to death or divorce or who had remarried, I limited this study to those respondents who had the same spouse in all four waves. The sample size which I used is 1120 men and 1344 women. And we can know the income of their spouses in the questionnaire. To estimate each independent variable against marital satisfaction, I used the fixed effects model in my analysis of the panel survey data.

3. Analysis

First, let us examine changes in marital satisfaction from the survey data. Figure 1 shows the average values for men's and women's marital satisfaction at four time points between 2007 and 2010. As previous research indicates (Nagai 2005),

Figure 1 Average scores for marital satisfaction by gender

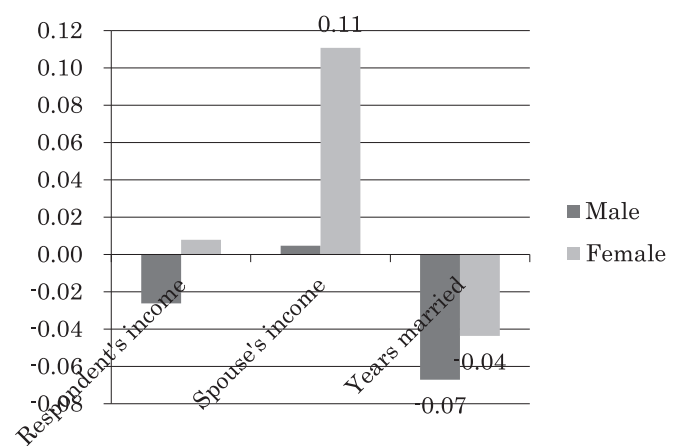


Note: Respondents married to the same spouse at all four time points.

Figure 1 reveals an overall decline in marital satisfaction in both men and women over time. It also shows that men are more satisfied with their marriages than women.

Next, I conducted an analysis using the fixed effects model treating marital satisfaction as the dependent variable and couples' actual incomes and years married as independent variables. Since the values for income have undergone logarithmic transformation, "No income" are converted to "1 yen" before the logarithmic transformation is applied.

Figure 2 Coefficients of independent variables (Respondent's income + spouse's income + years married)

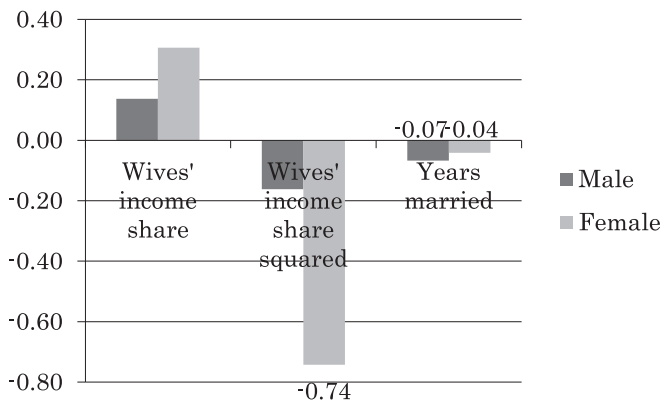


Note: Coefficients statistically significant at the 10% level are labeled.

Figure 2 plots the coefficients of each independent variable obtained from the regression analysis. This reveals that neither husbands' nor wives' incomes have a significant effect on men's marital satisfaction; rather, the number of years married is the only factor that has a significant negative effect. Therefore, there is a steady decline in men's marital satisfaction over time (see Figure 1) even when controlling for income. However, in addition to the number of years married, one can see that husbands' incomes have a positive effect on women's marital satisfaction. In other words, increases in husbands' incomes lead to higher marital satisfaction for wives.

Next, I analyzed the impact of couples' economic co-dependence on marital satisfaction by treating wives' income share as the independent variable. Figure 3, like Figure 2, plots the coefficients of the independent variables obtained from regression

Figure 3 Coefficients of independent variables (Wives' income share + wives' income share squared + years married)



Note: Coefficients statistically significant at the 10% level are labeled.

analysis. The data shows that the ratio of wives' income does not have a significant effect on men's marital satisfaction. However, since the ratio of wives' income squared has a significant negative effect on women's marital satisfaction, one can see the inverted U-shaped correlation between women's marital satisfaction and their income ratio. That being said, while the ratio of wives' income does not have a significant primary effect, the value is positive. Completely equal economic co-dependence in married couples does not raise marital satisfaction for wives. The estimated regression equation shows that women's marital satisfaction is the highest when wives' income accounts for approximately 15% to 25% of couples' total income.

Next, I analyzed what the real conditions of couples are when the ratio of wives' income is 15% to

25%. To ascertain this, I classified 1021 couples into five groups according to wives' income share (0~15%, 16~25%, 26~45%, 46~55%, 56~100%) and compared their employment status and couples' total income across the groups.

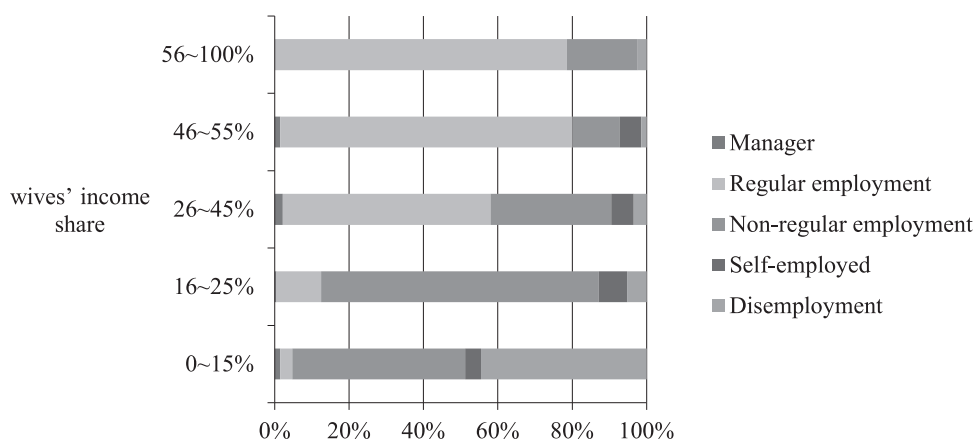
Figure 4 shows the distribution of women's employment status per group. As expected, the higher the income shares of wives were, the more likely their employment was regular. The most important factor is that the overwhelming proportion (roughly 75%) of women in the group with the highest marital satisfaction gleaned from Figure 3 (i.e., the group in which wives' income share is 15% to 25%) are employed part-time or in other non-regular employment.

