

# Determinants of Union Formation in Japan and France

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## 1. Introduction

The factors of non-formation of partnership need to be examined to understand recent trends in union formation in developed societies. We previously studied the trends in fertility in Japan and France (Kojima & Rallu 1997, 1998) and realized the necessity to compare nuptiality patterns at the individual level in the two societies with very different types of union formation and different developments in the process of non-formation of unions.

## 2. Data and Methods

This study has used the data from the French FFS (Family and Fertility Survey with a sample size of above 2000) conducted by INSEE in 1994 and the data from the 10<sup>th</sup> Japanese NFS (National Fertility Survey with a sample size of around 8000) conducted by the Institute of Population Problems (currently, NIPSSR) in 1992. The analyses have been limited to respondents aged 21-34 for both surveys. A 4-category partnership status variable has been constructed: 1) "having no partner", 2) "having an intimate friend" ('relation amoureuse stable' for France or 'having friend(s) of the opposite sex' for Japan), 3) "cohabiting" ('cohabitant' for France or 'having a lover/fiancé(e)' for Japan), and 4) "currently married."

Multinomial logit (logistic regression) and proportional hazards (Cox regression) models have been applied to French and Japanese data sets. In the proportional hazards analysis of first union formation, we have analyzed the timing (age) of first union (cohabitation or first marriage) for France and that of first marriage for Japan. For France we have also analyzed the determinants of first marriage either with or without previous cohabitation. For the proportional hazards analysis of Japanese data only never-married and first-married subjects are used because the information on the timing of first marriage is not available for other kind of marital status.

### 3. Results

Partnership status at the time of survey shows that Japanese are less likely to be alone (with no partner) than French at all ages and for both sexes. They are also less likely to have a friend, except for males aged 30-34. The proportion married is higher in Japan than in France. However, the total proportion in union (married or cohabiting) is higher in France, except at ages 30-34. Japanese with a lover or a fiancé(e) may actually represent the category where cohabitation is beginning. If social norms and economic conditions were different, cohabitation would certainly be much more prevalent and the proportion married would be lower in Japan. It is noticeable that the percentage "having no partner" among the total of this category plus the percentage "having a friend" are similar in both societies, except for females aged 25-29 where Japanese are more often without partner and among males aged 30-34 where French are more often without partner.

The multivariate analyses exhibited the differences and the similarities between the two societies. Although the effect of co-residence with parents has been less often analyzed for the West, it has turned out to encourage marriage for French women. For Japanese women, proportional hazards analysis does not show significant effects of co-residence with parents on marriage in this study but other models have shown such an effect. The effects of education also seem to be similar in the sense that higher one tends to encourage less "traditional" partnership behaviors. Similarly, young adults in professional and managerial occupation tend to have more "modern" partnership behaviors while the self-employed in the two societies tend to have more "traditional" ones. Unstable employment and unemployment seem to restrict partnership behavior in the two societies. Regional variables do not always have clear effects on partnership behaviors, but they seem to constrain them in some cases possibly through marriage squeeze.

In both societies, marriage is in competition with other forms of union with or without cohabitation. However, it may be not only ideology or culture that differentiate the partnership behaviors within and between the two societies, but it may be also structural constraints. Demographic and financial constraints seem to exert strong structural effects on the partnership behaviors of both "traditional" and "modern" young adults in the two societies and the seemingly different partnership behaviors may be different representations of their limited choices or adaptive strategies under somewhat different constraints.

### REFERENCE

Kojima, H. & Rallu, J.-L., "La fécondité au Japon et en France," *Population*, Vol.52, No.5, 1997, pp.1143-1172 ("Fertility in Japan and France," *Population: English Selection*, 10).

### RESUME

On a comparé les déterminants d' état matrimonial et le calendrier de la formation des unions au Japon et en France, en utilisant les données d' enquête national de fécondité et les modèles Logit et Cox. On a trouvé que la cohabitation avec les parents avant mariage a un effet positif au mariage des françaises, mais il n' est pas significatif chez les japonaises dans cette étude. Les effets de l' enseignement et la profession sont pareils dans les deux sociétés. Mais il y a aussi les différences.