Figure 5 depicts the average income of couples in the aforementioned five groups. The most economically well-off group is the one in which the wives' income share is 35% to 45%, followed by the group with an income share of 45% to 55%. Relatively speaking, the group in which the ratio of the wives' income is 15% to 25% cannot be considered economically advantaged. However, what we need to pay attention to is the average income of wives in the 15% to 25% group is 1.127 million yen, which is just under the 1.3 million yen threshold above which spouses have to contribute to social security and the national pension fund.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

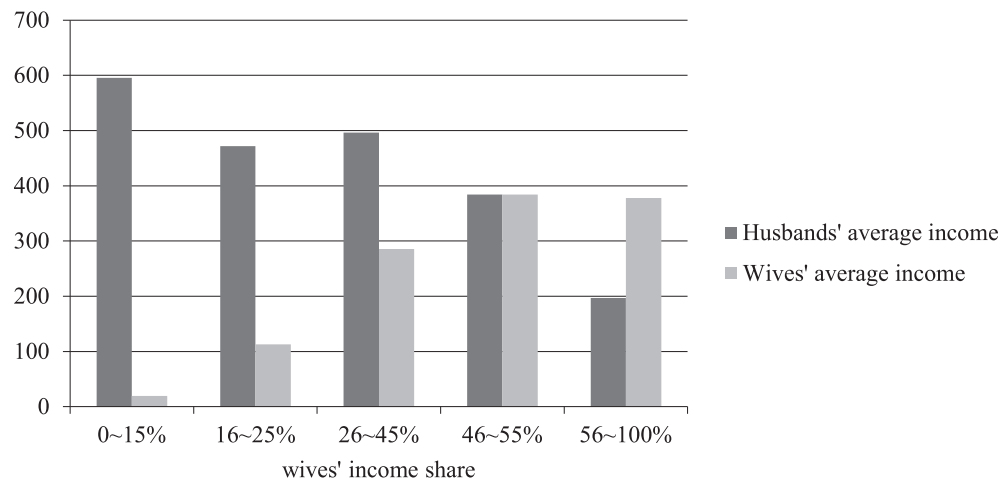
As Figure 5 shows, the wives with the highest marital satisfaction are those with annual incomes

Figure 4 Wives' employment status per group according to wives' income share



Note: Data from JLPS Wave 4 (2010). Limited to respondents married to the same spouse at all four time points.

Figure 5 Average incomes of husbands and wives per group according to wives' income share



Note: Data from JLPS 2010 (Wave 4) and is limited to respondents married to the same spouse in each survey year.

near the 1.3 million yen threshold for mandatory payments for social insurance, which suggests that the traditional gender-based division of labor is alive and well in Japan. The fact that most respondents indicated satisfaction with a gendered division of labor rooted in traditional values probably makes it hard for married women to achieve a work-life balance. One likely reason for this is that compliance with the current system has become a condition for marital satisfaction. Figure 4 shows that the group in which the wives' income share is the highest is predominantly occupied by regularly employed women. This, coupled with the added burden of housekeeping and child care, seems to keep marital satisfaction levels low. In contemporary Japanese society, the movement away from the standard roles of wives working to supplement household income will

decrease marital satisfaction for wives, thereby making marriage difficult to sustain.

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Marrying Late or Not at All: Changing Life Course Choices among Young Women in Japan

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1. Defining the Problem

The employment patterns of women in Japan have changed over the decades. Until the 1970s, young women mostly aspired to being full-time housewives (Iwakami 2007). In the 1980s, the participation of Japanese women in the work force began to follow an “M” shaped curve as they aged; women generally entered the labor force after high school, junior college or university, quit their jobs to raise children, and then returned to employment after their children grow up. Since the late 1980s, more women have been starting families and remaining continuously employed. More women are also delaying marriage or not marrying at all. The diversification of women's life courses is partly the product of increases in the number of women pursuing higher education and working outside the home since the 1980s.

This paper uses panel data to understand how current labor market conditions may be affecting how young women choose their life courses. The

data used in this analysis is from the High School Graduate Panel Survey, a longitudinal survey that tracks respondents who graduated in 2004 and comprises one of three sections of the Japanese Life Course Panel Survey (JLPS).

In 2010, 30.6% of unmarried women aged 18 to 34 indicated that their “ideal” life course would be to “work and have a family”, although 35.2%, the highest rate this year, still said they would prefer to work discontinuously in the “M” pattern in this survey begun in 1987 (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2012). However, when women were asked about what they *expected*, only 24.7% believed that they would actually be able to work continuously if they had children. The gap between young women's life course ideals and their expectations presumably reflects how labor market conditions, the under-supply of childcare services, and the small number of hours Japanese men typically spend on housework are pushing women to look at family and work as an either/or proposition.

Women who wish to be stay-at-home mothers are also finding it difficult to realize the previously common life patterns of full-time housewife and re-employment after childrearing. In other words, women who would prefer a marriage with a gendered division of labor in which men are the primary breadwinners are also finding it harder to pursue their preferred life course. Delaying marriage is a rational response to the decline in the number of young men who can support a family.

In fact, in 2010 the percentage of people age 50 who had never married reached 20.1% for men and 10.6% for women—the highest figures on record for both sexes (Yomiuri Shimbun)—and the average age at first marriage had risen to 30.5 years for men and 28.8 for women (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research 2012). One factor fueling this trend toward delaying marriage or not marrying is the increase in job insecurity among young people since the 1990s.

Japan's worsening labor market conditions are pushing large numbers of recent graduates into temporary, non-regular employment with limited prospects of ever achieving the job security that Japan was once famous for. Women are still interested in finding spouses with stable jobs in order to guarantee income security over their lifetimes. It is riskier for women to choose marriage partners with low expected lifetime earnings and the pool of unmarried men with promising futures is shrinking (Oshima 2011).

As survey research has shown, women's desired life course patterns are indeed diversifying, but none of them are easy to realize. While some researchers have noted recent trends of "professional housewife-ization" or "conservatism" among young women (Ishizaki 2004, Yoshizawa 2005, Matsuda 2005), I find it unlikely that these trends are entirely unrelated to the employment situation facing women.

2. Research Question and Analysis

The greatest strength of the High School Graduate Panel Survey data is that it can be used to track changes over time in any given variable for each respondent. I compare the answers respondents gave five (y5) and eight (y8) years after finishing high school (i.e., 2008 and 2011) in order to examine the relationship between changes in attribute variables and respondents' current life course expectations. As for factors contributing to life course perspective, I focus on family formation as well as work. The analysis covered data on 223 women who responded in both y5 and y8.

2.1 Explanations of Respondent Attributes and Variables

Table 1 lists the attributes of the respondents at both points in time. Over 80% of respondents are employed, but the percentage of "non-regular" employment is higher in y8 than in y5 and a high percentage of women report earning less than 120,000 yen, which suggests that the incomes of many respondents have plateaued.¹ The percent-

Table 1 Basic respondent attributes (at y5 and y8)

	y5	y8
Last school attended	(222)	(220)
High school	16.2	17.0
Technical or vocational school	26.1	24.1
Junior college	17.1	16.8
University or graduate school	40.5	41.4
Employment type	(221)	(223)
Regular	58.1	50.7
Non-regular or other	27.3	33.2
Student, unemployed etc.	14.6	16.1
Job category	(155)	(185)
Professional / technical	31.0	31.9
Clerical / sales	47.1	48.6
Service / skilled labor	21.9	19.5
Income	(218)	(222)
Less than 120,000 yen	27.5	32.0
120,000 - 159,999 yen	38.5	34.2
160,000 - 199,999 yen	23.9	22.5
200,000 yen or more	10.1	11.3
Status of residence	(223)	(223)
Live alone	18.4	17.9
Live with parents or other family	81.6	82.1
Marital status	(220)	(218)
Married	6.4	21.1
Single	93.6	78.9
Dating status	(205)	(173)
Yes	46.3	53.2
Broke up	23.9	20.8
No	29.8	26.0
Life course expectation	(217)	(222)
Career-oriented	31.4	40.5
Non-career-oriented	68.6	59.5

¹ In this article, currently employed owners/executives and full-time employees are considered "regular employees" while currently employed part-time workers, casual workers, contract staff, temporary staff, non-regular staff, self-employed individuals, freelancers, persons engaged in family business, and respondents who selected "other" are considered "non-regular employees." Individuals who are not currently employed are classified as "unemployed."

Table 2 Changes in attributes from y5 to y8

Employment type	(197)
Remained a regular employee	43.7
Became a regular employee	11.2
Became a non-regular employee or unemployed	14.7
Remained a non-regular employee or unemployed	30.5
Income	(217)
No change	21.2
Decreased	39.6
Increased	39.2
Marital status	(216)
Got married	14.8
No change	85.2
Dating status	(169)
Yes, at both times	31.4
Started dating	21.3
Broke up	10.1
No, at both times	37.3

age of married women increased from 6.4% to 21.1%, while the percentage of those who currently have boyfriends rose from 46.3% to 53.2%, which means marriage is more likely when women are in their mid-20s. While what I have just described represents the gross change between the two points in time, I also took advantage of the aforementioned strength of the panel data to examine how changes in employment type, income, marital status, and dating status between 2008 and 2011 affected women's life course goals at the individual level (Table 2).

Looking at changes pertaining to work, 70% of respondents experienced no change in employment type. Approximately 30% either switched from non-regular employment or unemployment to regular employment or vice-versa. As for income, 40% reported increases, 20% reported no change, and 40% reported decreases. In response to questions on family formation, 14.8% of

women had married, while 30% reported changes in their dating status.

In this study, the dependent variable is life course expectations. The aim of this article is to explain the hesitation that women feel about their life course expectations given that, as I mentioned earlier, it is getting increasingly difficult to enter into a marriage based on a particular gender division of labor. The survey gave women nine possible responses to the question, "What kind of lifestyle do you want to lead?" I divided the respondents into two groups based on whether or not they were planning to continue working after marriage and/or childbirth: career oriented women and non-career oriented women.²

2.2 Changes in Attributes and Life Course Expectations

After cross-tabulating the attribute variables (employment type, income, marital status, dating status) and life course expectations at each point in time, I found there were no significant correlations for any of the variables at y5, but there were significant correlations for employment type, income, and marital status at y8.

Next, I looked at the cross-table again to confirm the kinds of changes in attribute variables from y5 to y8 that resulted in different life course expectations at present. My analysis revealed that changes in employment type and changes in income were significant at the 1% level, while changes in marital status were significant at the 10% level. There was no significant correlation for changes in dating status (Figure 1). First, with regard to changes in employment type, about half of the women who remained or became regular employees were in the career oriented group, followed by 40% who remained non-regular employees. Meanwhile, only 10% of women who became non-regular employees or unemployed belonged to this group. The career oriented group accounted for about half of the women who reported no change or an increase in income and

² "Career oriented" refers to respondents who indicated they would "continue working even after getting married and having children," "continue working even after getting married, but not have children," and "continue working without getting married." "Non-career oriented" refers to respondents who indicated they would "not work, get married and stay at home," "stop working after marriage," "stop working after getting pregnant," and "get married but stop working temporarily after getting pregnant until my child grows up," as well those who selected "other" and "don't know."

Figure 1 Cross tabulation of changes in attributes over time (y5→y8) and current life course perspectives



** $p < .01$, * $p < .1$

less than 30% of those who reported decreases.

As for family formation, women who had not experienced the major life event of marriage were more likely to belong to the career oriented group than those who had gotten married. Women who reported having no boyfriend at both time points were more likely to belong to the non-career oriented group, but this correlation was not statistically significant.

3. Conclusions

The analysis I conducted herein reveals that employment and income insecurity tend to undermine women's desire to continue working, and that anticipation of becoming more insecure--switching to non-regular employment or unemployment--rather than being in insecure situations which remain "as is" (remaining in non-regular employment or unemployment) may drive women to opt for marriage. Perhaps increasing instability in the labor market is one factor that discourages women from staying employed. Faced with the gendered division of labor in the workplace, more women are losing their desire to work and choosing non-career oriented lives once they get married. It also appears that this trend is

being propelled forward by marriage, that is, the act of placing oneself within an alternate gendered division of labor.

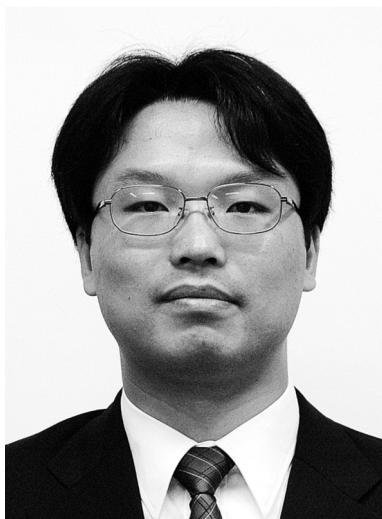
In fact, Ochiai (2004) referred to the social phenomenon in which "everyone got married and had two or three children" as "reproductive egalitarianism." In that kind of society, it was probably "natural" for women to choose non-career oriented life courses such as full-time housewife or finding another job after marriage. That being said, the foundation of the so-called "modern family model" in which men are the primary breadwinners and women take care of the home, is starting to crumble, and women, too, are wavering over what kind of life courses they should choose. While life course expectations have an impact on people's actual lives (Nishikawa 2001), those very same expectations are changing in response to the situations in which women find themselves. The added impact of the worsening labor market means that a woman's entire life course perspective, including both career and family formation, is affected by the employment conditions she experienced in her mid-20s. Given this, I would like to emphasize the significant impact of early career development for women on their life courses.

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The Transition from School to Work in Japan: The Role of Job Placement Assistance Provided by Schools

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In Japan, it remains customary for students to secure jobs while they are still in school, to begin working immediately upon graduation, and to continue working for a single organization throughout their careers. Public and private employers in Japan primarily hire new graduates, a practice that makes switching employers difficult for workers. As a result, job hunting is of utmost concern for Japanese students, because the success, or failure, of their first job search is likely to affect them throughout their careers.

Many sociologists are also deeply concerned with the issue of initial employment. For instance, the relationship between social strata and initial employment is a conventional research theme, but in my research on the school-to-work transi-

tion, I have placed special emphasis on the process by which students secure their first jobs. In this article, I focus on the job placement assistance that schools provide to their students and discuss what role it plays in the landing of initial jobs. As I have previously written about this issue as it pertains to university students, I focus on vocational high schools and post-secondary technical schools here.¹

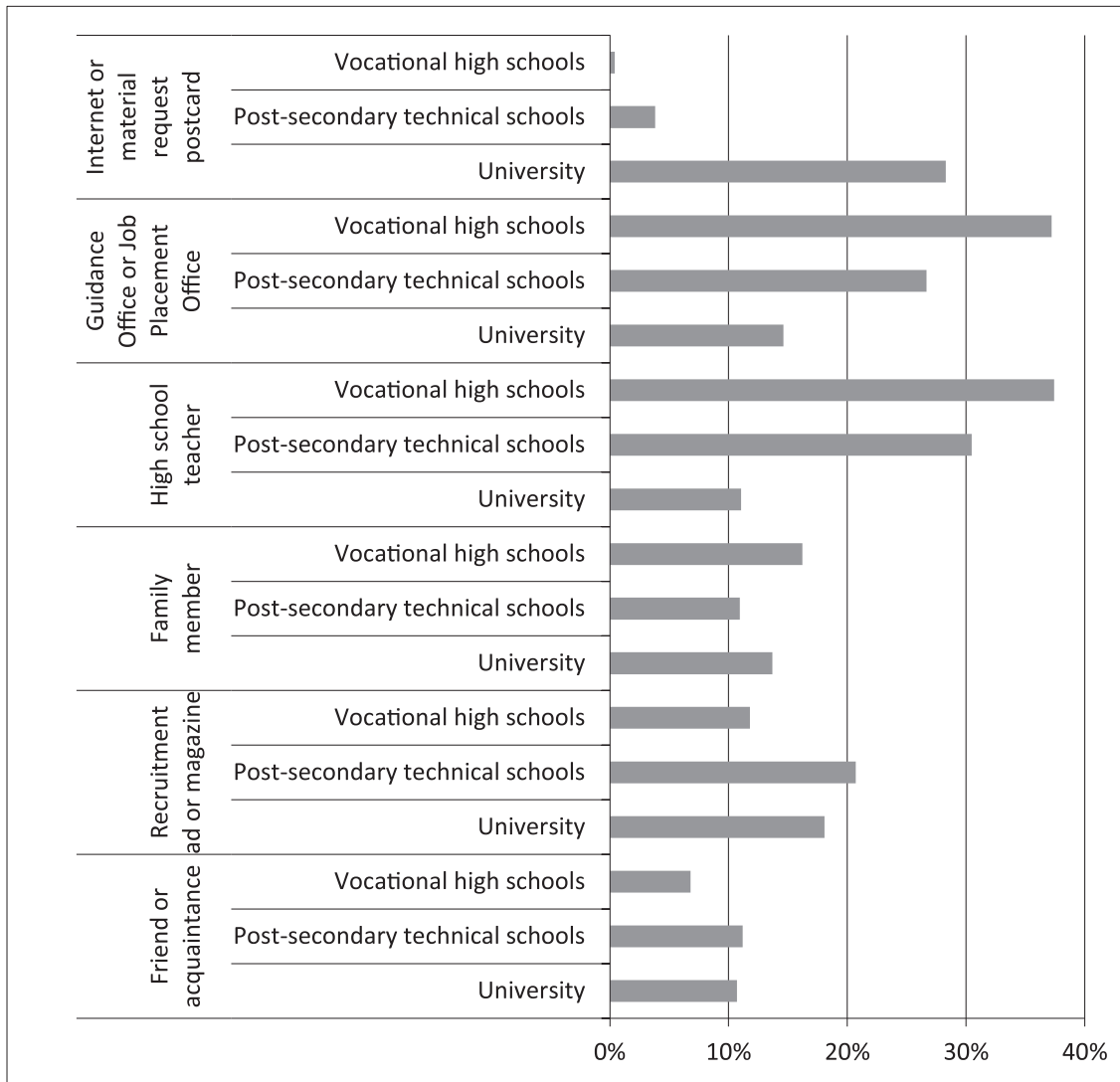
The first step is determining the extent to which schools in Japan provide job placement assistance. To do this, I have examined the findings of the Japanese Life Course Panel Surveys for Youth and the Middle-aged (JLPS-Y/JLPS-M), which the Institute of Social Science has been conducting since 2007.² Figure 1 below shows the distribution of responses to the question, "How did you find out about your first job and go about applying for it?" A large number of university students used company websites or mailed in requests for recruitment information to confirm whether companies were hiring or not. On the other hand, the majority of those in vocational high schools and post-secondary technical schools obtained information from their school's guidance or job placement offices.³ In Japan, schools are allowed to provide job placement assistance in lieu of government employment agencies, so companies send recruitment information directly to schools. Schools sort out the info alphabetically before making it available to their students through their job placement office. If students are interested in a company, they submit applications to the school which then forwards them to employers. Most students in vocational high schools and post-secondary technical schools use this kind of process to find work.

¹ Masao Oshima, "University Student Job Hunting and University Career Placement Divisions," *Social Science Japan* 40 (March 2009): 15-18.

² The initial survey was conducted from January to March 2007, and 4,800 responses were received. After that, follow-up surveys were conducted annually with the initial respondents, and the sixth survey is now underway in 2012. Respondents' ages ranged from 20 to 40 in 2007. The initial survey asked respondents what their first job was and the second survey asked them how they landed that job. Information on the panel survey can be found at <http://ssjda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/panel/>.

³ "Vocational high schools" are high schools that primarily teach job skills in fields such as manufacturing, commerce and agriculture. "Post-secondary technical schools" are generally post-secondary institutions with two-year programs.

Figure 1 Methods for finding initial employment by level of education



Source: Japanese Life Course Panel Surveys for Youth and the Middle-aged, 2007-08.

Note: Multiple answers allowed.

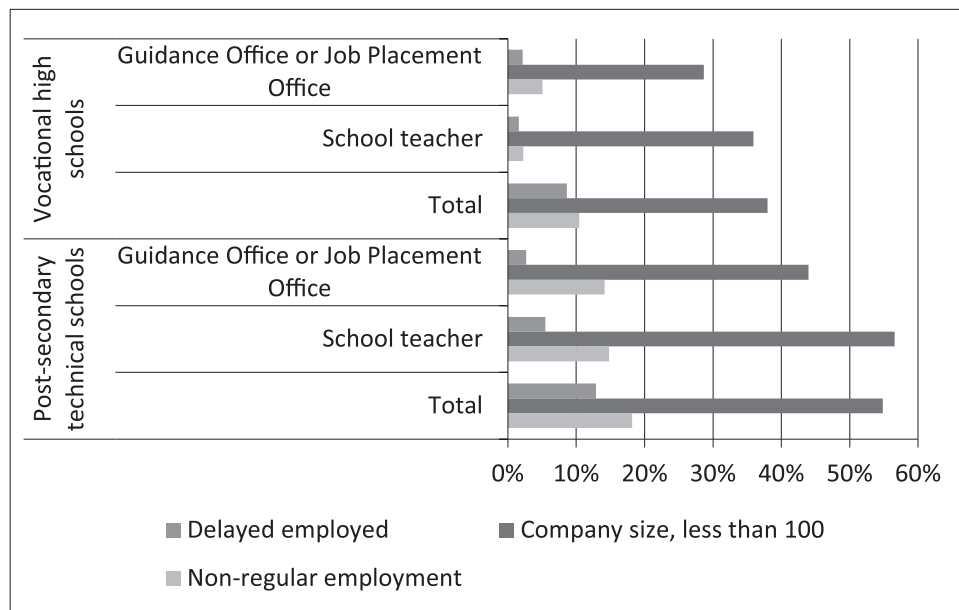
Many vocational high schools and post-secondary technical schools students report that teachers helped them to find work, which often refers to the process in which teachers tap into their personal networks to help students find jobs. That being said, the survey response of "school teacher" might also include teachers working in school guidance offices. This ambiguity is due to the fact that teachers handle job placement duties in most high schools, so there is considerable overlap between the two responses.⁴ Other responses, such as "family member" and "friend or acquaintance," indicate that students used their personal networks to find employment. In some cases students found work through a "recruitment ad or magazine." While a certain percentage

of students chose these responses, the figures are not very high.

How can we gauge the effectiveness of school's job placement programs? The JLPS-Y/JLPS-M data give us three indicators of the status or desirability of respondent's first jobs after graduation. The first is delayed employment. In a society where it is customary to begin working immediately after graduation, delayed employment is viewed as undesirable. In total, around 10% of students do not begin their first jobs immediately upon graduation. However, nearly all students who find employment via their school's job placement office or through a teacher quickly transition to work.

⁴ At universities, student employment offices are staffed by full-time administrative staff and faculty involvement is minimal.

Figure 2 Effect of placement assistance provided by schools on student job status



Source: Japanese Life Course Panel Surveys for Youth and the Middle-aged, 2007-08.

The second indicator of job status is company size because smaller companies commonly provide lower salaries and fewer benefits. Students will often steer clear of small companies in their job search. While there is no clear definition of a "small company," for the purposes of this study I define it as a firm with fewer than 100 employees. The data show that the percentage of students who found employment in small companies was slightly lower among those who found work with assistance from school placement offices.

The third indicator is non-regular (often fixed-term) employment, which usually entails more difficult working conditions and lower wages as well as job insecurity.⁵ Students who found jobs via school placement offices or teachers are less likely to enter into non-regular employment. While the difference is not very pronounced for post-secondary technical schools graduates, it is clearly visible for vocational high schools students. Given their lower rate of non-regular employment, it seems that students who receive job placement assistance from their schools tend to find jobs with better conditions than their peers who received no assistance.

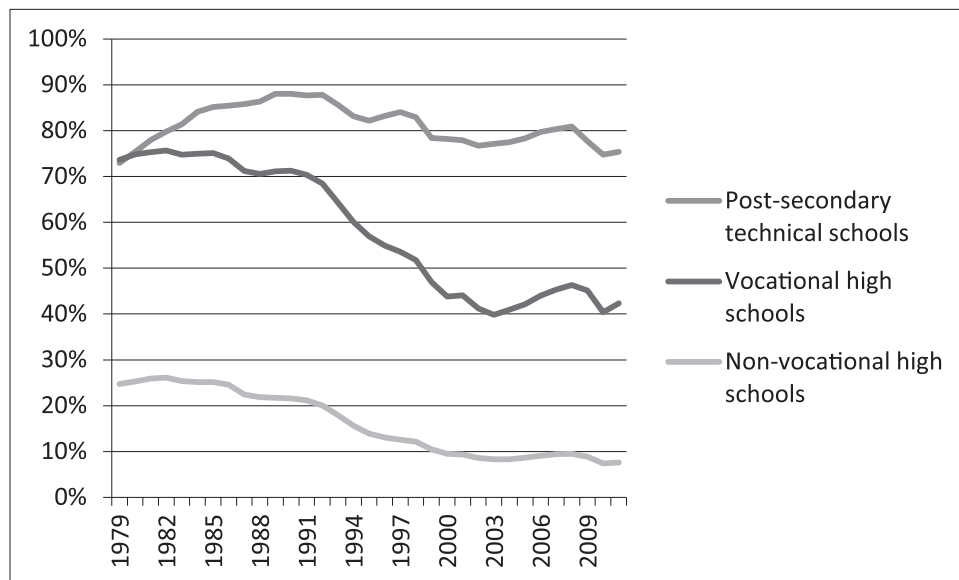
Because students acquire skills at school, graduates should have an easier time finding employ-

ment than the less educated. If this is the mechanism at work, then one could state that schools are involved in expanding job opportunities by providing education. However, the job placement assistance I explore in this article is one example of how schools expand job opportunities outside of the classroom in very concrete ways.

What is especially intriguing about these results is that job placement assistance provided in vocational and technical schools appears to have been effective. Both kinds of schools seek to expand student job opportunities by providing vocational education. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's *School Basic Survey*, "Percentage of New Graduates Entering Employment" for vocational high schools and post-secondary technical schools students are excellent. Figure 3 shows the percentage of high school graduates who choose work instead of postsecondary education. "Percentage of New Graduates Entering Employment" for vocational high schools students is falling as more students are opting to continue their education, but it is still extremely high compared to non-vocational high schools students. While there have been some minor fluctuations, "Percentage of New Graduates Entering Employment" for post-secondary technical schools students has

⁵ Given the custom of working for the long term once employed, it is generally understood that working without a fixed-term contract is the "regular" (i.e., standard) practice, while all other ways of working are "non-regular."

Figure 3 “Percentage of New Graduates Entering Employment” by school type, 1979-2012



Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *School Basic Survey*

been comparatively consistent at around 80%. Looking at this data, it is unmistakable that vocational education is helping to expand job opportunities for students. However, vocational education is not the whole picture: my analysis of JLPS data suggests that school-sponsored job placement assistance also contributes to this success.

When we think about the role that schools play in initial job placement, we often tend to focus solely on educational programs. However, as this article has shown, when we examine the details of what happens during the initial job placement process, we discover the true importance of the employment assistance provided by schools.

TANAKA Nobuyuki



At the request of the *SSJ Newsletter*, Tanaka Nobuyuki, Emeritus Professor of the Institute of Social Science has written a short reflection essay.

Chinese Law and the Lost Decade

In 1991, when I was appointed to the Institute of Social Science, the specter of Tiananmen Square still loomed, and there was a strong sense of stagnation surrounding the field of Chinese legal research. That winter, however, the Chinese government released the *White Paper on Human Rights* and thereby cast a ray of light onto the discipline. In 1992, China announced its intention to join the WTO and, in line with this, Chinese law changed tack toward globalization, thus enabling access to the rule of law. Chinese legal research was invigorated, and the sense of stagnation that existed before was swept away all at once.

Looking back, one might say the 1990s were the golden age of Chinese law and Chinese legal research. Chinese law entered a new age with the enactment of the *Company Law* in 1993, and this law opened a realm of new possibilities for Chinese legal research as well. In the late 1990s, the *Criminal Law* and the *Criminal Procedure Law* were revised, opening up new horizons for judicial reform. In rural areas, the direct election of village committees became common, and people began to see the potential for political reform. However, no one could have predicted that this new era of

Chinese law would end with China's ascension to the WTO in 2001.

In fact, when Jiang Zemin handed the reins of government over to Hu Jintao in 2002, I think that most people expected the reforms would continue. In particular, I think people thought that regime change would serve to spur the political reforms that had all but stalled. However, their hopes were dashed and a dark shadow began to creep over the rule of law which had made steady progress until then.

Chinese law in the 2000s began to notably steer away from globalization in 2007 with the enactment of the *Property Law* and the *State-Owned Assets Law*. These two laws negated the policy of ownership equality set forth in the *Company Law* and were formulated to reassert the dominance of the state over the economy. This shift was symbolized by the debate surrounding the initial draft of the *Property Law* in 2006, when some claimed it was illegal. Likewise, the *State-Owned Assets Law* ensured that the joint stock companies formed from previously state-run enterprises would essentially be ruled by the state.

The problem was not just globalization: the rule of law was deteriorating by the day domestically. In 1983, Deng Xiaoping oversaw the revision of the *Criminal Law* and the *Criminal Procedure Law*, which had just been enacted, and launched the "Strike Hard" anti-crime campaign. Deng Xiaoping was well aware that this "Strike Hard" campaign violated the rule of law. He claimed the campaign was necessary in order to cement the foundations of the policy of reform and openness and that it should be abolished once it achieved its effect. In fact, he ended the campaign three years later and moved to reestablish the rule of law, thereby paving the way for the legal reforms of the 1990s.

By parading prisoners through town on trucks and holding public trials in front of thousands of people, the message of the "Strike Hard" campaign was made crystal clear. The Supreme Peo-

ple's Court had prohibited the practices used in the "Strike Hard" campaign during Deng's reign, but when they were reinstated in many parts of China in the 2000s, it caused a public debate. The reinstatement of these two practices could be considered a clear sign of the failure of the judicial reforms of the 1990s and the collapse of the rule of law.

During my 20 nearly years at the Institute of Social Science, Chinese law could be divided in two according to the opposing policy directions it took, the first 10 years being an age of light, and second 10 years being an age of darkness. Personally, I think the Chinese people would have been better off if the age of light came after the age of darkness, but there is nothing that can be done about this. Being a Chinese legal researcher, it seems to me as if things are back the way they were when I first started, and without any progress, there is no joy in the research.

In fact, another "Strike Hard" campaign began in the latter half of 2010 and lasted for six months. However, since the Central Committee opposed the campaign, it was carried out as a stand-alone project of the Public Security Bureau, not as national policy. This, itself, may have been a sig-

nal that Hu Jintao would begin taking corrective measures to end the campaign and buttress the rule of law. In 2010, he moved the head of Communist Party's Politics and Law Commission (which oversees China's judicial organs)—who had been serving concurrently as the head of the Public Security Bureau—to another post.

In the spring of 2012, direct elections were held for the village council of Wukan, a village in Guangdong Province. This was done to quell a peasant uprising that broke out in Wukan in 2011, but most of the media outlets reported it as China's first direct election, even though that was not true. In the 1990s, most of China's rural villages elected their council members directly, but reforms over the past 10 years have stagnated to the point that this fact has been all but forgotten.

In Japan, the 1990s are called the "lost decade," but some pundits include the 2000s and speak of the "lost two decades." The 2000s in China were definitely a "lost decade" in terms of the rule of law, but the question now is whether or not this "loss" will end with a single decade. This is why, even after retirement, I intend to keep a keen eye on developments in this area.

KATO Takao



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Q. How did you first learn about Shaken?

I was born and raised in Japan, and I was always aware that Shaken was a premier research institute with particular focus on interdisciplinary research in social sciences. Last year I had an opportunity to spend a week at Shaken and give a seminar. The talk was based on my analysis of personnel data from a large retail chain which belongs to the Mondragon group of worker cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain. Mondragon is not really the most commonly discussed subject among Japanese social scientists. However, Shaken scholars who came to my seminar displayed an impressive amount of knowledge about the subject matter and I received many valuable comments and suggestions from them. I was deeply impressed with the breadth of knowledge shown by Shaken scholars, and I felt strongly that Shaken's reputation for being the nation's leading interdisciplinary social sciences research institute was definitely justifiable. When I received an invitation to make an extended visit

to Shaken as a visiting professor, I did not hesitate to accept. It was truly a great honor to receive such an invitation from Shaken.

Q. What were the main purposes of your visit?

Professor Hideo Owan of Shaken and I have been collaborating successfully since 2005. Our earlier collaboration resulted in a publication in a top journal in behavior economics and the economics of organization. Encouraged by our earlier success in collaborating, we decided to embark on an ambitious joint project – developing a new university-industry-government research consortium to collect and analyze personnel data provided by Japanese firms. Specifically we have been working with Works Applications, a leading human resource management software company in Japan, to encourage their clients to deposit their personnel data into the Research Institute of Economy, Trade, and Industry's (RIETI) high-security server (RIETI is a think tank established by the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry). Researchers can then use remote desktop connections to log onto this high-security server and analyze the data. So far, two major Japanese corporations have deposited their personnel data (including each employee's subjective evaluations over many years) into the RIETI's server and we have been analyzing their data. We have a number of other firms who have expressed interest in participating in this project, and we anticipate being able to analyze new data from several other firms over the next three years.

My extended visit to Shaken allowed me to focus on the project free from my teaching and administrative responsibilities at my home institution, and collaborate closely with Professor Owan and several of his graduate students who are involved in the project. I am pleased to report that my visit to Shaken has proven to be very instrumental in advancing our project – we have drafts of two working papers and obtained some key results to be used in a third paper, "Subjective Employee Evaluations and Career Development: Econometric Case Studies of European, American and

Japanese Firms,” written with my colleagues at the Institute for the Study of Labor.

Q. Can you tell us more about your current research interests?

What happens within the firm used to be a black box for mainstream labor economists. In the last two decades or so, diverse attempts in labor economics have been made to expand its traditional scope of inquiry to include institutions and activities inside the firm. My research interests center on opening the black box for mainstream labor economics. I am particularly interested in: (i) various workplace practices to enhance employee involvement, innovation at the grassroots level, and knowledge sharing; (ii) alternative compensation systems (such as employee stock ownership and profit sharing) to align the interests of labor with those of management; (iii) corporate governance systems to facilitate coordination among labor, management and shareholders; and (iv) human capital formation through on-the-job training and promotion tournaments. My approach is often cross-national (involving data from Japan, China, Korea, the U.S., Denmark, Finland, Spain, and France), and both quantitative (econometrics) and qualitative (field research).

One of the most pressing issues facing the U.S. and many other advanced market economies is to assess the long-term effects on their labor markets of the 2008 financial meltdown and the subsequent global Great Recession. Although it is too soon to determine the long-term consequences of the global Great Recession for labor markets, we can use Japan's experience with its own Great Recession or “lost decade” that occurred two decades ago to guide our inquiry. Notwithstanding some important differences between Japan's lost decade and the global Great Recession, there are some intriguing similarities. As such, I have embarked on a new research project regarding the long-term labor market effects of the Great Recession which is aimed at drawing some useful lessons from Japan's lost decade.

Q. What do you like about Shaken?

What I like about Shaken the most is the caliber of its people, including not only faculty members but also support staff. I have made a number of extended visits to various universities and research institutes around the world. I find people at Shaken not only kind and welcoming but also refreshingly competent. For example, I find the IT staff at Shaken unusually knowledgeable and able. When I tried to establish internet access to the RIETI's secure data server using a desktop computer in my office at Shaken, I encountered a difficult software incompatibility issue. As I explained above, my ability to access the RIETI's secure data server was of vital importance for the success of my Shaken visit. Shaken's IT staff understood the importance of solving the network problem for my project and came up with an innovative and effective local solution in a timely manner. Their solution was not something that you can find by googling. It was a tailor-made solution and an exemplary display of competency. Had they not been able to solve this network problem, my visit to Shaken would have been a disappointing failure.

Finally let me conclude my remarks by recommending the Oiwake International Lodge for future international visitors to Shaken (unfortunately there are only single rooms at the Oiwake International Lodge and therefore international visitors traveling with family cannot stay at the Lodge). The Oiwake International Lodge is clean, modern, and functional with a washer/dryer in each room. Most of all, the location of the Lodge is ideal. It is a short fifteen minute walk from Shaken and there are many good yet inexpensive restaurants near the lodge. Thanks to this excellent accommodation arrangement, I was able to focus on my work at Shaken throughout my tenure at Shaken free of any accommodation-related distractions.

ISS Contemporary Japan Group at the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo

ISS Contemporary Japan Group seminar series provides English-speaking residents of the Tokyo area with an opportunity to hear cutting-edge research in social science and related policy issues, as well as a venue for researchers and professionals in or visiting Tokyo to present and receive knowledgeable feedback on their latest research projects. Seminars are open to everyone. Admission is free and advance registration is not required. For inquiries, please contact the seminar organizers Professor Hiroshi Ishida (ishida@iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp), Professor Gregory W. Noble (noble@iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp), or the coordinator, Satsuki Takahashi (tsatsuki@iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp).
Photo by Takahashi Satsuki (ISS)



Florian Kohlbacher

Senior Research Fellow and Head of the Business & Economics Section at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) Tokyo.

*Ethical Consumption in Japan
—Fad or Sustainable Trend?—*

April 19, 2012

Abstract: Social and ecological responsibility is of increasing importance for the economy and society on a global scale. Japan seems to have woken up to this challenge only recently, with a number of notable trends and initiatives. The triple disaster of March 11 2011 seems to have further raised the awareness of sustainability issues, contribution to society and

ethical consumerism. This presentation focuses on ethical consumer behavior (i.e., taking into account environmental and social responsibility of products and their production during consumers' decision-making processes), which has become known in Japan as *sōsharu shōhi* or more recently *eshikaru shōhi*. The presentation gives an overview of ethical consumption in Japan and analyzes various influencing factors determining ethical consumer behavior, as well as the specific cultural, social and economic background. Based on both primary and secondary data and various examples, the presentation discusses the implications of this consumer trend for the Japanese economy, business practice and public policy

Nakagawa Junji

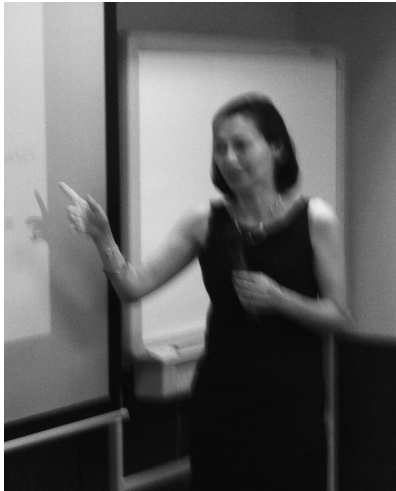
Professor of International Economic Law, Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo

*What will happen when Japan joins the TPP?
—TPP as a Means of Regulatory Reform—*

May 24, 2012

Abstract: Should Japan join the proposed TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement)? Among the wide range of subjects covered by TPP, the most heated debates have focused on liberalization of agricultural trade. The impact on Japan's regulatory reform, in contrast, has attracted almost no attention. In fact, TPP will exert a profound influence on regulatory systems in all member countries, not least Japan. In light of the impasse of the WTO as a forum for regulatory reform, TPP and other FTAs/EPAs will be at the forefront of regulatory reform in a host of areas, including trade facilitation, E-commerce, services regulation, competition law and policy, investment regulation, intellectual property, environmental regulation and labor law. Moreover, arrangements for regulatory coherence in TPP will open the possibility of drastically improving how the Japanese government enacts and reviews its regulations. After analyzing the likely impact of TPP on regulatory systems, I will argue that Japan should join quickly so as to take the lead in promoting regulatory reform in the Asia-Pacific and ultimately the world.





Kathryn Ibata-Arens

Associate Professor in the department of political science at DePaul University

The Networked Nation

—Identifying Emerging Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Hubs in Asia (and Japan's knowledge and network stickiness problem)—

June 20, 2012

Abstract: Japan has a “stickiness” problem. This talk presents a conceptual framework of “sticky” v. “fluid” knowledge and network flows that feed into a nation’s innovation to entrepreneurship pipeline

(the set of institutions and practices that produce commercialized technologies in new products and firms). Japan is compared against a number of world economies in terms of strengths and weaknesses in codified and tacit knowledge and closed and open network institutions and practices. The conceptual framework, empirical data and analysis of biomedical innovation and entrepreneurship contribute to debates in national innovation systems, entrepreneurial ecosystem development, national policy and firm level strategy. This study aims to provide a global level analysis of the innovation to entrepreneurship pipeline, identifying emerging concentrations of scientific citation, patenting and firm creation – paying close attention to Japan’s competitive position and future prospects. In frontier technology sectors such as biomedicine, proxy measures can help identify emerging trends in the innovation to entrepreneurship pipeline: emerging knowledge hubs (scientific citations), potential new product developments (core patents) and entrepreneurial activity (firm-level data). Utilizing proprietary datasets (citation, patent and firm-level), including Dunn and Bradstreet and Teikoku Databank, as well as open-access data sets from WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization), OECD and SCOPUS/Web of Science data, a unique NAICS “Plus” delineated data set was created. This provides the opportunity to analyze aggregate global (and micro) level data – utilizing socio-spatial methodologies – to identify concentrations of innovation and firm-level activity. The result is a time series mapping of emerging hubs of knowledge and firm creation in biomedical sectors including biopharmaceutical and medical device technologies. Preliminary findings indicate a gradual shift to Asian economies of a number of biotech innovation and new business creation activities. Data visualization showing trends at the global level (top ten bio economies 2000-2010) is complemented with a discussion of specific national level policies in countries exhibiting significant growth, including China, India and Singapore. While Japan excels in codified “sticky” assets and inter-firm networks, greater fluidity in knowledge and network flows in other Asian countries has placed Japan at a competitive disadvantage – as demonstrated by policy and practice in knowledge and network assets such as intellectual and human capital. The talk concludes with implications for immigration, investment, education and inter-firm networks in Japan.

ISS Contemporary Japan Group at the Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo

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Photo by Takahashi Satsuki (ISS)



Kawabata Eiji

Associate Professor of Political Science at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and a Visiting Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law at Keio University.

July 26, 2012

Privacy is essential for democracy because of its close connection to individual liberty, and the protection of privacy has long been an important political issue in democratic countries. The rapid development of digital technology, which enables a large amount of information to be transmitted quickly across the world, has increased the difficulty of protecting personal information from involuntary public exposure and has made the protection of privacy even more important for policymakers. To solve this problem, governments in advanced industrial countries have formulated and implemented policy for information privacy protection. In this talk, I will discuss the development of privacy regimes in Australia and Japan. After the issuance of the OECD Guidelines on the Protection of Privacy and Transborder Flows of Personal Data, OECD member countries began to set up privacy rules. In Australia, the federal government enacted the Privacy Act of 1988, which established the Privacy Commissioner to regulate only federal government organizations. The Act was amended in 2000 and private-sector organizations became subject to regulation by the Commissioner. In Japan, the government passed the Personal Information Protection Act of 1988 that was only applicable to personal information held by government organizations. The rapid growth in the use of advanced digital networks subsequently prompted the government to enact the Personal Information Protection Act of 2004. Through these processes, each government has developed a privacy regime. The Australian privacy regime has a government agency specialized in privacy regulation, but it does not have a strong enforcement power. In contrast, Japan's privacy regime has a very fragmented structure where each government ministry deals with privacy issues in its own jurisdiction. Although each privacy regime prompts government and private-sector organizations to improve privacy protection, critics contend that both are inadequate in comparison to the strong and extensive European Union privacy regime. The talk will explain the development of each regime by using an analytical framework of the confluence of four policy streams—international rules, developmental policy, government reform, and human rights—in the politics of privacy.



Carola Hommerich

Senior Research Fellow at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) Tokyo

Coping With Disaster: Trust and Subjective Well-being after 3/11

July 12, 2012

Abstract: In the aftermath of the 3/11 disaster, an apparent strengthening of social bonds (kizuna) gained much attention in public discourse. Discontent with the way the Japanese government handled the disaster was an equally big topic, suggesting that trust in political institutions had weakened. To analyse whether such predictions hold true, I will compare data from 2009 to a postal survey carried out in the Tohoku and Kanto regions in September

2011, and explore differences in trust in governmental institutions and social networks by regional proximity to the disaster area, as well as by personal affliction. Next, I will take a look at the implications of trust resources for subjective well-being, which previous research has shown to function as an indicator for individual resilience. Bringing both parts of my analysis together, I will try to identify groups according to their abilities to cope with the consequences of the March 11 disaster. Responses to an open-answer question about “hope” (kibō) are used to emphasize the different outlooks on the future these groups hold.

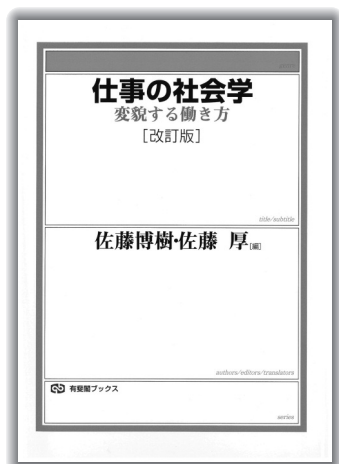
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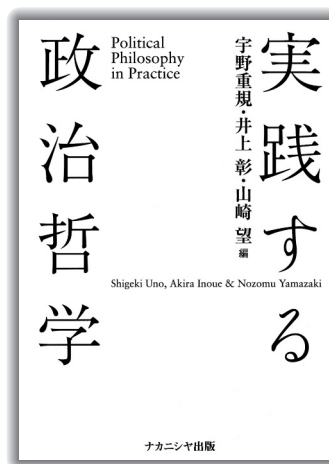
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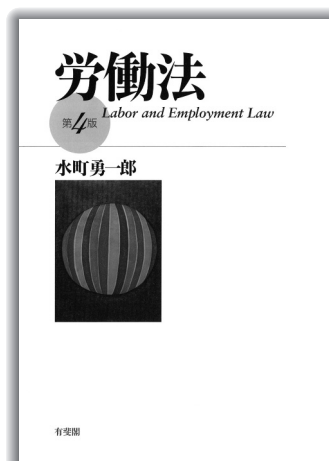
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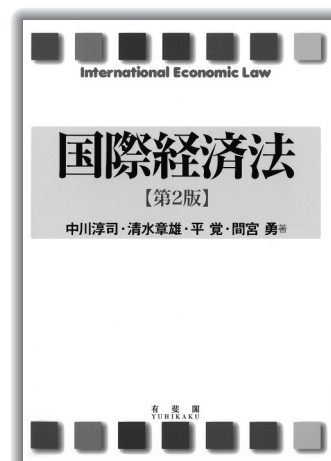


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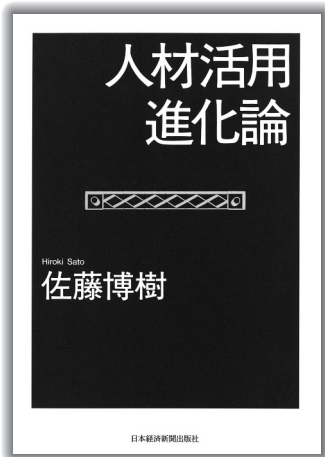
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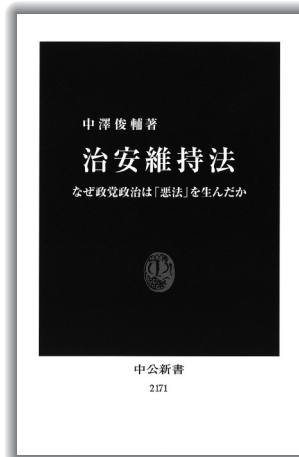
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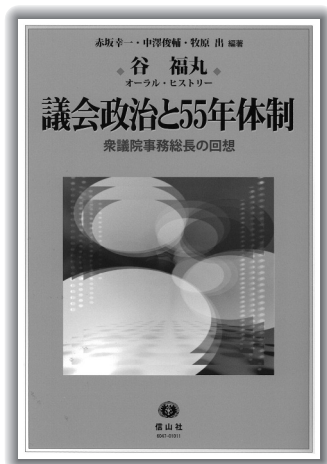
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Focus on ISS

The “Reconsidering Governance” Project

OSAWA Mari
Professor, Institute of Social Science

An Outline of the Project

Many issues confronting the present-day world are condensed into debates on governance. The term “governance” became commonplace in Japan from the mid-1990s: “corporate governance” to discuss corporate scandals or management efficiency, “good governance” regarding the effectiveness of aid for developing countries, and “welfare governance” or “local governance” in the context of trying to find solutions to the stalemate of the welfare state. Many of those issues have been examined in Shaken’s recent institute-wide joint research projects, “The Lost Decade?,” “Comparative Regionalism,” and “The Social Sciences of Hope.” In this current research project, we reconsider governance from the following two points: an analysis of the varieties of governance, and the question of why to focus on governance.

Analysis and Synthesis of the Layers and Varieties of Governance

While different forms of governance in diverse areas have their own specific contexts and issues, all forms of governance are born out of the need to control a diverse group of actors’ participation, cooperation, and coordination in order to allow for the sustainable development of a society or institutions. Related to this, ensuring conceptual consistency between types of governance at different levels of society—micro, local, national, and supranational—has become a challenge. In this research, we analyze and synthesize the governance of welfare, local governance, and markets/industry based on their specific structure and contexts.

Why Focus on Governance?

First, what is the significance of the sudden increase in theories of governance, the so-called “governance revolution”? Has governance itself actually changed, or is it our way of seeing the issue that has changed? Alternatively, is the increase due to a change in how we pursue the issue and attempt to solve problems in governance? Were previous theories of governance sufficiently aware of the meaning of focusing on the various problems? In this research, we examine the factors which led to the recent focus on governance, as well as their validity. Thus, this research promotes an interdisciplinary analysis and synthesis of governance, as well as an examination of the validity of focusing on governance, from legal, political, economic, and sociological perspectives. We hope to further theorize governance, and to present a vision of governance capable of coping with modern social issues.

1) The Livelihood Security System and the Global Economic Crisis

Looking ahead to the diverse livelihood security needs within the constraints of the aging population, natural resources, and the environment, the question of the ideal balance of cooperation and division of labor between the government and the private sector keeps coming up. Also, what governance by various actors at the micro, local, national, and supranational levels should look like is being questioned. On the question of welfare governance, our research compares the Japanese system with those of Germany, the US, Sweden, Korea, China, Thailand, and others.

2) Local Governance

The concept of local governance deals with the governing-governed, mandate-contract relationships between a wide variety of actors, including local governments and residents, community associations, NPOs or citizen organizations, employee organizations, welfare organizations, environmental organizations, industry, economic groups and employers’ organizations, etc. In this project, a variety of scholars with backgrounds in fields such as politics, administration, finance, history, and thought, all bring together a rich vision, and are going to address these issues based on case study findings.

3) Markets/Industry

Corporate governance is a mechanism used to discipline and supervise the mutual relationships between not just shareholders and management, but also between various other stakeholders such as directors, employees, creditors (financial institutions, etc.), and clients. Using basic contract theory as our analytical tool, we offer a theoretical and empirical analysis of the experience of Japan.

After clarifying the impact of the shift from prewar traditional corporate governance (which assumed a fluid labor market and stock market) to what became known as “Japanese style corporate governance” in the postwar period (emphasizing employee benefits), and then the ramifications on corporate governance of the more institutional changes in the financial and labor markets of the 1990s and later, in this research we want to try a comparative institutional analysis to reveal the relationships between exogenous factors of the market environment etc., and the most efficient forms of corporate governance. Specifically, our particular focus will be on international comparisons, historical analyses, and interaction between corporate governance and labor organizations.